

**Developing Task-Based Supplementary Reading Materials for the Eighth
Grade Students of Junior High Schools**

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APPROVAL SHEET

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FOR THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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Developing Task-Based Supplementary Reading Materials for the Eighth Grade Students of Junior High Schools

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Abstract: The objectives of this research were to find out the target and learning needs of the eighth grade students of Junior High Schools and to develop task-based supplementary reading materials for the eighth grade students of junior high schools. This research was concerned on providing a task-based supplementary reading material book and the teacher guidelines for the eighth grade students of junior high schools. The research was Research and Development (R & D). The subjects of the research were 31 students of the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Sleman. This research adapted the R & D model proposed by Masuhara (in Tomlinson, 1998). The steps of the research procedure were conducting needs analysis, writing the course grid, writing the first draft of the materials, conducting materials evaluation, and writing the final draft of the materials. The data collection instruments of the research were three questionnaires and an interview questions. The first questionnaire was used to obtain the data for the needs analysis. The second questionnaire was used to obtain the data from the material evaluation through expert judgment. The third questionnaire was used to obtain the data from the teacher guidelines evaluation by English teachers. Furthermore, the interview was addressed to the English teacher. The data from the questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively through descriptive statistics and the data from the interview were analyzed qualitatively. The result of the needs analysis showed that the students needed supplementary reading materials which contained various tasks and texts, grammar practice, clear pictures and coloured layout. The product of the research was entitled "Reading Zone" which was completed with teacher guidelines and answer keys. This research developed three unit materials based on task-based language teaching. Each unit had three main parts: pre-task activity, task cycle and language focus. Based on the analysis of the data from the expert judgment, the mean score of all aspect of the units was 3.09 which falls into the category of "Good". As a result, the task-based supplementary reading materials are appropriate for the eighth grade students of junior high schools.

Keywords: Supplementary Reading Materials, Task-Based Language Teaching, Junior High School

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Introduction

The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language has become increasingly important in Indonesia. It becomes one of the subjects tested in National Examination. The result of National Examination is used to decide whether a student can graduate or not. This shows that the government takes English as an important subject that students have to master. Therefore, students have to learn English well to pass the examination.

Reading is an important skill in English. By reading, students can improve their vocabulary list and get a lot of information. Reading is a basic skill which is not only important in English learning, but also in other subjects. It is very essential for students since it has many advantages for learning, pleasure, and language comprehension. By reading a lot, students get opportunity to learn vocabulary, grammar, and meaning by deriving them from context.

To improve their reading skills, junior high school students need varied reading materials. Nowadays, the students have already had English textbook to learn English at school. However, the materials are inadequate to be used as the reading learning source since the texts are not varied. They need additional or supplementary materials to assist them in learning reading so they are able to learn more materials beyond the textbook.

There are several factors that contribute to this situation. For instance, there were no sufficient materials to learn English especially reading as the provided textbook did not have varied texts. In addition, that the students did not have much interest in reading. Furthermore, the students found out that the provided books were not interesting. The tasks were not varied and did not make them feel at ease in learning

Considering those factors, the writer decided to develop supplementary reading materials for the students. The materials can be used for both teachers and students to facilitate learning so they have varied resources in learning English. It also provided independent learning for the students. The materials used task-based language teaching in which students learn reading through some tasks. The supplementary reading materials would give benefits for the students in mastering English especially reading skills.

To sum up, this research focused on developing task-based supplementary reading materials for the eighth grade students of junior high schools. The developed materials focused on a set of supplementary materials for reading skills in order to help the eighth grade students improve their reading skills. The materials can be used for teachers as additional materials in the teaching and learning process and for the students to learn reading autonomously.

Literature Review

Junior high school students are considered as teenagers. Their behaviour are between children and adults which make them have special characteristics. Brown (2000: 92) says that teens are the age of transition, confusion, self-

consciousness, growing, and changing body and mind. They search for identity and discover themselves which make them compare the differences between self and others (Scales, 2010: 62). He also states that the period of early adolescents is intense and unpredictable. They have tendency to be moody, restless, and may experience uncertain and inconsistent behaviour including anxiety, bravado, and fluctuations between superiority and inferiority.

Kellough & Kellough (2008) state that young adolescents tend to be highly curious and display a broad array of interest, though few are sustained. In addition, young adolescents are typically eager to learn about topics they find interesting and useful. They prefer active learning experiences and interactions with peers during educational activities. Related to that, teachers need to design activities which provide active participation from the students.

