

Designing Story-Based Materials to Improve Reading Skills for the Fourth Grade Students of Elementary Schools

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Abstract: This research is aimed at identifying the learning needs of fourth grade students of elementary schools and designing appropriate reading materials of fourth grade students of elementary school. The development of this research is based on the R&D theory by Walter Dick and Lou Careign Gall, Gall and Borg (2003:570). The development consists of six steps i.e., conducting need analysis, constructing instructional design, designing the materials, producing the materials, evaluating the materials, revising the materials, and developing final draft. The data of this study were quantitative obtained from the questionnaires and qualitative obtained from the interview. The questionnaires were distributed to the students and the expert. The quantitative data were analyzed with simple data statistics while the qualitative data were analyzed in the narrative form. The subjects of the research were 26 students in the third grade of SD Negeri Adisucipto 2 Depok Sleman Yogyakarta. The results of the research are: (1) the learning needs which consist of students preference, material and media, and activities preference; and (2) the product of the research is a story book and teachers' guide book for teaching reading to the fourth grade students of elementary schools. From the assessments and responses given by the expert judgement, it can be concluded that the story book as the product of this research is feasible to be used for teaching reading. The percentage score given by the expert is 84.56%. It classifies that the product are very good and feasible to use in teaching reading for children.

Keywords: *Story-based materials, reading skills, the fourth grade students, elementary school*

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Introduction

In the globalization era, English has an important role in the world as an international language. English is like a window of knowledge because once people acquire it, they can learn and get more information broader and wider about the world. In learning English, young learners have to deal with four basic language skills that is listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading plays a role in understanding any written texts in order to get some information from the texts. Through reading, children learn about people, places and events beyond their own experience. They are exposed to ways of life, ideas and beliefs about the world which may be different from that which surrounds them.

However, nowadays, young learners experience lack of motivation to read. This phenomenon happens in many schools in Indonesia. They find that reading an English course book is difficult. Unfortunately, the course books used to teach the students which are prepared by the school are not proficiently appropriate. Based on the observation at SDN Adisucipto 2, the course book used to learn

English is mostly black and white printed and there are too much text which, in the learning process, makes the students have assumptions that what they are about to learn is hard. Hence, they need proper materials to help them to enjoy learning to improve their reading skills. In order to improve learners' reading in such young ages, the materials should be able to encourage their interests and motivation to learn English. However, children are not able to receive complex materials because most of them have not had such ability to think elaborately like the adults do. Therefore, they need fun materials so that they can learn English with no pressure. Such materials can be found in story-based materials. The stories are motivating, challenging and fun and can help to build positive attitude. Young learners can personally get involved in the story. Stories can also build young learners' good character. Therefore, the story based reading materials can be used as materials to support English teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Based on the background of the study which has been stated above, the researcher finds some problems that influence the success of the English teaching and learning process on the fourth grade of elementary school students, particularly in reading skills. The first problem is that the students of fourth grade of elementary schools are basically lack of motivation and interest to read. The second problem is that the teachers use traditional method in teaching English. The third problem is the books provided for the fourth grade students of elementary school. The books that the students use are not appropriate for them.

This research is focused on designing story-based reading materials. The designed learning materials are expected to give contribution on the teaching and learning English reading in this Elementary School.

This research has two objectives that are (1) to identify the learning needs of the fourth grade students at Elementary Schools to learn reading; (2) to design appropriate reading materials for the fourth grade students at Elementary School. This research is expected to help the teachers of elementary schools to teach reading easily. The designed learning materials can be used in the process of English teaching and learning. The needs analysis results of this research are hoped to help materials developer and course designer to create their own material designs, and the lacks and advantages of this research are expected to be considered as inspirations for other researchers in conducting similar research.

Research Method

The development of this Story book is based on the R&D theory by Walter Dick and Lou Careign Gall, Gall and Borg (2003:570). The development consists of six steps i.e., conducting need analysis, constructing instructional design, designing the materials, producing the materials, evaluating the materials, revising the materials, and developing final draft. The data of the research were taken from fourth grade students of SDN Adisucipto 2 Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2016/2017. The researcher only used a group of the fourth grade students. There were 26 students in this grade. The age of the students varied from 9 to 10 years old. They have varied backgrounds. The research was conducted in SDN Adisucipto 2 Depok, Sleman in the fourth grade. It is located at Janti street, Maguwoharjo, Depok, Sleman, DIY. It is situated in the Adisucipto

housing complex. The school has a large area. There are six classrooms, a headmaster room, a teacher office, an IT room, a canteen and a school yard. This study applied two types of instrument to collect the data. They were observation guide and questionnaires. There were 2 sets of questionnaires used in this study. The first questionnaire was aimed at obtaining the data of the needs analysis. The second questionnaire was aimed at obtaining data of the first draft developed by the expert judgement to consider the final product.

