

DEVELOPING SUPPLEMENTARY WRITING MATERIALS FOR GRADE VIII STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 6 YOGYAKARTA

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Abstract

The aims of this research were to: 1) identify the needs of Grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 6 Yogyakarta for improving writing skills, 2) identify the characteristics of appropriate materials to improve writing skills, and 3) develop the appropriate English writing materials using the Task-Based Language Teaching approach. This was a research and development (R&D) study. The research subjects were Grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 6 Yogyakarta. The research was conducted following a modified version of Jolly and Bolitho's step (Tomlinson, 2011). The steps were conducting needs analysis, designing the course grid, developing the materials, getting expert judgment, and making revision. The research instruments were in the form of questionnaires. The two questionnaires were used for needs analysis and expert judgment. The data obtained from the needs analysis and expert judgment were analyzed quantitatively using percentages and descriptive statistics respectively. The product of this study was a textbook entitled "Easy Writing: A Supplementary Book for Writing Skills". The book was developed using Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach and it consisted of three units with a total of 51 tasks, not including a total of 6 evaluation tasks at the end of the units. The tasks were developed using the TBLT framework which includes pre-task, task cycle, planning, report, and language focus. In each unit, "Learn More" sections were also presented to give the students the needed materials to understand the topic of the unit. The book also incorporated additional items such as fun booth and reflection to add interesting points of the book. The book focused on improving writing skills and provided many inputs in the form of authentic texts which were added in several tasks. Based on the result of expert judgment, the developed materials were good with an average score of 3.79, meaning that the developed materials are considered appropriate and suitable for the students.

Keywords: supplementary materials, Task-Based Language Teaching, materials development, writing

***Pengembangan Materi Pembelajaran Tambahan Menulis Untuk Siswa Kelas VIII
SMP Negeri 6 Yogyakarta***

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk: 1) mengidentifikasi kebutuhan belajar siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 6 Yogyakarta dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis, 2) mengidentifikasi karakteristik materi pembelajaran yang sesuai untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis, 3) mengembangkan materi pembelajaran menulis berbahasa Inggris yang sesuai dengan menggunakan pendekatan Task-based Language Teaching. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian research and development (R & D). Subyek dari penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 6 Yogyakarta. Penelitian dilakukan berdasarkan tahapan penelitian oleh Jolly dan Bolitho dalam Tomlinson (2011) dengan beberapa pengubahan. Tahapan-tahapan dalam penelitian ini adalah analisis kebutuhan, perancangan course grid, pengembangan materi pembelajaran, penilaian ahli dan penulisan revisi. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian berupa kuesioner yang didistribusikan pada tahap analisis kebutuhan dan penilaian ahli. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis secara kuantitatif dalam bentuk persentase dan statistik deskriptif. Produk dari penelitian ini berupa buku ajar berjudul “Easy Writing: A Supplementary Book for Writing Skills”. Pengembangan buku ajar menggunakan pendekatan Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) dan terdiri dari tiga unit dengan total 51 tugas, belum termasuk 6 tugas evaluasi pada akhir pembelajaran dalam tiap unit. Tugas dikembangkan menggunakan kerangka dasar TBLT yang terdiri dari pre-task, task cycle, planning, report dan language focus. Sesi “Learn more” pada tiap unit menjelaskan tentang materi tambahan yang dibutuhkan dalam memahami topik pembelajaran. Buku ini juga dilengkapi dengan sesi hiburan dan refleksi untuk menambah poin menarik di dalam buku. Buku ini difokuskan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa dan menyediakan input berupa teks otentik pada tugas yang diberikan. Berdasarkan hasil penilaian ahli, buku yang dikembangkan dikategorikan baik dengan skor 3.79 yang berarti buku ini sesuai untuk digunakan oleh siswa.

