

**DEVELOPING READING AND WRITING LEARNING MATERIALS
FOR CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION
MANAGED BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION**

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Abstract: The objectives of this research were to describe the target needs, learning needs, and to develop appropriate reading and writing learning materials for children participating in non-formal education managed by a Non-Governmental Organization. The developing model used was TBLT. This was a Research and Development study. The subjects were the active participants of *Drinking Water Program* class. The procedures were conducting needs analysis, developing materials, physical production, getting expert's validation, and revisions. The data were the results of the needs analysis questionnaire, interview transcript, and the results of the expert judgement questionnaire which were analyzed quantitatively as well as qualitatively. The materials consisted of three units. Each unit had 18 to 20 activities. The topics were related to the environment. The materials were very good and feasible to be used by children participating in non-formal education managed by Non-Governmental Organization with revisions.

Keywords: children, TBLT, reading and writing materials

Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan kebutuhan target, kebutuhan pembelajaran, dan untuk mengembangkan materi pembelajaran membaca dan menulis yang sesuai untuk anak-anak yang berpartisipasi dalam pendidikan non-formal yang dikelola oleh Organisasi Non-Pemerintah. Model pengembangan yang digunakan adalah *TBLT*. Penelitian ini adalah Penelitian dan Pengembangan. Subjek penelitian adalah peserta aktif dari kelas *Drinking Water Program*. Prosedurnya adalah melakukan analisis kebutuhan, menyusun materi, produksi fisik, mendapatkan validasi dari ahli, dan revisi. Data penelitian ini adalah hasil kuesioner analisis kebutuhan, transkrip wawancara, dan hasil kuesioner penilaian ahli yang dianalisis secara kuantitatif maupun kualitatif. Materi pembelajaran terdiri dari tiga unit. Setiap unit memiliki 18 hingga 20 jenis soal. Topiknya terkait dengan lingkungan. Materi yang dikembangkan dikategorikan sebagai sangat baik dan layak untuk dipergunakan oleh anak-anak yang berpartisipasi dalam pendidikan non-formal yang dikelola oleh Organisasi Non-Pemerintah dengan beberapa revisi.

Kata kunci: anak-anak, TBLT, materi membaca dan menulis

INTRODUCTION

Language learning can take place anytime and anywhere. Learning is not always done at schools. Some children might not have the opportunity to learn in such formal setting. Learning can also be carried out in a non-formal setting such as in a community conducted by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). NGO usually has its own objectives in providing education, such as offering English lesson due to the awareness of the importance of English. Similar to the formal education, non-formal education managed by an NGO has several important components, such as learning materials. Appropriate English materials are needed to make the learning process become meaningful. However, sometimes learning materials which suitably meet the needs of the program are not always available. One of the NGO offering an English lesson and facing such problem in Indonesia is *Project Child Indonesia*.

Project Child Indonesia according to the information provided on its Official Website (accessed on September 19, 2017) is described as a locally-run, community-based NGO,

working to alleviate poverty in the coastal and riverside communities of Indonesia because these communities are most vulnerable concerning natural disasters and increasing pollution. In order to meet its objectives, the organization offers several education programs which use English as its medium to convey the materials. One of its programs is *Drinking Water Program* which is applied in several schools in Yogyakarta. So as to maintain and monitor its progress, *Project Child Indonesia* is allowed by schools to give lessons to students about environment, health, and disaster awareness through an English lesson once a week. Students of *Drinking Water Program*, through the English lesson, are expected to learn English which is related to its main concern, such as environmental issues.

Project Child Indonesia is aware of its needs of appropriate English materials containing information or content knowledge which suit its syllabus. The organization thinks that the children, as the beginner language learners, need to receive more inputs to explore their English skills, including reading and writing, through proper and relevant

materials. Nevertheless, *Project Child Indonesia* has difficulties on finding the suitable reading and writing materials which match its objectives, its students' needs and interests.

