

Developing Writing Materials for the Students of the Eighth Grade of SMP N 3 Tempel

Ari Putri Haryanti
Siti Sudartini, M.A.

English Education Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts,
State University of Yogyakarta

Abstract: The objectives of this study were: (1) to identify the learners' needs for eighth grade students of SMP N 3 Tempel, (2) to develop appropriate materials for eighth grade students of SMP N 3 Tempel. This was a Research and Development (R&D) study. The subjects of the study were the students of eighth grade of SMP N 3 Tempel. The research procedures, adapted from Jolly and Bolitho's model in Tomlinson (1998) with some modifications, consisted of conducting the need analysis, writing the course grid, developing the first draft, getting expert judgment and evaluating the first draft, also revising the first draft of the materials. The instruments to collect the data were a need analysis questionnaire and an expert judgment questionnaire. The data from the need analysis were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and percentage, then the results were used to develop the course grid. The data from the expert judgment were analyzed quantitatively through descriptive statistics while the suggestions were used to revise the first draft of the materials. The product of this study was a set of writing materials entitled "Guide for Writing" for students of eighth grade of SMP N 3 Tempel. The writing materials consisted of three units, "My Best Friend", "My Unforgettable Experience", and "My Favorite Story". Each unit consisted of Pre-writing, Drafting, Responding, and Editing tasks ranging from 15-17 tasks. Based on the research findings from the expert judgment, the whole aspects of the developed materials were 3.62 which was in the range of $3.25 < x \leq 4$ and could be categorized as "very good".

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk: (1) menemukan target dan kebutuhan belajar siswa kelas VIII di SMP N 12 Magelang dan (2) mengembangkan materi yang sesuai untuk siswa kelas VIII di SMP N 12 Magelang. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian dan pengembangan (R & D). Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIII di SMP N 3 Tempel. Penelitian ini mengikuti langkah-langkah dari Jolly dan Bolitho dalam Tomlinson (1998) dengan beberapa modifikasi. Langkah-langkah tersebut adalah melakukan analisis kebutuhan, mengembangkan *course grid*, menyusun draf awal materi, evaluasi materi oleh para ahli, dan merevisi materi berdasarkan saran hasil dari evaluasi. Instrumen penelitian adalah kuesioner untuk analisis kebutuhan dan evaluasi materi. Data dari analisis kebutuhan dianalisis secara kuantitatif menggunakan frekuensi dan persentase dan data dari evaluasi materi dianalisis melalui statistik deskriptif sedangkan saran dari para ahli digunakan untuk merevisi draf awal materi. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah seperangkat materi pembelajaran menulis berjudul "Guide for Writing" untuk siswa kelas VIII di SMP N 3 Tempel. Materi ini terdiri dari tiga unit yaitu, "My Best Friend", "My Unforgettable Experience", dan "My Favorite Story". Setiap unit terdiri dari empat langkah, yaitu *Pre-writing*, *Drafting*, *Responding*, dan

Editing dengan 15-17 aktifitas untuk setiap unitnya. Berdasarkan analisis data dari penilaian ahli, materi menulis yang dikembangkan, tepat dalam hal isi, bahasa, penyajian, dan tata letak. Rata-rata semua aspek adalah 3,62 yang terdapat dalam $3,25 < x \leq 4$ dan dapat dikategorikan sebagai "sangat baik."

=====

INTRODUCTION

Communication is not only created by spoken language but also written language. Nowadays, writing skill has an important role. In the modern era, we use the written communication almost every day. Text messages, emails, blogs, social media posts are some examples of using written language that are often used in daily activities.

Writing as a communication device is not only the reason why writing is important to learn. Raimes (1983: 3) proposes the most important reason writing helps students learn. Why writing is important. He mentions some reasons. First, writing reinforces student's grammatical structure, idioms and vocabulary. Second, when students write, they have a chance to express what they have already learnt. Third, students become involve in a new language when they are writing. They will discover something new to write or a new way to express their ideas.

