

## Developing Graded Readers-Based Supplementary Reading Materials for Grade Eight Students of Junior High School

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**Abstract:** The objectives of this research is to find out the reading target needs and reading learning needs of grade eight students of junior high school, and to develop appropriate supplementary reading materials for grade eight students of junior high school. The nature of this research was Research and Development (R&D). The subjects of this study were 29 students of grade eight at SMPN 8 Yogyakarta. This research was conducted by following Jolly and Bolitho's model of materials development (1998) and Masuhara's model of course design (1998) with some modification. The steps of this study were conducting needs analysis, developing the syllabus, developing the first draft of the materials, evaluating the materials and revising the materials. The types of the data were qualitative and quantitative. The instruments for the qualitative data collection were interview guidelines and that for the quantitative data collection were two questionnaires for the needs analysis and for the evaluation of the supplementary reading materials. The qualitative data were analysed by following Burns' model of data analysis (2010) while the quantitative data were analysed by percentages and Sugiyono's rating scale (2011). This study developed three units of supplementary reading materials. The materials were developed based on Curriculum 2013 and extensive reading framework. The units have three main parts, i.e. Introduction, Main Lesson and Reinforcement. Based on the result of the expert judgement, the mean score of the whole aspects of the developed materials was 3.47 which was in the range of 3.21 – 4.00 and categorized as 'Very Appropriate'.

Keywords: *extensive reading tasks, supplementary materials, reading*

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### Introduction

Materials are important in language teaching. Besides the textbook, the students also need more exposure of the target language. The existence of graded readers can be used in teaching reading. They can be used as language input of target language and can be used extensively.

There were some problems found. The first problem is related to the supplementary reading materials. There were few supplementary reading materials which are suitable with Curriculum 2013. There were some supplementary materials but they focused on drilling and remembering in order to help the students to pass the National Examination. The materials available did not facilitate the students to express their opinion.

The second problem is related to the development of supplementary reading materials. Teachers were actually the ones who know the students' needs. Unfortunately, they had limited time to develop their own materials. The steps in developing supplementary reading materials need much time and a lot of work.

The last problem is related to the materials already available. The teachers could use the materials already available on the internet, materials from bookstores or even from a newspaper but sometimes they did not fit students' needs. The materials need to be adjusted.

Based on those problems, the study focused on the development of graded readers-based supplementary reading materials for grade eight students of junior high school because supplementary reading materials make the students get more input. The input itself could enrich their vocabulary for graded readers were written with a controlled vocabulary. It also could improve their critical thinking and motivate them to learn English through reading more and more.

Scriveener (2005) states that extensive reading is a fluent, faster reading for pleasure, entertainment and general understanding without careful attention to details. In addition, Carrel, Carson and Nutall state that it is important to note that intensive and extensive reading should not be seen as being in opposition since both serve different purposes but complement each other (as cited in Renandya & Jacobs, 2002). Conducting extensive reading complements the implementation of intensive reading and broadens the objectives of the curriculum as proposed by Day (2004). The input used for extensive reading in this study is graded readers.

Graded readers are books of stories (or other content) which are published specifically for learners to get extended exposure to English and provide opportunities for extensive reading for pleasure (Scriveener, 2005). The existence of graded readers answers the needs of 'authentic' materials in learning a foreign language as Day and Bamford advocate simplified reading texts which have 'the natural qualities of authenticity' (as cited in Tomlinson, 2001). The supplementary reading materials which used graded readers as the input in this study were used to promote autonomous learning.

The terms 'autonomy' is articulated by Benson and Voller (as cited in Nunan, 2005) who point out that in language education the term is used in five different ways:

1. for situations in which learners study entirely on their own
2. for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self- directed learning
3. for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education
4. for the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning
5. for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning.

Autonomous learning moves students from learning dependently to learning independently (Nunan, 2005). The supplementary reading materials developed in this study followed the criteria of good supplementary materials.

Supplementary materials are materials which are designed to be used in addition to the core materials of a course (Tomlinson, 1998). In agreement with Tomlinson, Richards and Schmidt (2002) state that supplementary materials deal more intensively with skills which has not been developed in details in the course book. Lowry and King (1974) state that supplementary materials should be in line with learners' reading level, interest and need for enrichment.

## **Research Method**

The study is categorised as Research and Development (R&D). The procedure of this research referred to the model of materials design proposed by Jolly and Bolitho (1998) and the model of course design proposed by Masuhara (1998) which were modified. The procedure of the research consisted of conducting needs analysis, developing the syllabus, developing the first draft of the materials, evaluating the materials and revising the materials.

This research used interview guidelines and two kinds of questionnaires in collecting the

data. The interview guidelines and the first questionnaires were for identifying the students' needs in the needs analysis step. The questions in the interview guidelines were open-ended questions while that in the first questionnaires were in the form of multiple choices. The second questionnaires were distributed to the expert of English learning materials.

The data collected from the needs survey were analysed qualitatively using the model of data analysis proposed by Burns (2010) and were analysed quantitatively using percentages. The data obtained from the evaluation step were analysed through descriptive statistics using the rating scale proposed by Sugiyono (2011).

## Findings and Discussions

From the needs analysis, it can be inferred that the students' necessity was to be able to learn new words from the texts they read. The difficulty which the students had in reading was their limited vocabulary. It was also found that the students wanted to read to broaden their vocabulary.

Regarding students' learning needs, it is found that the length of the input the students wanted is between 300 to 400 words for each passage. They preferred to have supplementary reading materials which were colourful and had pictures. The mode for the learning activities that they preferred is to work individually. The developed materials consist of three units. Each unit consists of three main parts. They are Introduction, Main Lesson and Reinforcement. Introduction consists of the cover unit and brainstorming activity in 'Lead-In' section. Main Lesson consists of pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities in 'Think First' and 'Start Reading' section. The last part is Reinforcement which consists of three parts, i.e. reflection, review and glossary.

All units are categorised as 'Very Appropriate' with the mean score ranged from 3.41 to 3.58 which are within the interval of 3.21 – 4.00 and considered appropriate for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

## Conclusions

The developed supplementary reading materials were in accordance to the students' reading target needs and students' reading learning needs. The supplementary reading materials were also in accordance to the Curriculum 2013 and were in line with the theories in extensive reading and autonomous learning. The supplementary reading materials were considered appropriate for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

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