

## **Developing Task-Based Supplementary English Reading Materials for Grade VII Students of Junior High School**

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**Abstract:** The objectives of this research were: (1) to describe the reading target needs of Grade VII students of Junior High School focusing on descriptive texts; (2) to describe the reading learning needs of Grade VII students of Junior High School focusing on descriptive texts; (3) to develop task-based supplementary English reading materials focusing on descriptive texts for Grade VII students of Junior High School. This research belonged to research and development study. The research subjects were grade VII D students of SMPN 9 Yogyakarta. This research adapted the combination of R&D model proposed by Jolly and Bolitho in Tomlinson (1998) and Borg and Gall (1983) with some modifications which were conducting needs analysis, writing the course grid, developing the materials (designing the first draft of the product), getting expert judgment, and revision (writing the final draft of the materials). The research used two types of questionnaires: 1) need analysis questionnaire to find the students' target needs and learning needs and 2) expert judgement questionnaire to obtain the data for the appropriateness of the developed supplementary materials. The data obtained from the needs analysis and the expert judgement were analyzed quantitatively through descriptive statistics. There were three units in the developed materials. Each unit consists of 13-16 tasks divided into seven parts: schema building, controlled practices, authentic reading practices, focused on linguistic elements, freer practices, pedagogical tasks, and reflection. Based on the results of the expert judgement questionnaire, the developed supplementary materials can be considered as "very good".

**Keywords:** *Task-Based, Supplementary Reading Materials, Grade VII students of Junior High School*

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### **Introduction**

Reading is one of the four skills that should be mastered in learning English. Reading is the most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as the means of consolidating and extending the knowledge of the language. It means that reading is essentially used to get the important and meaningful information

from written language. Much knowledge about the target language will be learned and gained from many sources that are read.

Therefore, the written materials become a very crucial thing in the English teaching and learning process. Textbooks and other resources are important means to reach the goal of national education. Students need to receive more inputs in order to explore their reading skills through good materials. Good materials are materials that meet the students' needs and interest.

However, based on the preliminary observation held in SMP Negeri 9 Yogyakarta, there are problems during the English teaching and learning process found in the classroom. One of the problems is the lack of appropriate learning materials (textbook), especially those intended for reading skills. The school use the book from the government entitled "When English Rings A Bell".

Then, the problems are identified. The Ministry of Education in Indonesia designs Curriculum 2013 as the newest curriculum in Indonesia. And for grade VII students of SMP 9 Yogyakarta, this curriculum is applied. Based on the basic competence for the reading skill (3.7), the students in grade VII of Junior High School need to understand the social functions, structures, and linguistic features of a very short descriptive text about people, animals, and things based on the use of context. They also need to catch some messages or detailed information from a descriptive text. However, the activities from the materials available in the textbook are not comprehensible enough. The textbook does not provide sufficient inputs which reinforce students' understanding. Besides, the explanation of the language function is not always found in every chapter of the book. The second problem was that the book provided by the government does not meet the students' needs, especially in its reading part. There is no enough part for reading input and practice. The main model of the materials is a conversation and dialogues. So, most of the tasks only focus on listening and speaking eventhough the skill mostly being tested in examination (whether it is school exam or national exam) is reading. Moreover, in the book currently used, there are some parts representing "task" for students. But, those tasks are not well sequenced. In one chapter, the students have to repeat similar activities such as listening to the teacher, then repeating after the teacher, and after that practicing it to the class with their friends (just like the example).

So, In reference to the considerations above, in this research, supplementary English reading materials for Grade VII students of Junior High School focusing on descriptive text is developed

## **Research Method**

The needs analysis was conducted on February 1st, 2017 at SMPN 9 Yogyakarta. The subjects of this research were 32 students in VII D class. The procedure followed in this research was the combination of R&D model proposed by Jolly and Bolitho in Tomlinson (1998) and Borg and Gall (1983) with some modifications which were conducting needs analysis, writing the course grid, developing the materials (designing the first draft of the product), getting expert judgment, and revision (writing the final draft of the materials). There were two types of questionnaires in this study: 1) need analysis questionnaire to find out the students' target needs and learning needs and 2) expert judgement questionnaire to obtain the data for the appropriateness of the developed supplementary materials.