Based on the preliminary observation in SD Negeri Sinduadi 1 Yogyakarta, one of the schools applying *Drinking Water Program*, it is found that the available materials are lacking reading and writing materials due to the problems on finding appropriate materials on both skills for children related to environmental issues. For these reasons above, appropriate reading and writing English materials have to be developed for children participating in non-formal education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research study focuses on developing learning materials for children participating in non-formal education which is managed by an NGO. Therefore, this study is categorized as Research and Development (R&D). According to Borg and Gall (2003), educational research and development is a research in which the findings are used to design new products or procedures. The designed products should be tested, evaluated, and refined until they

meet the expected results or objectives. Basically, there are ten steps in doing R&D, namely research and information collecting, planning, developing preliminary form of the product, preliminary field testing, main product revision, field testing, operational product revision, operational field testing, final product revision, and dissemination as well as implementation. However, this research is done up to evaluating and revising the developed English learning materials.

The subjects of this research were the active participants of *Drinking Water Program* class. There were 25 children aged 9 – 11 years old. The procedures of this research were adapted from the model proposed by Jolly and Bolitho (in Tomlinson, 2011). However, the students' use of materials stage was omitted. The instruments used in this research are two questionnaires and interview guidelines. There were two types of data that should be gathered. They were the data of the learners' target and learning needs as well as the data for the materials evaluation.

In this research, there were two kinds of data; qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data were obtained

from the result of the interview with the volunteers of *Project Child Indonesia*. The results of the interview were presented in the form of transcripts and the results were analyzed qualitatively through the description. Meanwhile, the data obtained from the needs analysis questionnaire were quantitative. They were analyzed manually by the writer using frequency and percentage. The writer then used the highest percentage to present the learners' condition.

The quantitative data from the evaluation questionnaire assigned by the expert were analyzed by using the means. The means of the data were then converted into a descriptive analysis. Suharto (2006) proposes the quantitative data conversion which was used to classify the category of the means. The categories are shown below.

Table 1: Data Conversion Table

Mean score	Categories
3.26 – 4.00	Very good
2.51 – 3.25	Good
1.76 – 2.50	Fair
1.00 – 1.75	Poor

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Describing the target needs, learning needs, and developing suitable materials are the objectives of this research study. It focuses on developing reading and writing learning materials for children participating in a non-formal setting managed by an NGO. Hence, this research is categorized as Research and Development (R&D). The product of this research is developed based on the results of the needs analysis done in an NGO which focuses on tackling environmental issues named *Project Child Indonesia*. One of the programs held by this organization, namely *Drinking Water Program* class, focuses on giving English lessons to schools applying this program in which its participants are children aged 9 – 11. Therefore, the characteristics of children, the concept of teaching reading and writing to children, as well as the characteristics of children's learning materials should be taken into account in the process of developing the product. More importantly, the results of the needs analysis, the organization's learning objectives, children's interests, and the basic competences adapted from the School-based Curriculum

should also be considered in developing the materials.

In conducting this research, there were six steps that had been followed. There were identification and exploration of the needs, contextual realization, pedagogical realization, physical production, evaluation, and revision. These steps were adapted from Jolly and Bolitho (in Tomlinson, 2011) with modification where the students' use of materials stage was omitted.

In the identification and exploration stage, a needs analysis was conducted in order to obtain the data related to the learners' target needs and learning needs. It was conducted in two schools applying *Drinking Water Program*, namely SD Negeri Bangirejo 1 Yogyakarta and SD Negeri Bangunrejo Yogyakarta. The needs analysis was done by distributing questionnaires to the participants of *Drinking Water Program* class as well as interviewing the volunteers in charge. The question items used in both interview guideline and needs analysis questionnaire guideline were organized based on some theories proposed by the experts, such as Graves (2000), Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Nunan (2004), Scott and

Ytreberg (2004), Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2003).