Kata kunci: materi pembelajaran tambahan, Task-Based Language Teaching, pengembangan materi, menulis

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to learning English, most people concern that learning to speak English is more important than learning how to write. They eager to sound like native speakers and be understood by them. In this digital era, everyone use the written language almost every day. Text message, e-mails, blogs and social media post are just a few examples of daily written media that people use in communication. In fact, written language mastery is also important for effective communication. According to Brown (2007), writing is a process of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures; it requires special skills which all speakers cannot develop naturally. In the educational context, writing is essential as most exams use the written form of assessment such as writing an essay and a report. Thus, the knowledge of constructing structured text is needed. Harmer (2004) states that writing encourages students to focus on accurate language use. However as the EFL, Indonesian students still face some difficulties dealing with vocabulary, grammar and spelling. The complexity derives from the fact that mostly the use of writing skills outside classroom is rare (Weigle, 2002).

As a complex activity there are many elements within such as grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and the type of the text that should be learned by the students. As the necessities of learning the elements, appropriate learning materials are needed. Learning materials can be anything which teacher or learner use to increase the skills of language. The materials will provide information and experience of language use (Tomlinson, 2011). Some suggestions also come from Tomlinson about the characteristics of good learning materials such as: the materials should achieve impact, it should help learners to feel at ease and developed confidence, what is being taught should be

perceived by learners as relevant and useful, it should expose the learners to language in authentic use and provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes. Learning materials are important because they can significantly increase students' achievement by supporting students' learning. A common teacher's resource is a textbook. The textbook serves a basic source of the language input and language practice for the students. However based on preliminary observation held in SMP Negeri 6 Yogyakarta there are some problem that occur during English teaching and learning process. One of the problem was related to the materials that taken from textbook. The teacher only use a textbook that cover four macro skills of English. There are some negative effects of relying on single textbook, such as: it may contain inauthentic language, it may distort content, it may not reflect on the students' needs and it can deskills teachers (Richards, 2001).

Especially for teaching writing, the textbook used does not provide sufficient input to support students' comprehension about language features, namely tenses, kind of nouns, adverbs, adjective, and conjunction. The presented materials are not interesting enough and not appropriate for the students. Beside the materials, time limitation in writing activities is became another issue. The students need a wide range of time to develop a text. As the result, the teachers are hesitant on giving bigger portion of it in the lesson plan. Based on the problems, this research focused on developing supplementary writing materials.

Supplementary materials can be solution to the teacher for giving meaningful lesson. Supplementary materials can be define as books or other materials that can be used in addition of course book (Spratt, Pulverness & Williams., 2005). Since the development of supplementary materials are based on the students' needs and

characteristics therefore they can relate the materials with their experiences and daily life. It also facilitate the students for practicing writing through various interesting activities and challenging tasks. This research focuses on using Task-Based Language Teaching approach to developed the supplementary materials. TBLT is considered as part of the communicative language teaching method. TBLT focuses on using tasks to create interaction and then building language awareness and language development around task performance (Richards, 2006). This includes developing tasks which are encouraging the students to communicate and create outputs using the language they learn. Willis (1996) proposes a framework or sequence of activities of the TBLT in which it is divided into three main parts: pre-task, task cycle and language focus. She also mentions some various task that can be applied in the materials such as: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experience, and creative tasks. In reference to the discussion earlier, in this research, supplementary writing materials for Grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 6 Yogyakarta is developed.

RESEARCH METHOD

This was a research and development (R & D) study as the objective of conducting the research was to develop a product. The objective of conducting the research was to develop supplementary materials. The product was specified as additional writing skills materials which based on Task-Based Language Teaching method for Grade VIII students of junior high school.

The research was conducted in SMP Negeri 6 Yogyakarta on 21st and 26th of February 2018. The research subjects were 66 Grade VIII students. It was done in Grades VIII-C and VIII-D. The ages of the students ranged between 13 to 15 years old. The research procedure was adapted from Jolly and Bolitho's steps in Tomlinson (2011) with some modifications. The research started by conducting needs analysis, designing course grid, developing the first draft of the materials,

getting expert judgment and finally revising the developed materials.

The technique of this research was in the form of survey. The data collection was in the form of questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed twice to gain the desired data. The first one was the students' needs analysis. The data collected were about the students' needs, lacks and wants in English writing skill. The data were used as the guide in developing the course grid and the first draft. The second questionnaire was expert judgment. The expert judgment questionnaire was distributed right after the first draft was completed to gain evaluations and suggestions on the first draft.

