

DEVELOPING THEME BASED ENGLISH VOCABULARY LEARNING MATERIALS FOR KINDERGARTEN

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to develop English Vocabulary Learning Materials for Grade B learners of TK Negeri 1 Sleman. The materials were developed based on the theme used in the school and used “Dora the Explorer” animated TV series as the input texts. The materials are aimed to help instructors to introduce English to the students in TK Negeri 1 Sleman. This research is classified into Research and Development (R&D). The research subjects were the 6 instructors from LCI. This research was conducted through the following steps i.e. 1) conducting the needs analysis, (2) writing course grid, (3) writing the first draft, (4) getting expert judgment, and (5) writing the final draft. The instruments used in this research were the needs analysis questionnaire to identify their target needs and learning needs, and the expert evaluation questionnaire which was used to assess the appropriateness of the developed materials. The data from the needs analysis were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and percentage and the data obtained from the materials evaluation were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The developed materials consist of six units and thirty activities in total. Each unit consists of three parts of learning activities i.e. 'Let's Start', 'Let's study', and 'Let's Practice'. Based on the expert judgment result, the mean score of all aspects was 3.93, categorized as "Very Good". This suggests that the developed materials are appropriate to be used for the English extracurricular activity in TK Negeri 1 Sleman.

Keywords: *vocabulary learning, English materials, Kindergarten*

Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengembangkan materi pembelajaran kosa kata bahasa Inggris untuk siswa TK Negeri 1 Sleman. Materi disusun berdasarkan tema yang digunakan di sekolah dan menggunakan kartun “Dora the Explorer” sebagai inputnya. Buku materi ditujukan untuk membantu para instruktur dalam memperkenalkan bahasa Inggris kepada siswa-siswi TK Negeri 1 Sleman. Penelitian ini diklasifikasikan sebagai Penelitian dan Pengembangan. Subjek dari penelitian ini adalah para instruktur dari LCI. Langkah-langkah penelitian ini adalah sebagai berikut; (1) menganalisa kebutuhan, (2) menyusun *course grid*, (3) menulis draft pertama, (4) penilaian ahli, dan (5) menyusun draft akhir. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah angket analisa kebutuhan dan angket penilaian ahli. Data yang diperoleh dari analisa kebutuhan dianalisa secara kualitatif menggunakan frekuensi dan persentase, dan data yang diperoleh dari penilaian ahli dianalisa menggunakan deskripsi statistik. Terdapat 6 unit dan 30 kegiatan di materi yang dikembangkan

ini, Tiap unit terdiri dari tiga tahap pembelajaran yaitu 'Let's Start', 'Let's study', dan 'Let's Practice'. Berdasarkan hasil uji ahli, skor rata-rata dari semua aspek penilaian dikategorikan sebagai “sangat baik”. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa materi yang dikembangkan sesuai untuk digunakan sebagai pengenalan bahasa Inggris di TK Negeri 1 Sleman.

Kata Kunci: pembelajaran kosakata, materi Bahasa Inggris, taman kanak-kanak

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is being taught as an elective subject in some preschools. It is a good thing that children learn it since they are young. It has long been hypothesized that children learn a second language better than adults. The idea of introducing English since the very young age is also supported by parents who believe that early English learning will bring many benefits to their children in their future. Once they are able to learn a foreign language, they will develop greater language awareness. The Critical Period Hypothesis (Cameron: 2006) also states that older learners will learn language differently after this stage (before puberty), particularly for accent, can never achieve the same levels of proficiency.

Teaching English to young learners is not a simple matter. It is

different from teaching English for adults. Children are different from adults. They can get bored easily (Brewster, 2003). Teachers need to bring interesting and attractive materials and deliver the materials in communicative ways. Attractive materials and communicative ways will bring joy to the class and will easily engage students to keep learning. As it is supported by Tomlinson (2008), children's enjoyment and engagement with the materials is the important thing for them to learn.