Reading is one of the English skills in language learning besides listening, speaking, and writing. To convey the message in the text, readers should be able to build their knowledge and combine it with information in the text that has been read. According to Nunan (2003: 68), reading is a fluent process of combining information from a text and background knowledge to build meaning. It means that readers need to activate their background knowledge in order to comprehend the message being conveyed. Reading may be considered as the process of recognizing and perceiving the written or printed materials. It is a process to understand and reconstruct the meaning.

As stated by Brassel and Rasinski (2008: 15), reading has many different features in the process that involves the eyes, the ears, the mouth, and most significantly, the brain. They also state that reading refers to the ability to comprehend or make meaning from a written text. Therefore, readers have to increase their reading ability since it can influence their way to get the meaning of a text. To sum up, reading is a process of getting the message and extracting the meaning in which the readers get the information of the text. Reading involves the readers' background knowledge to construct the meaning of the text. It is an activity which needs readers' objective which makes the information in the text can be transferred. Reading is not just an activity to read what is printed and written but also to build the meaning of the text.

Tomlinson (1998: 2) defines materials development as anything which is done by the writers, teachers, or learners to provide sources of language input and to exploit those sources in ways which are maximized to supply the information about the language in ways to design and promote language learning. Graves (2000) defines that materials development means creating, choosing or adapting, and organizing materials and activities so that the students can achieve the objectives that will help them reach the goals of the course.

Tomlinson (1998: 83) also states successful materials development should be envisaged as learning materials and the principles to follow need to show the central role that learners should play. From the statements above, it can be concluded that material development means a process of developing and producing teaching resources to support the language learning process. In addition, it can be used to provide appropriate materials which meet the goals of learning and the students' needs.

Williams and Burden (1997: 168) state that a task is any activity that learners engage in to process of learning a new language. Meanwhile, Breen (1987: 23) explains that a task is a range of learning activities from the simple exercises to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision making. Furthermore, Willis (1996: 53) stresses that a task is a goal-oriented activity in which learners use a language to achieve a real outcome. Skehan in Hismanoglu (2011) lists features of “task” as follows: (1) meaning is primary, (2) there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities, (3) task completion has some priority, and (4) the assessment of tasks is in terms of outcome.

Meanwhile, Nunan (2004: 4) states that a task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language. The attention is focused on mobilizing grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning and the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. In brief, a task is an activity which helps students to achieve the goal of language learning. According to Tomlinson (1998: 13), task-based language teaching concerns with materials or courses which are designed around a series of authentic task which give the learners experience of using the language in ways in which it is used in the real world. The aim of this approach is to make students learn a language from the tasks that need their active participation.

There were some studies that had been conducted related to learning reading using task-based supplementary reading materials for the eighth grade students of junior high schools. Wulandari (2013) proved that using task-based language teaching in reading class was effective to improve students' reading skills. The findings showed that the students' motivation increased and they could get involved actively during the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, research done by Warahita (2015) proved that supplementary reading materials could help the students learned English effectively. In addition, the developed products were beneficial for the students since there were inadequate sources to learn reading. The students felt that the materials could help them improve their reading skills as there were varied activities in the materials.

Research Methods

The research was categorized as a research and development (R&D) category since the purpose of the research was to develop a product that can be used in educational program (Borg and Gall 1983: 772). The products of the research were developed and validated through the methodological steps in the research and development study. The final result of the research was the materials developed were based on the needs analysis. Hence, the materials were expected to meet the students' needs.

The subject of the research was 31 students of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Sleman. This research adapted a model of course design procedure by Masuhara in Tomlinson (1998). The steps of this research procedure were conducting needs analysis, writing the course grid, writing the first draft of the materials, conducting materials evaluation, and writing the final draft of the supplementary reading materials.

This research collected quantitative data using a survey and qualitative data using an interview. There were three types of questionnaires used in the survey. The first questionnaire was made to obtain the data for the needs analysis, the second questionnaire was made to obtain the data about the evaluation of the materials through expert judgment and the third questionnaire was used to obtain the data about the evaluation of the teacher guidelines by English teachers. Meanwhile, the interview was addressed to the English teacher.