The results obtained from the needs analysis are learners' description, learners' target needs, and their learning needs. The subjects of this research were mostly always curious about the materials which would be taught. In terms of social and emotional development, the learners were willing to work in groups. However, their attention span was very short. These characteristics are in line with the theories proposed by some experts, such as Harmer (2007) who mentions that children are always curious in nature. Scott and Ytreberg (2004) also explain that they have limited attention span and are happy working with others.

In terms of the target needs, there were four aspects including goals, necessities, lacks, and wants, which were analyzed. According to the results of the needs analysis, the learners expected to have the ability to communicate in English. However, Moon (2000) says that children are too young to feel any need for English language learning. Therefore, the volunteers were asked for opinions regarding their general intention of doing the learning process. The

organization wanted to build learners' confidence, curiosity towards the topics formulated by the organization. Moreover, the learners were expected to know English words related to environment issues. In terms of their necessities, *Project Child Indonesia* needed to have reading and writing materials which were relevant with its lesson objectives. As for the lacks, the learners' reading and writing ability in English were poor. They had difficulties in pronouncing and spelling English words. Lastly, the organization demanded relevant reading and writing materials which were well-designed with interesting activities, pictures, and colors.

On the other hand, in terms of the learners' learning needs, there were five aspects which were analyzed. In relation to the input, the learners' preferred inputs which were equipped with pictures. Furthermore, they also liked to have comic, cartoon, dialogue, or conversation as the input. As for the procedure, matching activities were preferred as the reading activities and writing short and simple words or sentences as the writing activities. Next, according to the learners in terms of the teacher's roles, they preferred to have

the teacher explaining most of the materials. Meanwhile, as the learners, they were interested in every learning activity which was performed by the teacher. They were also willing to ask questions when the materials could not be understood well. Then for the settings, the learners liked to learn as well as work in groups, and did the learning activities both in the classroom and sometimes outside the classroom. However, according to the volunteers which were interviewed, doing learning activities outside the classroom was impossible because it was hot outside and it would disturb the other classes.

The results of the needs analysis were then used to design the course grid. Moreover, the official syllabus of *Drinking Water Program* and the basic competences adapted from the School-based Curriculum were also taken into account in determining what information should be provided in the course grid. The course grid consisted of the reading and writing basic competences, topic and the title of the unit, the learning indicators, language focus which included language function, expressions, vocabulary, and the learning activities. The course grid emphasized on three different language

focuses, including describing things and animals, giving and accepting suggestions, and expressing prohibition. The next step after designing the course grid was developing the materials. The materials consisted of three units. The materials were developed by employing the teaching approach or model of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) which is proposed by Nunan (2004). TBLT was considered as the most proper method in developing reading and writing materials for children because learning by doing tasks would give more exposure and direct experience on the use of the language. Furthermore, there are 20 activities in Unit 1, 18 activities in both Unit 2 and Unit 3. Each unit is divided into four parts including *Get to Know*, *Let's Learn*, *Mind Your Language*, and *Let's be Creative*. The activities within each unit should be done accordingly based on the TBLT model.

The next step after developing the first draft of the materials was expert judgement or materials evaluation. The instrument used in this step was questionnaires adapted from several experts as well as *Deskripsi Butir Instrumen Penilaian Buku Guru Bahasa Inggris* by BSNP (2014). The

evaluation questionnaire provided quantitative data which were used to validate the materials and qualitative data in which the expert gave comments and suggestions used as the bases to revise the materials. The quantitative data were converted into some categories by using the data conversion proposed by Suharto (2006). The results of the expert judgement are presented below.

Table 2: Validation of the Materials

Unit	Aspects	Mean	Mean of Each Unit/Category
1	Course grid	3.5	3.27
	Content	3.11	
	General layout	3.28	
	Teacher's book	3.2	
2	Course grid	3.5	3.27
	Content	3.11	
	General layout	3.28	
	Teacher's book	3.2	
3	Course grid	3.5	3.27
	Content	3.11	
	General layout	3.28	
	Teacher's book	3.2	
Mean/Category		3.27/Very Good	

Based on the table above, the materials can be categorized as very good and considered appropriate for

children aged 9 – 11 participating in a non-formal education managed by Non-Governmental Organization. The materials are feasible with revisions. In general, the expert stated that the grammar, capitalization, and punctuation should be paid attention to. The last step of this research was revising the first draft materials based on the comments and suggestions from the expert. The revised materials were called as the final draft.