The results of the needs analysis questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and percentages. The highest percentage was considered as the one representing the students' condition (lacks) and opinion (needs). Meanwhile the quantitative data obtained from the expert judgment were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The researcher used the formula proposed by Suharto (2006) whereas the comments and suggestions were used to revise the first draft to become the final product of supplementary materials.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The first step of the research procedure was conducting needs analysis. The needs analysis was conducted on the 21st and 26th of February 2018. The questionnaires were in the form of multiple choices consisting of 20 questions covering several aspects including the students' profile, necessities, lacks, wants, input, preferred topics, materials procedure, setting, and teacher's role. The questionnaire aimed to find out the target needs and the learning needs based on the principles and standards of needs analysis as proposed by Nunan (2004) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Target needs are divided into three parts, namely necessities, wants and lacks. For the necessities, most of the students needed the skills in using appropriate structure and word choice. Furthermore, in term of wants, the students wanted to be able to write a text correctly. For the lacks, the students found some difficulties while learning writing skills.

The first obstacle was related to the use of appropriate vocabulary. The second difficulty was related to the organization of paragraphs.

For the learning needs, the students preferred having pictures as the prior input in their textbook. Pictures give a brief insight within the texts. Beside the pictures, a number of texts in the form of incomplete texts and jumbled texts were chosen as the supplementary input. Regarding the length of the texts, the students wanted 100-200 words for each text. The students chose the topic about daily life therefore the input were selected based on the students' daily life. Added to this, the students were interested to learn English through authentic text, such as: notices, articles, diary, advertisement, etc.

Based on the findings, the students realized the importance of grammar explanation and vocabulary learning prior to writing. There are two kinds of grammar-learning activities that were preferred by the students which were grammar test and imitation. Then, in term of vocabulary learning the students chose matching words into appropriate meanings and arranging jumble words as their favorite activities. For the setting, the students preferred both individual and paired in carrying out the tasks. They also believed that having discussions with the teacher during teaching and learning process can give big impact for the learning result.

The resulting product of this research is a textbook entitled "Easy Writing: A Supplementary Book for English Writing Skills". The book has three units. Unit 1 entitled "What Did You Do Yesterday?", Unit 2 entitled "My Unforgettable Experience", and Unit 3 entitled "Can I Have Your Attention?". Every unit represented the basic competence which is required to be learned by the students: core competences 4.10, 4.11.2, and 4.12.2. Each unit employed certain theme which was different from each other and functioned as a way to correlate different tasks in the unit. There were a total of 51 tasks which were developed and organized based on the TBLT framework proposed by Willis (1996). The approach incorporates three stages namely pre-task, task cycle (task, planning, and report) and language focus. Later in the book the parts were known as *Pre-task*, *Let's Start*, *Let's*

Focus and *Let's Write*. *Pre-task* in the stage of warming up (pre-task). The activities in the pre-task was designed as the warming up activities to introduce the students to the materials. The second section of the materials was *Let's Start* in the stage of task. In task stage, the activities were designed to expose the students with as much information as possible with enough examples of the texts. The third section, entitled *Let's Focus*, represented the planning stage. In the planning stage, the activities were designed to engage the students in writing texts and preparing them before advancing to the next phase. The fourth section, entitled *Let's Write*, represented the report stage. In report stage, the activities were designed to direct the students to create works of writing which can be presented to the class. The book featured "Learn More" section which gave the students information for them to learn. The "Learn More" sections were available in each unit and were divided into several parts based on the topics. It gave information about the details, the structures, and the language features of the texts. By studying the materials, the students should be able to do the tasks in the textbook. At the end of each unit, there were evaluation sections. The evaluation section functioned to evaluate the students' comprehension of the materials. By pushing the students to write freely using certain instructions, the evaluation section was the final step of the students' learning of writing skills in that particular unit. Teacher could evaluate how the students fare and what improvements could be made from that.