In analyzing the results of the first questionnaire which was distributed to the students, the researcher used frequency and percentage. The highest percentage of answers on each question represented the students' choice. The second and third questionnaires, which were given to an expert and English teachers, used 4-point Likert scale. Then, the total score of the expert judgment results were calculated and converted into descriptive analysis. Meanwhile, the interview was analyzed using qualitative data analysis.

Research Findings

There were several reading needs of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Sleman. For the target needs, the students expected that the main goals of the students in learning English were to understand the meaning of a text, improve their vocabulary mastery, use grammar correctly and know the structure of texts. The students needed to learn the language features and generic structures of different text types such as descriptive, recount and narrative texts. Furthermore, they found difficulties related to the vocabulary mastery, the grammar used in the texts, the generic structure of texts and the meaning conveyed in the texts. Since the provided materials were inadequate to learn reading, they wanted supplementary reading materials to support their learning process. They also wanted to enrich their vocabulary mastery and use the language in the daily life.

In terms of the learning needs, there were several learning needs of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Sleman. The students wanted to have reading materials which had many texts, picture stories, grammar practices and short stories. They also wanted to have materials about describing people, stories about holiday experience and fables. Furthermore, the students liked to work both individually and in pairs. Therefore, the materials were designed for the students to work not only individually but also to enable them to work in pairs. In addition, the students wanted to learn reading by reading texts and answering questions, re-arranging jumbled pictures, fill in gaps and matching. They tended to be active students by asking friends and teachers when they faced difficulty in learning English. Thus, they also read books, dictionaries or other sources to solve their problems.

Based on the needs analysis results, the writer then developed a course grid and developed the supplementary reading materials and teacher guidelines. There were three units in the materials. The first unit was entitled "*What do they look like?*" which was about descriptive texts. The second unit was entitled "*It Was a Great Holiday*" which was about recount texts. The last unit was entitled "*Long, Long Time Ago*" which was about fables. After the materials were developed, they were evaluated through expert judgment and the teacher guidelines were evaluated by English teachers.

The expert categorized the materials as “Good” as the mean score of the materials evaluation was 3.09. Meanwhile, the teacher categorized the teacher guidelines as “Very Good”. The mean score of the teacher guidelines evaluation was 3.72. However, there were some parts to be revised such as the sequence and the instruction of the tasks.

Conclusions And Recommendations

Through this research, the researcher was able to identify the reading needs of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Sleman. The developed materials were developed based on the students’ needs. The materials stressed on developing students’ skills in vocabulary, grammar and comprehending the contents of texts. Varied learning activities such as picture stories, fill in blanks and matching statements were also included. Moreover, the provided materials were designed with coloured layout, clear pictures and illustrations and clear fonts. In addition, the developed materials were completed with teacher guidelines and answer keys to assist the teachers in delivering the materials.

The developed materials were considered to be appropriate based on the result of the materials evaluation. It was drawn from the expert judgment and English teachers’ opinion. The materials covered the students’ needs such as containing the generic structure of the texts, grammar practices, vocabulary and varied tasks. The materials were also interesting for the students as they had coloured layout and involved many pictures which helped students in understanding the content of the texts.

After drawing the conclusions of the research, the researcher wanted to propose some recommendations to the following parties.

1) The Students

The students are expected to be able to use the supplementary reading materials autonomously or with the guidance of their teacher. They can also learn and discuss together with friends. They should not be hesitant to ask for guidance and help from their English teacher if they find any difficulties.

2) The English Teachers

The developed materials can be used by English teachers of the eighth grade in the teaching and learning process to teach descriptive, recount and narrative texts. In addition, the English teachers can develop supplementary reading materials which include various tasks in order to help students in understanding the meaning of a text, improving their vocabulary masteries, using grammar correctly and knowing the generic structure of texts.

3) Materials Developers

It is recommended for material developers who are interested in developing supplementary reading materials for the eighth grade of junior high school students. They can develop interesting supplementary materials that contain other text types, different activities or apply other approaches in line. They should develop supplementary reading materials that contain generic structure of the texts, vocabulary and grammar practice since the students find it difficult to comprehend those aspects. They can also focus on other skills.

4) Other Researchers

Other researchers are welcomed to improve the results of this research and develop a better materials. They can make improvement or adjustment, and do deeper research with similar or different themes. However, they need to pay attention on the picture sources since it was quite difficult to find clear and suitable pictures for the materials. They should find books or websites which provide various pictures so that they will not find any difficulties in finding suitable pictures for the materials.

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