Among the four skills of learning English, writing is considered the most difficult skill to learn because students have to put their own ideas, develop their ideas, how to arrange their ideas into good sentences, how to make their writing cohesion and coherence, etc. Bell and Burnaby in Nunan (1989: 36) state that writing is considered as a complex activity because writers have to control the content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation.

Materials are one of the aspects to improve students' writing ability. The use of suitable materials will help students to learn writing in a good way. In the teaching-learning process, teachers have to develop the appropriate materials for students to encourage them to improve their ability in writing. However, the use of materials in the classroom is not interesting for students. Students feel bored to do the assignments because it only answers the questions from the texts. It does not give students a motivation to write. Therefore it is necessary for the teacher to design interesting materials. Materials are useful to make students easier to catch the subject.

However, students' writing competence is relatively low. Based on the researcher's observation on the practice of teaching in SMP N 3 Tempel, students of the eighth grade of SMP N 3 Tempel had some problems related to their writing skill. First, students got problems in developing their ideas in writing a text. They felt confused to start writing and in the middle of writing they did not know what they had to do to continue it. Second, they found difficulties in choosing the words that were suitable for their writing because they lacked of vocabulary. The other problem was the use of grammar. They felt confused dealing with the use of grammar. They were not able to make a text using correct

sentences. They still had some mistakes using the grammar. In arranging sentences, they still made some mistakes in the use of punctuation, spelling and capitalization.

In Indonesia, English is the foreign language that is first taught in the junior high school level. In the eighth grade, students have many activities in writing some types of text. The basic competences of writing texts which should be mastered by eighth grade students are the implementation of social functions, text structures and language features in writing descriptive text, narrative text and recount text.

Therefore, it was necessary to provide suitable and interesting materials for students of the eighth grade of SMP N 3 Tempel to encourage the students to practice writing which will be useful. For the reasons above, the researcher is interested in developing writing materials for students of the eighth grade of SMP N 3 Tempel.

Literature Review

One of productive skills in English teaching-learning process is writing. There are some definitions of writing according to some experts.

Brown (2001: 335) assumes that written language is like spoken language; the difference between them is in graphics instead of auditory signals. Written language is called the graphic representation of spoken language. Solokik (2003) states three definitions of writing. First, writing is the physical and mental act. Writing is the physical act because of the activities, whether writing or typing ideas. Furthermore, writing is the mental act because the activities of writing are to develop ideas and to arrange them into sentences that the reader can catch easily. Second, the purpose of writing is how to express ideas from the writer and impress the reader. Third, writing is a process and product. Hibbard and Wagner (2013: 56) define writing as a process of learning through constructing complete thoughts on the paper. Writing is the process of the thinking about what is read and then translate it into the process of writing.

In conclusion, writing is one of the productive skills. Writing is an act in the graphic signal language to express the ideas into sentences to inform the readers.

In terms of writing, it does not only consider the product but also the process of writing. Ron White and Valerie Arndt in Harmer (2001: 256) state that there are some stages of the process of writing, they are:

- 1) Drafting
- 2) Structuring
- 3) Reviewing
- 4) Focusing
- 5) Generating ideas and Evaluation

Hedge in McDonough and Shaw (2003:163) suggests the stages of writing are:

- 1) Getting ideas together
- 2) Planning and outlining
- 3) Making notes
- 4) Making a first draft
- 5) Revising, redrafting
- 6) Editing

They are in line with Byrne's steps (in McDonough and Shaw, 2003), i.e. :

- 1) Listing ideas
- 2) Making an outline
- 3) Writing a draft
- 4) Correcting and improving the draft
- 5) Writing the final version

Following Hedge's steps, they can be reduced into three steps for teaching purposes, as follows:

- 1) Pre-writing
- 2) Drafting and redrafting
- 3) Editing the pre-final version

Seow in Richards and Renandya (2002: 316-319) explains the six steps in writing process:

- 1) Planning (Pre-writing)

Pre-writing is activities to encourage students to get ideas before starting writing. There are some activities that the teacher can do to stimulate students to get ideas or information. They are

- Group brainstorming

Students are divided into some groups to give a piece of their mind about the topic with their group members. There are no correct or wrong answers in this activity.

