

**Designing “Good at English” as an English Conversation Book for  
Speaking Activities outside the Class for Grade VIII Students of the Junior  
High School**

**Nurin Afifah  
Drs. Suharso, M. Pd.  
Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia**

**Abstract:** The objectives of this research were: (1) to describe students’ learning needs in conversation in terms of speaking for outside class activities, and (2) to design the appropriate materials for speaking learning and teaching for outside class activities which was focused on conversation. This was a research and development (R & D) study. The subjects were Grade VIII students of SMP N 6 Yogyakarta Classes VIII-E and VIII-F that consisted of 33 male students and 35 female students. The research procedure followed the theory proposed by Jolly and Bolitho in Tomlinson (1998) with some modifications. The steps were the exploration of needs, contextual realisation, pedagogical realisation, production of the materials, evaluation of the materials, and revision of the materials. The instruments to collect the data were the needs analysis questionnaire and the expert judgment rating scale. The data from the needs analysis were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and percentage and the quantitative data obtained from the expert judgment were analyzed through descriptive statistics. Based on the results of the needs analysis, the students wanted the topics that were related to daily activities. The conversation input that students preferred was pictures/photos. The conversation book presented a lot of information and explanation. The students wanted to learn vocabulary by spelling the words correctly. The students wanted to learn pronunciation by pronouncing words, phrases, and sentences correctly. They wanted to learn grammar by practicing speaking activities by paying attention to the grammar. This study developed a conversation book for speaking for outside class activities for Grade VIII students of junior high school based on the results of the needs analysis. The book consisted of three units in which each unit consisted of subunits called preview, warm up, presentation, practice, production, record, review, and reflection. The research findings showed that the developed materials were appropriate. The mean score of the four aspects which were evaluated was 3.8. This score is in the range of  $3.25 \leq x \leq 4$ , which is categorized into “very good”.

Keywords: speaking, activities outside the class, English conversation  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Speaking is considered as the most difficult skill to learn. Researchers agree that developing English speaking ability for students in non-speaking English countries is difficult since they lack English-speaking environment. Moreover, students are not used to speaking to certain contexts. Therefore, students need speaking activities outside the class to practice their speaking skill. In order to give improvement in students’ speaking skills, they need some kind of activities that can be carried out outside the class.

Their speaking skill improvement is impeded by some prominent factors. However, the most prominent factors that influence students' skill improvement are learning materials and learning activities. There are not many materials for activities outside the class that help students to develop their speaking skill. There is not much time for students to train their speaking skills outside the class with/without teacher's guidance.

Providing the materials for speaking class based on the curriculum is important to help the English speaking teaching and learning processes, especially in helping students to improve their speaking skills outside the classroom (not during English classroom activity). By providing an English conversation book, it is expected that students get more activities outside the classroom.

### **Research Method**

This is a research and development study. Therefore, the final result of the research is a particular educational product. The subjects of the research were Grade VIII students of SMPN 6 Yogyakarta with 68 students in total. The number of female participants was 35 and that of the male participants was 33.

The research procedure in this study followed the process of materials writing proposed by Jolly and Bolitho cited in Tomlinson (1998: 98) with some modifications. The model was modified into: (1) exploration of needs, (2) contextual realization, (3) pedagogical realization, (4) production of the materials, (5) evaluation of the materials, and (6) revision of the materials. In this study, the collected data were quantitative data. The quantitative data were obtained from two questionnaires distributed by the researcher. The first questionnaire was aimed to obtain the students' needs and target needs. The second questionnaire was aimed to obtain the expert judgment to evaluate the first draft of the materials. The research used the random sampling technique to select the sample. The needs analysis questionnaire was analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The expert judgment questionnaire used the Likert-Scale questionnaire which was analyzed using descriptive analysis.

### **Findings and Discussions**

The findings showed the needs analysis of Grade VIII of junior high schools. The needs analysis data showed the six task components that are goal, topic, input, teacher role, learner role, and setting. After the data were analyzed, the context realisation and pedagogical realisation were made and analyzed. In terms of realisation, the learning materials were adjusted with the actual condition of the students. The materials were adjusted to the context of Yogyakarta where the students live in. Furthermore, the materials was designed based on the curriculum. Therefore, the course grid was designed as the guidance in the materials writing.

After writing the course grid, the materials were produced. Each unit was designed and sequenced using the same procedure. Each unit consisted of

seven subunits; those were preview, warm up, presentation, practice, record, review and reflection.

After the first draft of the materials of conversations for outside class activities was designed, an expert judgment was conducted to evaluate the appropriateness of the product. The purpose of the expert judgement was to validate the materials to be implemented in the teaching and learning process for Grade VIII students of the junior high school. The research findings showed that the designed materials were appropriate. The mean scores of the four aspects (content, language, presentation, and layout) were 3.8. This score was in the range of  $3.25 \leq 4$ , which is categorized into "very good".

### **Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions**

From the findings we found the students' learning needs in conversation. Students' goals in learning English were to be able to develop knowledge and communicate in English correctly. The topic they wanted was related to daily activities. The inputs they wanted were pictures/photos, games, a lot of information and explanations, spelling the words, pronouncing words, phrases, and sentences, paying attention to the grammar. They wanted the teacher to give explanation and encouragement. The learner role they wanted was to be active. They wanted to conduct the activities 2-3 times a week.

The result of the materials development shows that the conversation book consists of three units. The mean score of the appropriateness of the designed materials was 3.8, which fell into "very good" category. It can be said that the materials were appropriate to be implemented for speaking activities outside the class for Grade VIII students of the junior high school. This book is expected to help students to develop their speaking skill and facilitate adequate practice for students.

### **References**

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