The data obtained from the needs analysis and the expert judgement were analyzed quantitatively through descriptive statistics. The data gained from the needs analysis are analyzed by calculating the percentage of each answer in the questionnaire. The answer with the highest percentage is considered as the representation of the learners' actual condition. The results of materials evaluation were analyzed by calculating the range to determine the appropriateness of the materials according to formula proposed by Suharto (2006: 52-53).

### **Finding and Discussions**

The findings of this study covered the data of needs analysis, the course grid, the unit design of the materials, the data of the expert judgement, and the final draft.

The needs analysis consisted of two parts: target needs and learning needs. The first part, target needs, could be further broken down into three aspects: necessities, lacks, and wants. In term of the necessities, most of the students learn reading in English in order to be able to answer the questions in the examination correctly. So, the task-based supplementary materials is appropriate since it gives the students practice which is like a simulation for the examination preparation. For the Lacks, the data shows that the students got difficulties in vocabulary mastery and grammar. They also claim that it is difficult to identify the topic of the text. Therefore, those aspects should be recycled in the task-based supplementary English reading materials focusing on descriptive texts in order to help the students increase their mastery. On the other hand, pronouncing vocabulary from the text is decided to be something not difficult by them. So, the pronunciation transcription of the vocabulary may not be included. And for the wants, most of the students claimed that they wanted to understand the text well and also be able to answer the questions based on the text correctly.

The second part of needs analysis is learning needs. They consist of five components: input, procedures, and settings. The results of students

learning needs can be seen as follows. For Input, most of the students claim that the current reading materials used give less support to their learning process. In their opinion, the book used in the classroom has less exercises or practices in reading skill. So, they said that supplementary English reading materials need to be developed. The kind of input they want is the text in average long ( $100 \leq X \leq 200$  words), and it is supported with pictures. Most of the students claim that pictures help them in understanding the content of the text because pictures give them clearer context. Also, some of them think that pictures make the text more interesting. For the procedure or activities, the data shows that all of the vocabulary activities can be applied in the task-based supplementary English reading materials. Matching activity are decided to be the most interesting vocabulary activities. Then, for the reading activities, It can be concluded that arranging jumbled sentences to make a summary of a text may not good to be included because it is not an interesting activity for the students. On the other hand, answering questions by discussing it with partner, summarizing text with the help of 5W1H, translating text, analyzing some statements (T/F), "Fill in the blanks" activity, discussing the text with friends may be included in the supplementary materials because most of the student claimed that those reading activities are interesting. For the setting, it is known that for doing the reading tasks, 31,25% of the students like to work in pairs, 15,63% prefer to work individually, 3,12% like to do the tasks with the whole class, and the rest 50% of the students, which is the most of them, like to work in small group consists of 3 up to 5 people.

The results of the needs analysis were used to design the course grid of the materials. The course grid was a basis of the materials being developed. In writing the course grid, it is important to pay attention to some aspects such as the results of needs analysis, core competence, and basic competence. The course grid consisted of unit name and title, basic competences, indicators, learning materials, learning activities/tasks, time allocation, and teaching kits. The course grid consisted of unit name and title, basic competences, indicators, learning materials, learning activities/tasks, time allocation, and teaching kits.

After the course grid was developed, the next step of this research was developing the materials. There are three units in the materials. Each unit has seven parts: schema building, controlled practices, authentic reading practices, focused on linguistic elements, freer practices, pedagogical tasks, and reflection. The activities in the schema building part help the students to have schema and to activate their prior knowledge about the materials that are going to be learnt. The second part, controlled practice, consists of some tasks that guide the students to learn the generic structure, and the function of descriptive texts, and also introduce vocabulary related to the topic. Next, in the authentic reading practice part, the students are going to do reading comprehension tasks. In the fourth part,

that is focus on linguistic elements, the students have to learn the linguistic elements or language features of the texts through tasks provided. After that, the providing freer practices part offers some less guided tasks in reading comprehension. The sixth part, introducing the pedagogical tasks, allows the students to discuss things with group. In discussion, the students can relate the tasks to their real life. Finally, in the reflection, the students are asked to check their progress after finishing the unit.

The first draft materials then were evaluated by an expert. There were four aspects that were evaluated: the appropriateness of the content, language, presentation, graphic. The mean score of the content aspect is 3.78 for Unit 1, and 3.88 for both Unit 2 and Unit 3. While the mean score of the presentation aspect is 3.85 for all the three units. Furthermore, for the language and graphic aspects, the mean score is 4 for all the three units in the developed materials. All of those ratings are in the range of  $3.25 \leq x \leq 4$  which can be categorized as "very good". However, there are some minor revisions in spelling and grammar.

