

**DEVELOPING TASK-BASED SUPPLEMENTARY ENGLISH READING
MATERIALS FOR GRADE VII STUDENTS OF
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

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Abstract: The objective of this study was to develop a set of task-based supplementary English reading materials focusing on descriptive texts for Grade VII students of Junior High School. This study was a Research and Development (R & D). The subjects were students of SMPN 8 Yogyakarta Class VII D. Questionnaires were used to obtain the data of the needs analysis and the expert judgment. The data were analyzed quantitatively. This research was conducted by following Masuhara's research design (in Tomlinson, 1998) with several modifications. The research stages were conducting needs analysis, writing a course grid, designing the first draft, getting expert judgment, and revisions. In the first stage, the questionnaire was used to gain the data of the learners' needs. In the next stage, the data gained from the needs analysis was used to write the course grid. This course grid was used as a guide in designing the first draft of the materials. Then, the first draft was evaluated and validated by the expert in the expert judgment stage. The results of the expert judgment then was used as the basis to revise the first draft which then became the final draft of the developed materials. The results of this research showed that the supplementary reading materials that they need were the materials dealing with their real life and contained the structure and function of the texts, vocabulary and grammar lesson and interesting reading activities which allowed them to interact with the teacher and other students. The product of this study was a set of task-based supplementary English reading materials for Grade VII students of Junior High School entitled "Practice in Reading". It consisted of three units. Each unit consisted of 20-25 reading activities. Based on the data from the expert judgment, the mean value of all aspects of the three developed units fell into the range of $3.25 \leq x \leq 4$. It means that the developed materials were categorized as "Very Good". Thus, it can be concluded that the task-based supplementary English reading materials fitted for Grade VII students of junior high school.

Keywords: Task-Based English Reading Materials

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Introduction

Language is presented both in spoken and written form. In the English language teaching, written language is the most important input. The spoken language typically contains little subordination. The written language, on the other hand, contains well-chosen words and well-organized structures. Nowadays, English teaching and learning in Indonesia focuses on the written language rather than the spoken language. Moreover, the new curriculum, Curriculum 2013, determined junior high school as the first place to learn English as a compulsory subject. It means that junior high school is the time for the students, as beginner, to develop their knowledge of the target language by gathering and making sense of information. It happens through reading.

Reading is assumed by several educational experts and studies to have many advantages. Harmer (2007) claims that reading is useful for language acquisition. In line with Harmer, Lu (2002) states that reading is the basis of all other skills in language learning. Hood, Solomon, and Burns (1996) mention that every aspect of life involves reading, both for enjoyment and for obtaining knowledge. Further, Pinker (2007) says that language is an instinct, but reading is not. If reading and writing were universal, no language group would have failed to develop a writing system. Then, Rivers (1981) states that 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. It is also commonly believed that reading is the window of the world. Much knowledge about the target language will be learned and gained from many sources that are read.

Therefore, materials become very important in the English teaching and learning process. When the newest materials are presented, not only the newest information, but also the world in this era will be learned by the students. Moreover, the seven grade students of Junior High School, as beginners, 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 interests. However, it is difficult to find appropriate and interesting materials. Therefore, the English teachers need to facilitate the students by providing appropriate materials, so that the learning purposes can be reached.

The use of inappropriate English materials causes bad effects toward the process of teaching and learning. Some of the learners are less motivated to learn English. Therefore, to encourage their motivation, teachers have to take more time to reconstruct the materials and tasks in order to meet the students' needs and interests, and make them understandable. When the appropriate design materials are implemented, the learners will realize that it is easy to learn English.

This phenomenon requires the teachers to design supplementary materials. It takes time and requires particular skills. However, teachers are now too busy in teaching the students and dealing with the school administrative works. Most of them are also not able to design the appropriate materials since they did not get the knowledge on how to design materials in the university. When the teachers

do not have the ability to do so, they tend to supplement the course book with the available materials sold in the market.

Another problem that recently occurs is related to the new curriculum. The new curriculum requires new materials. Nowadays, some schools that are not ready for implementing Curriculum 2013 return to KTSP or Curriculum 2006 for a while. At the same time, they have to prepare everything, including the materials, so that they will be ready for implementing the new curriculum. Yet, the English books based on Curriculum 2013 sold in the market are very limited.

Based on this situation, supplementary English reading materials for Grade VII students of Junior High School have to be developed. It is very useful to supplement the textbooks that are provided by the government. The reading materials should be developed based on the students' needs so that they are highly motivated to learn English.

Research Method

The needs analysis was conducted on November 3rd, 2015 at SMP Negeri 8 Yogyakarta, which is located on Jl. Prof. Dr. Kahari Muzakir 2, Yogyakarta. This research study involved 32 students of Class VII-D as the subjects of the research. The data of the research were in the form of the needs analysis and the expert judgment. The needs analysis was gained before the first draft of the materials was developed and the expert judgment was obtained after the first draft of the materials was developed. Based on the data collection techniques, the instruments used were in the form of questionnaires: the questionnaire for the needs analysis and the questionnaire for the expert judgment. The research procedures followed the R&D cycle proposed by Masuhara (in Tomlinson, 1998) with some modifications. The steps were conducting needs analysis, writing a course gride, designing the first draft of the product, getting expert judgment, and revision. The data from the needs analysis were analyzed quantitatively. The data gained from the needs analysis and the expert judgment were analyzed through descriptive statistic. The data from the expert judgment were calculated by using the formula proposed by Suharto (2005) whereas the comments and suggestions were used to revise the first draft to become the final product of the task-based supplementary English reading materials for Grade VII students of Junior High School.

Research Findings

The results of this research show that the students realized that it was necessary for them to comprehend the texts in order to answer all of the questions related to the texts correctly, so that they pass the exam. On the other hand, they found some difficulties in finding the generic structure of the texts, finding the function of the texts, mastering the grammar and vocabulary in the texts. Besides, they wanted to be able to communicate in English well after learning the reading materials.

In terms of input, the students could understand very short texts with pictures. They claimed that pictures gave them a clear description of the object discussed in the texts. The students also wanted the texts completed with vocabulary list. Moreover, they liked to read texts taken from the internet, magazines or newspapers.

In terms of procedures, the students liked to learn the texts through various activities, those are gap filling activities, matching activities, answering comprehension questions in the form of multiple choice and short answer questions, true/false activities, arranging jumbled words and sentences and discussion. The students prefer to find out the meaning of words in the dictionary rather than guess the synonym or the antonym of those words.

Related to the learners' role, the students wanted to complete the activities in groups. They also expected to have reading activities that allow them to interact with their friends and their English teacher.

This research findings showed that the developed task-based supplementary English reading materials for Grade VII students of Junior High School met their needs of reading materials. The mean score of all aspects in every unit which were the content, language, presentation and graphic fell into the range of $3.25 \leq x \leq 4$. It means that the developed materials were categorized as "Very Good".

Conclusions

The developed task-based supplementary English reading materials for Grade VII students of Junior High School was appropriate to be implemented as the supplementary reading materials in the teaching and learning process for Grade VII students of Junior High School. These reading materials was printed in the form of a students' book. This the final product of this research.

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