- Clustering

The teacher gives stimulus to students. Then, they form words related to the stimulus. It helps students know what they have to say.

- Rapid Free Writing

In one or two minutes, the teacher gives students time to write about a certain topic. The students know what they want to write and they can write it rapidly.

- WH-Question

Students generate *who*, *why*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *how* questions about a topic.

- Others

The teacher can give other sources such as printed materials, videos, or films to motivate students in writing.

- 2) Drafting

In this stage, students only focus on the fluency of writing and they are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft. A good writer has to understand the readers, and how to visualize their writing well.

3) Responding

After drafting a text, students can get responds from the teacher or peers. It is the important role to make the implementation of writing process successful. Responding to the draft can be oral or written. The false response occurred when the teacher gave it in the final stage; however it did not give any guidance for students.

4) Revising

After responding stage, students revise their text based on the feedback given. It is used for checking the communication between both the writer and the reader whether the readers understand the meaning of the text or not. Revising is not only checking the language error but also the language use in the text whether the written texts are already clear enough to the reader, and the content and the organization of ideas do not propose ambiguity.

5) Editing

In this stage, students are engaged in tidying up their text before evaluated by the teacher. Students correct their grammar, punctuation, diction, sentence structure, and accuracy of the text.

6) Evaluating

The teacher evaluates students' work. The scoring of writing can be analytical or holistic. The criteria of evaluating should be known before. The criteria should include overall interpretation of the task, the sense of audience, the relevance, the development, and the organization of ideas, the layout, the grammatical system, the spelling and punctuation, the range and appropriateness of vocabularies, and the clarity of communication.

There are some definitions of materials development. Graves (1993:149) defines material development is the planning process of creating units and lessons to achieve the goal and objective of the study. It also can be defined as the process of creating, choosing or adapting, and organizing materials and activities until the students can achieve the objective to help them in reaching the goals of the courses. Tomlinson (1998: 2) states materials development refers to anything to provide sources of language input and to exploit those sources in ways which maximize the likelihood of intake. In developing materials, there are some steps that should be followed. Jolly and Bolitho in Tomlinson (1998: 98) propose some steps that should be followed in developing writing materials. Those are:

a. Identification of need for materials

The first step is identification of need for materials. In this step, materials developers identify a need to fulfill or problem to solve.

b. Exploration of need

The second step is exploration of needs. The material developers need to explore the area of needs or problems in term of the appropriateness of the language and function.

c. Contextual realisation of materials

The third step is contextual realisation of materials. The contextual realisation involves the suitable ideas, contexts and text.

d. Pedagogical realisation of materials

The fourth step is pedagogical realisation of materials. The pedagogical realisation involves the appropriateness of the exercises and activities and the appropriateness of the instruction.

e. Production of materials

The fifth step is production of materials. The physical production of the materials is designed in the form of the book including the layout, type size, and cover.

f. Student use of materials

The sixth step is student use of materials. In this step, the materials developers can use the developed materials in the classroom. It can be followed by the completion of worksheet at home and checking it in the next class.

g. Evaluations of materials

The last step is evaluation of materials. Students can give comments and report difficulties regarding the worksheet.

Research Method

The objective of this research was to develop writing materials for the students of the eighth grade of SMP N 3 Tempel. This research developed a type of materials based on the needs analysis to meet learners' needs. This research was categorized as an Educational Research and Development (R&D). Gall, Gall and Borg (2003: 569) state that "Educational R&D is an industry-based development model in which the findings of research are used to design new products and procedures, which systematically field-tested, evaluated, and refined to meet the specified criteria of effectiveness, quality or similar standards". The result of this study was writing materials for students of eighth grade of SMP N 3 Tempel.

The research subject were 88 students of the eighth grade of SMP N 3 Tempel. The procedures of this research were adapted from Jolly and Bolitho (in Tomlinson, 1998). The steps of the research were: (1) conducting needs analysis, (2) writing the course grid, (3) writing the first draft of the materials, (4) getting the expert judgment, (5) revising the first draft of the materials.