Many schools provide English as one of the subjects being taught in their schools, but not many of them use appropriate materials in the class. Materials were mostly printed in black and white colors which made them less interesting for young learners. Many of them also lacked variety of activities and tasks. From this point, the researcher found

that there should be some modifications to the materials to make them more interesting and engaging. In some schools in Yogyakarta, based on the researcher's experiences, it was found that the instructions used in the materials were also unclear. Many materials given were also less interesting for learners. Materials used for young learners should be able to engage children to stay and pay attention to the teachers. Activities and tasks should also be described and specified in detail so it will help both students and teachers use the materials. Based on the observation in TK Negeri 1 Sleman, the development of materials was urgently needed in order to improve student's vocabulary mastery. The materials delivered in English extracurricular activity in TK Negeri 1 Sleman should follow the themes of the materials used in the school. For example, if the morning class use the theme "Buah-buahan", the English extracurricular activity instructors should teach "Fruits" to match the learning's theme used in the school.

In learning English, vocabulary mastery is the most useful and appropriate skill for young learners level. Vocabulary, as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays a great role for learners in acquiring a language (Cameron, 2001). Teaching English vocabulary for young learners has become a very essential part since vocabulary takes a really important role in learning language.

Theme takes a great role in this material development. Brown (2001) states that theme-based instruction offers an alternative in teaching learning process by designing a course around theme or topic that can increase students' interest and focus on the content chosen. The theme used in the research include the theme about "Myself", "My Family", and "My Environment". The researcher also decided to use a cartoon movie "Dora the Explorer" as the input text. Choosing "Dora the Explorer" was expected to help in improving an interesting theme for the materials and good values which students can learn. Dora shares, cares, helps, and

she is empathetic. Thus, the researcher decided to develop materials to help the instructors introduce English to Kindergarten students which match the target and learning needs of Grade B learners of TK Negeri 1 Sleman related to vocabulary learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was classified into Research and Development (R&D). This research was conducted in September 2017 to July 2018 in TK Negeri 1 Sleman. This research was conducted through the following steps i.e. 1) conducting the needs analysis, (2) writing course grid, (3) writing the first draft, (4) getting expert judgment, and (5) writing the final draft.

Two instruments were used in this research. They were questionnaires for the needs analysis and questionnaires for evaluation. As the data were collected through questionnaire, the questionnaire guidelines were made. The first guideline was made for collecting the students' needs and interest data. The questionnaire consisted of a set of

questions about the learners' target and learning needs. The second questionnaire was for getting the feedback from the expert. The expert evaluated the materials based on four criteria i.e. appropriateness of the content, appropriateness of the presentation, appropriateness of the language and appropriateness of the layout. The interview was also conducted to confirm and clarify the collected data. The respondents were the English instructors of LCI for the B Grade of TK Negeri 1 Sleman whose role is to teach English extracurricular activity to TK Negeri 1 Sleman students, specifically Grade B students. The researcher did also make observations through the teaching process she did because she is one of the instructors as well.

The data from the first questionnaire were analyzed by calculating the percentage of each answer on the questionnaire. In the second questionnaire, the researcher used descriptive statistic to analyze the data. To obtain the data, the researcher used *Likert-Scale*. The data of this second questionnaire were obtained by central tendency

measure that proposed by Suharto (2006: 52-53).

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Research findings showed that the English instructors of LCI (Learning Center Institution) needed help in introducing English to kindergarten students in TK Negeri 1 Sleman. The instructors wanted to have materials which can help them create a great teaching-learning process in introducing English vocabulary to the students. From the needs analysis it can be seen that they found difficulties in how to deliver the materials. The instructors wanted authentic materials which are more varied in the activities. Interesting activities and media were needed by them to make the students pay more attention to the learning. Pictures, songs, videos, games, and crafts are really engaging for young learners. The developed materials provide appropriate activities and media for the students. There are videos of Dora which were aimed to be used as an input to begin every unit. The length of the videos were

varied. Lots of pictures were also provided in the materials to keep the students attracted to the materials. Various games, songs, and crafts were also provided to fit the importance of interesting inputs for kindergarten students.

From the results of the needs analysis, the researcher wrote the course grid. It was used as the guideline to develop the vocabulary learning materials based on the theme used in the school and supported with Dora the Explorer as the input text. After writing the course grid, units of materials were started to be designed. The materials were focusing on the learning of vocabulary through the combination of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. But since they were designed for the English extracurricular activity in a Kindergarten school, the skills are limited to fit the young learners' characteristics. There are two 'Teacher's Routines' which could be used as cues for the instructors to open and end the class. There are three units of materials. In each unit, there are some subunits namely 'Let's

Start', 'Let's Study', and 'Let's Practice'.