CONCLUSION

The results of the needs analysis show that the learners' goal of learning English in general is to be able to communicate in English. Furthermore, the volunteers whom were interviewed claim that the organization's goals were building learners' confidence and curiosity towards the topics formulated by the organization. Moreover, the learners were expected to know English words related to environmental issues.

Regarding the necessities, *Project Child Indonesia* needed to have reading and writing materials which were relevant with its lesson objectives. Therefore, reading and writing learning materials used for

their teaching and learning process was essential.

The next aspect is related to the learners' lacks. The learners' reading and writing ability in English were still poor. They had difficulties in pronouncing and spelling English words. Hence, the learners needed reading and writing activities which provided them with many pronouncing and spelling practices.

Lastly, in relation to the learners' wants, the results of the needs analysis showed that the organization demanded relevant reading and writing materials which were well-designed with interesting activities, pictures, and colors.

The results of the needs analysis show that most of the learners preferred inputs which were equipped with pictures because interesting pictures or illustrators could help them in understanding the texts. Furthermore, they also liked to have comic, cartoon, dialogue, or conversation as the input.

In terms of the procedure, matching activities were preferred by most of the learners for the reading activities. Moreover, they would also like to have writing short and simple words or sentences activities.

The next aspects are related to teacher's and learners' roles. Most of the learners wanted the teacher to act as an informer in which the teacher explained most of the materials. Meanwhile, as the learners, they were interested in every learning activity which was performed by the teacher. They were also willing to ask questions when the materials could not be understood well.

Lastly, in relation to the setting, most of the learners preferred to learn and work in groups in the teaching and learning process of reading and writing. In addition, they also liked to have the activities sometimes inside and outside the classroom some other times. However, the teaching and learning activities could only be done inside the classroom.

The final draft of the reading writing learning materials was considered to be appropriate for children participating in non-formal education managed by a Non-Governmental Organization. It has three units which provide 18 to 20 activities. Each unit was developed using Task-Based Language Teaching. Unit 1 covers describing things and animals as the language focus. The topic chosen is about life under the sea. In Unit 2, the topic is about eco-friendly

products, single use plastic stuffs, and reducing plastic waste and focuses on teaching about asking and accepting suggestions. The last unit focuses on teaching about expressing prohibition which has endangered ocean animals as the topic. Moreover, each unit has four main parts: *Get to Know*, *Let's Learn*, *Mind Your Language*, and *Let's be Creative*.

The first part of the unit, namely *Get to Know* which is used to introduce the topic. This part is also used to introduce some of the key vocabulary and expressions which are used to finish all the tasks of each unit. The learners will first be exposed to the main picture how to spell and pronounce some words related to the topic. All the tasks will help them in getting the idea of the materials.

The next part of the unit, *Let's Learn*, consists of two kinds of task, namely controlled practice and authentic practice. Controlled practices are used to check on learners' ability in using the vocabulary, structures, and functions of English which is related to the topic of each unit. Furthermore, this part also provides authentic inputs which are employed to expose the simulated context to the learners.

The third part of the unit focuses on providing tasks related to linguistic elements, namely *Mind Your Language*.

The learners are expected to fully understand the relationship between communicative meaning and linguistic form. There are jumbled letter activities, jumbled words activities, and many other activities related to the linguistic elements.

The last part of the unit, namely *Let's be Creative*, allows learners to apply their knowledge and skills obtained from the previous tasks. This part consists of two kinds of practice. Those are freer practice and pedagogical practice. This part aims to improvise learners' creativity and skills through a group work discussion, decision making, and poster making.

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