There were six steps conducted to create Story-based reading materials as the instructional materials in this research. They were explained in the following steps. (1) In this step, the researcher made effort to get some information related to the students' and teacher's need in the reading instructional materials; (2) Here, the instructional design was formulated; (3) In this step the design of the *Story-based materials (story book)* as the reading instructional materials was made; (4) The next step was producing the materials. The researcher used some materials to create *story-based reading materials (story book)*; (5) In this steps, the materials were revised based on the analysis of the data gained in the previous step; (6) The evaluation of the materials was based on the data from the questionnaires distributed to the expert judgement.

The data and the information obtained were used to develop the materials and to identify the feasibility of the media to be used as the instructional materials. Both the qualitative and quantitative data were collected in this research. (1) The qualitative data were obtained from the interview with the teacher based on the interview guide; (2) To determine the feasibility of the media through the quantitative data, the researcher used Likerts Scale in analyzing the data. The researcher used the Likert Scale to quantify the respondents' opinion through the questionnaires. The quantitative data were obtained from the second questionnaires.

Finding and Discussions

The findings are discussed in three main parts: the learning needs, the process of designing story-based reading materials (story book), and characteristics of the story book to teach reading for children.

1. The Description of the learners' need and learning needs

The questionnaire showed the students' needs and their interest toward English. It pointed out the students' attitude toward English, their motivation in learning English (especially reading skill), the topics that they like when they are learning English, and the kinds of activities they like to do during the lesson. Those results were used as the main base in designing the Story Book at grade 4 of SD N Adisucipto 2.

1. Developing Story Book

a. Constructing Instructional Design

The instructional aspect which was developed in this part was mainly about course grid. The other aspect such as competency standards and learning objectives were presented in the teacher's guide book.

a. Designing the Materials

In this part, the stories and the pictures were selected and designed. The editing process was also done to make the pictures look more appropriate.

1. Selecting appropriate pictured stories

Pictured stories were as the important part of the materials. The chosen pictures and stories were considered as good components.

2. Designing storyboard

In designing the materials there were some concepts in placing the elements. Every story will have the same pattern of layout; cover, story, inputs and tasks.

b. Producing the Materials

There were many preparations done in the development process. The test for the product was also done before the evaluation.

c. Evaluating the Materials or Expert Judgement

After the materials were developed, the next process was the expert judgement. The expert judgement process was conducted to evaluate and validate the developed learning materials. A set of questionnaire was administered to the expert to examine, evaluate, suggest, revise and decide whether the materials were appropriate or not to be implemented. The expert is the lecturer of English Education of YSU.

(1) Materials Aspect, The result of the data was 83.33%. The data showed that the story book was very good. Thus, the materials presented in this Story Book were ready to use; (2) Instructional Aspect, which the result was 80.55%. Hence, it meant this Story Book was good; (3) Appearance Aspect, the result of the third table was 90%. It showed that the expert thought this story book was interesting; (4) Development Aspect, the result of the development aspect. The score was 84.37%. It meant that the materials development is very good.

d. Revising the Materials

Some revisions were done in order to make the materials more appropriate to be used by teachers. The revisions were based on the comments and suggestions from the expert.

e. Developing Final Draft

After the minor revisions, the final materials which are ready to use is completely done.

Conclusion

The objectives of the research are answered in the following explanation.

1. To identify the learning needs of the fourth grade students at Elementary Schools.

The learning needs of the fourth grade students of elementary schools are a fun way learning, media and materials, and an interesting teaching. In accordance to the first need of the learners, they expect a fun way, because they like to have games and work in group. They also love to make something such as crafts. Second are materials. The students are mostly interested in English, so that the materials to support a fun way learning are needed. The materials are expected to motivate their learning. The teacher can use some media such as a story book and pictorial book. Finally, the students also need an interesting teaching.

2. To design appropriate reading materials for the fourth grade students at Elementary Schools.

a. The Story Book

The cover of the Story Book is made from ivory paper. It is wrapped by glossy cover in order to keep the Story Book durable. The book uses spiral binding. The orientation of the Story Book is landscape. The Story Book contains

62 pages. The pages are divided into 3 parts: Story 1, story 2, and story 3. Each story consists of some input materials and tasks.

b. The Teachers' Guide Book

Teacher's guide book is printed in ivory paper too, but in the smaller size. The teacher's guide book consists of 39 pages including introduction, the course grid, the using of the Story Book in the classroom, the rules of conduct, and the answer keys.

3. Result

From the assessments and responses given by the expert judgement, it can be concluded that the story book as the product of this research is feasible to be used for teaching reading. The percentage score given by the expert is 84.56%. It is classified that the product is very good and feasible to use in teaching reading for children.

References

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