In this research, there were two steps which were implemented. Those were the students' needs analysis and the expert judgment. The first step, the students' needs analysis, was conducted before the first draft of the writing materials was developed. The data were the target needs and the learning needs collected by distributing questionnaires for students. The second was the expert judgment conducting after developing the first draft. The data were conducted to evaluate the appropriateness of the materials.

Research Finding

In terms of the target need, there are three aspects: necessities, wants and lacks. For necessities, the skill that the students' need in writing a text was using the suitable structure organization and words choice. For wants, the students wanted to increase their ability in writing English from these materials developed. For lacks, the difficulties faced by the students were related the use of grammar, the second of the difficulties faced by the students was related to the structure of the sentences and the third was how to express their own ideas.

Meanwhile, there were five aspects in term of learning needs, they were input, procedure, setting, teacher role and learning role. Regarding to writing input, most of the students wanted the topic of the materials related to daily life. Students wanted the input of the materials in the form of pictures. Regarding to the input length, students wanted to have input texts with 100-200 words in length. Students also stated that the comprehension of grammar and text type was important. In term of writing procedure, most of students preferred to give procedure by given a certain topic. For setting, students wanted to do tasks individually.

There were two roles in the teaching and learning process, those were learner's role and teacher's role. For learner's role, students preferred to do writing activity by discussion. For teacher' role, most of the students liked if the teacher explains the materials during the teaching and learning process. When students have difficulties in writing activity, students liked if the teacher explain the materials again. After writing activity, students wanted the teacher give them corrections and provides signs on the students' mistakes.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the expert judgment, the developed materials can be categorized as appropriate. The developed materials have the characteristics as described in this following paragraph.

The first part of this unit is picture about the topic of the unit. The title of the unit is related to students' life, those are My Best Friend, My Unforgettable Experience and My Favorite Story. Then it is followed by some questions related to the topic. The main part of this unit is divided into four stages. The first is Pre-Writing. The activities were designed to build students' background knowledge. Students are introduced to the genre of the text in each unit. Students are also given some activities to have comprehension about the generic structure of the text and the grammar used of the text. The second is Drafting. In this stage, students have to implement what they learnt in the previous to write their first draft of the text. The third is Responding. These activities are designed to make the students' write

better. In this stage, students' writing gets a feedback from the teacher or peers. The last stage is Editing. In this activity, students write their text after getting feedback from the teacher and peers. The last part of this unit is complement. It includes reflection, the summary of each unit and my dictionary

Based on the findings of the research, there are some suggestions for some parties. The suggestions are presented as follows.

a. The English Teachers

The English teachers of eighth grade of junior high school who teach English could use the developed materials in the teaching learning process. These developed materials could improve the students' writing skill. The teacher could use the developed materials to teach the students about descriptive text, recount text and narrative text.

b. The Other Material Developers

The most important thing in developing materials is conducting students' needs analysis. The product of the research should provide students' needs and interest. The developed materials are very useful for the teachers and the students in the teaching learning process if they are easily used. The next thing that should be considered by the developers is the design of the materials. The design of the materials should be eye-catching and interesting for the students.

Reference

- Brown, H D. 2001. *Teaching by Principles An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy (2Ed)*. San Fransisco: Longman.
- Gall, M D.,Gall, J P., and Borg, Walter R. 2003. *Educational Research An Introduction(7Ed)*. New York: Pearson.
- Graves, K. 2000. *Designing Language Courses: A Guide for Teachers*. Canada: Heinle & Heinle Publisher.
- Harmer, J. 2001. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Essex: Longman.
- Hibbard, K. & Wagner, E. A. *Assessing and Teaching Reading Comprehension*. New York: Routledge
- McDonough, J. and Shaw, C. 2003. *Materials and Method in ELT*. New York: Backwell Publishing.
- Nunan, D. 1989. *Designing Task for the Communicative Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Pers.
- Raimes, Ann. 1983. *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Pres.
- Richards, C J. & Renandya, A W. 2002. *Methodology in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Pers.

Sokolik, M., Nunan, D (Ed). 2003. *Practical English Language Teaching*. Singapore: McGrawHill.

Tomlinson, B. 1998. *Materials Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Pers.