Fun Booth section was added in each unit, giving the students some games that they can do after doing the tasks in the unit. The games were intended to be fun for the students, yet still gives some learning value to them. Other interesting things were also distributed throughout the textbook, such as fun facts, quotes, and riddles. Adding trivial things to the textbook was expected to add interesting points of the book, something that most books were lack of according to the students.

After each unit the students were asked to reflect on what they had gone through. The reflection section allowed the students to give opinion and commentary on the unit. This section also allowed the students to self-

evaluate their English skills. It encouraged the students to know what they were lack of and what they were good at without teacher's evaluation. Knowing one's weaknesses is important for students in learning how to cope with them.

As the first draft of materials were finished, the next step was the evaluation of the product. The developed materials were evaluated and validated by an expert. A set of questionnaire was distributed to the expert. The questionnaire items were adapted and designed following the guidelines from BSNP. It evaluated the appropriateness of the content, language, presentation and layout. The result of the expert judgment was used for further revisions of the materials. There are several key aspects which was revised in the materials such as revising grammatical errors and typos, adding more input materials, activities, and layout and design improvements. Three additional tasks, one additional evaluation, and one additional model text were added as suggested by the expert. Based on the questionnaire, the materials scores were 3.64, 3.93, and 3.80 for Unit 1, 2, and 3 respectively. The mean of all units were 3.79, which placed within "Very Good" range.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, basically most of the students had interest on enhancing their writing skills in the classroom. However, most of them still consider that writing is difficult to learn. There are several difficulties that they have to face such as how to use proper vocabularies and organizing paragraphs properly. Moreover, the students also claimed that the books they currently use to learn English in class were not interesting enough for them to read and use, let alone improving their writing skills.

To gain students' attention in learning English, there has to be books that suit their preferences. For that, based on the research findings, the students stated the characteristics of good materials, in this case the material is in the form of a supplementary book. In term of learning input, the students want books which topics related to their daily life that they can relate to and are more likely to use the

materials in real life. The students also want the inputs to be delivered with text samples and illustrations that also relate to the topics of daily life, preferably texts that are not too long for them. Improving writing does require students to be able to read, but giving them texts that are too long by the students' standard might results in increased difficulties in learning writing. Addition of pictures were also important. The students prefer more pictures to be implemented in the book so the book does not end up boring or lame. This aspect makes much sense since students in the age range of 13 to 15 years old, which is the age range of junior high school students, tend to be attracted to pictures that spark their interest on the materials. The pictures may be included in for aesthetic and functional purposes. Books with joyful colors in the layout and design will do better than books with very few to no pictures.

Adding as many authentic materials as possible is also important such as notice, diary, etc. The needs analysis results show that the students are interested with the use of authentic materials in the book. The students also want books which includes explanations on the grammar and vocabularies that they are learning, for example grammar test and imitation exercises. Task-based Language Teaching focuses on the implementation of tasks in learning and also focuses on the students' learning process. Choosing proper tasks in developing textbook using TBLT approach is the key to gain the desired results and effects on the students. In the needs analysis, the researcher asked the students about the type tasks that they prefer to appear in the textbook. The majority of the students prefer arranging words/sentences/paragraphs, and matching as their most favored task to do.

Based on the needs analysis result, the writer then developed a course grid and the first draft of the materials. There were three units in the first draft of the materials. Unit 1 entitled "*What Did You Do Yesterday?*" focused on the use of the simple past tense and the past continuous tense. Unit 2 entitled "*My Unforgettable Experience*", focused on the recount texts. Unit 3 was entitled "*Can I Have Your Attention?*" The unit focused on the short messages and the notices.

The materials were then developed as the first draft of the materials. The first draft is the researcher's vision of what suitable materials should be. However, taking advices, evaluations, and suggestions is essential to spot the errors and mistakes that were made. This is where expert judgment became the crucial aspect in the materials development. This textbook were evaluated by the expert in materials development and were revised based on the suggestions and corrections. The textbook was considered as appropriate, the materials score 3.79 in the expert judgment questionnaire and showed that it is applicable and suitable to be used by students.

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