### **Conclusion**

Regarding the findings, some conclusions are drawn. They cover the targets' needs, learning needs and characteristics of appropriate supplementary English reading materials focusing on descriptive texts for Grade VII students of Junior High School.

Based on the results of the needs analysis, the reading target needs can be described as follows: 1) Most of the students' goal in learning English (35.14%) is to be able to answer the questions in the examination correctly. 2) Most of the students' goal in learning reading skill in English (30%) is to be able to understand the content of the text. 3) Most of the students' interest in reading English text (56.25%) is low. So, it is important to develop supplementary materials that meet their interest more. 4) In reading activity, most of the students (65.62%) have difficulty related to vocabulary mastery. 5) Also, most of the students (59.37%) have difficulty in finding the topic of the text. 6) Furthermore, most of the students (71.88%) have difficulty related to the grammar of the text. 7) After learning reading in English, most of the students (47.23%) want to understand the text well and be able to answer the questions based on the text correctly.

According to the reading learning needs data, the learners' view about what they need to do in order to learn is classified into some components. They are input, procedure, and setting. In terms of input, most of the students (56.25%) claim that the reading materials currently used in the English classroom is less supportive because it does not give enough exercise for reading activity. So, 52.13% of the students agree that supplementary English reading materials need to be developed. The students prefer having texts that have  $100 \leq X \leq 200$  words (average).

Furthermore, most of them (44.82%) claim that the text is better supported by pictures because those pictures help them in understanding the text by giving clearer context (place, situation, time, etc). Regarding with the procedures or the activities for vocabulary mastery, 81.25% of the students prefer finding words then looking for the meaning in dictionary. Besides, most of the students (78.12%) also claim that guessing the meaning of words from the context is interesting. 75% of the students also prefer doing fill in the blank activities. Furthermore, doing crossword puzzle, matching word with provided contextual meaning, finding synonym and antonym of words, classifying words, and matching words with pictures are considered as interesting activity since all of those activities are all liked by more than 50% of the students. For the procedures or activities for reading skill, most of the students (46.88%) prefer answering questions based on the text given by discussing with partner. 59.38% of the students also claim that summarizing text with the help of 5W1H and analyzing the T/F of statements based on text are interesting reading activities. Furthermore, most of the students (65.63%) prefer to translate the text and fill the blank spaces in sentences based on the text. In addition, 71.87% of the students also claim that reading a text then discussing the content with friends is effective activity. Related to the setting, 31.25% of the students like to work in pairs. While 15.63% of them prefer to work individually. Besides, 3.12% of them like to do the tasks with the whole class, and the rest 50% of the students, which is the most of them, like to work in small group consists of 3 up to 5 people.

Based on the result of the expert judgment questionnaire, the supplementary materials developed are considered as the appropriate one. The characteristics are: 1) The materials were developed using task based language teaching principles. It was also developed based on the core competence and the basic competence for grade VII students of Junior High School. The materials were developed based on the learners' needs which were concluded after conducting needs analysis. 2) The topics of the units in the developed materials agree with the basic competences of reading skill for grade VII students of Junior High School (people, animal, and things). Those topics are also related to the students' real life. It is intended to make the materials meet the students' interest and make the learning process meaningful. 3) The task-based supplementary English reading materials consist of three units. Each unit has the unit title and objectives. The unit title is in the form of an interesting phrase or sentence that is appropriate to the materials that are going to be learnt. The objectives are involved in the task-based supplementary English reading materials to make the students know what the activities in that unit are for. Besides, providing the objectives can helps the students to evaluate their learning process. 4) The activities in the task-based supplementary English reading materials are presented through seven parts: six main steps and a reflection in the end of every unit. Those main steps are schema building, controlled practice, authentic reading practice, focus on linguistic elements, freer practice, and

pedagogical tasks. Finally, each unit is ended with a reflection. The students are asked to do self reflection by checking statements related to their progress after finishing the unit. In addition, based on the students' goal in learning reading skill in English that is to answer the questions in the examination correctly, these kind of task-based supplementary English reading materials are useful for the students. It helps them to comprehend descriptive texts because it allows the students to understand the descriptive texts autonomously through well-order activities.

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