Once the first draft was done, then it will be evaluated by the materials expert. The aspects that were being evaluated were the appropriateness of the content, the appropriateness of the presentation, the appropriateness of the language, and the appropriateness of the layout. Those aspects were adapted from the BSNP (*Badan Standar Nasional Penilaian*). The expert judgment gave scores to assess the materials using scale from one to four. The average scores of each unit are mentioned as follows. The average score of Unit 1.1 is 3.86. The average score of Unit 1.2 is 3.95. The average score of Unit 1.3 is 4.00. The average score of Unit 1.4 is 4.00. The average score of Unit 2 is 3.91. The average score of Unit 3 is 3.91. The final mean of all units is 3.93 which categorized as very good. It suggested that the developed materials were appropriate to be used by the LCI instructors to introduce English to the Grade B students of TK Negeri 1 Sleman. However, the expert did give some

suggestions about the writing of the objectives, the pictures used in the materials, and the activities used to deliver the materials. After the evaluation of the first draft had been done, it was revised as suggested by the expert.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusions

a) The target needs of Grade B learners of TK Negeri 1 Sleman related to vocabulary learning:

- Kindergarten students prefer songs, videos, and games as the input materials in learning English.
- The number of words to be learned by kindergarten students in every unit is 5-10 words.
- The goal of the English extracurricular activity in TK Negeri 1 Sleman is to introduce English to kindergarten students so that they are familiar with English.
- Singing, dancing, playing games, making crafts, role-playing are really perfect to be

used as activities in teaching English to young learners.

b) The learning needs of Grade B learners of TK Negeri 1 Sleman related to vocabulary learning:

- The learning of English in TK Negeri 1 Sleman is limited to the introduction to English.
- Young learners need topics which are interesting and relatable to their surroundings.
- Kindergarten students need fun and interesting activities in learning English such as singing, playing games, and making crafts.
- Kindergarten students do not necessarily know how to pronounce vocabulary accurately.
- English instructors in TK Negeri 1 Sleman need help in creating great atmosphere in class for introducing English to the students.

c) The developed materials for the English extracurricular activity in TK Negeri 1 Sleman are appropriate. It could be seen from

the evaluation score with mean of 3.93 which categorized into very good. It can be concluded that the developed materials have the following characteristics.

- a. The language focus skills match students' language development.
- b. The content of the materials are appropriate for young learners.
- c. The language, presentation, design and graphic of the materials are suitable for kindergarten students.
- d. The learning materials have components such as Let's Start, Let's Study, and Let's Practice. The materials contain activities to build knowledge and recall learner's experience of the related topics, activities to enrich students' knowledge and information of the related topics, and activities which consist of reflection about what the students have learnt from the materials. The materials do have teacher's routines which are really helpful for the instructors to create great class management.

2. Suggestions

- a) The Grade B learners of TK Negeri 1 Sleman

The developed materials are expected to help students get familiar with English so that they will be able to learn English better in their future education. Materials were developed to provide useful inputs and activities for the learners to enrich their vocabulary.

b) English teachers of TK Negeri 1 Sleman

The materials were developed based on the students' needs and interests which were expected to help the LCI instructors in introducing English to students in TK Negeri 1 Sleman or in other kindergarten schools. Teaching young learners is different from teaching adults. The materials and activities for young learners should be chosen carefully. The input given has to be able to match and help in improving the cognitive, physical, and social development of young learners. The developed materials were expected to be taken as one example of good materials to help young learners learn English better.

c) Material Developers

It is really important to be careful in choosing the appropriate materials to be used in teaching English for young learners. The inputs, activities, layouts and media have to be interesting and engaging.

d) Other Researchers

The materials were expected to give other researchers ideas and inspiration in conducting the similar research. It is important to be noted that other researchers have to be willing to improve their skills in creating qualified materials with engaging activities, media and layout. Thus, the materials would be more acceptable to use in language learning.

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