

**DEVELOPING READING MATERIALS FOR JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS BASED ON CONTENT AREA**

AN ARTICLE

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ARTIKEL

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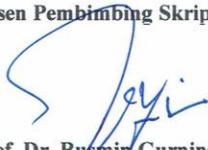
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**DEVELOPING READING MATERIALS FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS BASED ON CONTENT AREA**

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ABSTRACT

Lubis, Anggita Kasanra. Registration Number: 2123121002. Developing Reading Materials for Junior High School Students Based on Content Area. A Thesis. English Educational Program, State University of Medan, 2016.

Reading is the basic in learning every subject. The more understanding the text, the more information students can gain. However, the reading materials that the students use is not appropriate based on syllabus. Therefore, the reading materials should be developed to fulfil the syllabus and the students' needs also. Because English is included Content Area Reading, so the development of reading materials is based on content area which focus on strengthen the vocabularies, specifically the unfamiliar ones, by giving glossary and related pictures. The developed text is only focus in the first semester which is descriptive and recount text. The research was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan. The data was taken from interviewing the English teacher and distributing questionnaires for 30 students in grade VIII-4. The data showed that students need materials which is related to their environment and constructed by familiar vocabularies. Based on the result of the study, conclusion and suggestion are directed to the English teacher who is teaching in that school to provide reading materials based on syllabus and students' needs regularly.

Keywords: Developing, Reading Materials, Content Area

*Graduate Status

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Reading is an interaction between writer and readers and the goal of reading is comprehension. But, reading can be challenging, particularly when the material is unfamiliar, technical, or complex. That is why for some readers, comprehension is always challenging. They may understand each word separately, but linking them together into meaningful ideas often doesn't happen, as it should. Academically, the source of reading is a textbook. English textbook is included content area reading. Content area reading is a text which discusses specific content that is why each content area has its own language or vocabulary. This kind of textbook is called as inconsiderate textbook which means difficult to read or understand. This is the reason why reading and comprehension are difficult things. Therefore, the materials should be developed based on content area to help students understand the text easier. The criterion of materials based on content area such as word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension and study skills. After the students can recognize the words or the term, then they can understand the meaning by using a system namely vocabulary. When the students understand the meaning, they do a comprehension. In comprehending the text, the students require dictionary to finish it, this is called as study skills.

Considering the fact above, there is still a textbook which is difficult to understand. Based on the preliminary data at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan on Friday, 24th June 2016, it can be seen that the reading materials for the first semester is about descriptive and recount text. There are four texts, which

descriptive is two texts and so does recount. From the observation had been done, it showed that the reading materials did not have clear text structure as descriptive text and familiar words which constructed the text.

Considering the reality above, the development of reading text based on content area to help students understand the text better is needed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reading is a fundamental skill in learning every subject. But, when reading become a difficult thing to do then a comprehension will be impossible. Reading comprehension is an activity which means constructing meaning from a text. A good reader has a strategy in comprehending a text. The strategy is like determining the point of the text, summarizing the information, connecting with the background knowledge and questioning. For junior high school students who are included as young readers, an attractive text is needed to catch their interests. To provide a reading text which can fulfil the students' needs and acquired easily by the students, the teachers have to focus on the students' needs and the characteristics of content area reading. When a content area reading already fulfilled all criteria of materials based on content area, the more helpful the students in understanding the reading texts.

Content area reading is a reading which discuss specific content and has own language. Content area reading in English is like literature textbook which concerns about characterizing, plot, grammar and theme. But there are still difficulties in understanding content area textbook such as different background

knowledge, inconsiderate textbook which is difficult to understand or learn from, students' experiences in reading content area textbook.

There are four basic areas to concern in helping students to read and understand content area textbooks; they are word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension, and study skills. These areas are supported each other.

Therefore, criterion of reading materials based on content area as a parameter in developing reading materials for junior high school which then being considered with the students' needs. The reading materials will be developed based on content area and by using the development test theory adopted from Borg and Gall theory due to its aim that is to analyze then develop the reading materials provided in the textbook.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

Methodology

This research was conducted based on educational research and development (R & D). R & D is one of research designs aimed at developing and validating educational products, like curriculum, syllabus, textbooks, instructional media, modules, assessment instrument, etc. (Borg & Gall, 2003). This study aimed at developing reading materials for grade VIII at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan which provided in textbook entitled **Interactive English 2 for Junior High School Grade VIII** published by Yudhistira by firstly analyzing the materials and finally developing them based on criterion of reading materials based on content area.

This research was applied in 6 phases; they are 1) Gathering information and data, 2) Analyzing data, 3) Designing materials, 4) Validating new materials by experts, 5) Revising materials based on experts' suggestion, 6) Revised-developing reading materials (final product). The result of this research was explained based on the procedure of the research.

Techniques of Analyzing the Data

The techniques in analyzing the data are stages as follows:

1. Gathering information about the existing reading materials in textbook that was used by students by using observation and the students' hardship in reading by interviewing the teacher. And collecting related or supplementary documents such as syllabus, lesson plan to know the reading material that will be learnt.
2. Analyzing and adjusting the reading materials to the syllabus through documents observation.
3. Designing and developing the reading materials. This stage was meant to develop the reading materials based on the criterion of content area reading.

Findings

The existing materials in the textbook were four texts which are descriptive and recount texts. The textbook entitled **Interactive English 2 for Junior High School Grade VIII** published by Yudhistira which is used by students at SMP

Muhammadiyah 7 Medan. The observation was conducted in order to get the data. The existing materials were further analyzed based on students' needs and criterion content area reading. Actually, the students loved to learn English although their proficiency was still basic. But, the students feel reluctant to understand the text just by seeing the title which discuss uninterested topic. And also the text was not provided with glossary or vocabulary list which will help students acquire the text whereas the learning needs will not happen if the students and the text cannot be bond. The existing material about animal can be seen below.

The Life of Endangered Animals

Humans have control over much that happens on our planet. The world of animals undisturbed by human contact is quickly shrinking.

Many wild animals are affected by the world of humans. Many animals are killed because humans want to use a part of the animal for some specific purposes. Luckily, there are some organizations trying to protect animals which are endangered by contact with the human world.

The orang-utan of Indonesia is one species of primate which wildlife groups want to protect. Orang-utans live high in the forest treetops for much of their lives. When companies began widespread logging in the forests where orang-utans live, many orang-utans lost their homes or were killed.

From the explanation above, reading materials should be developed based on criterion of content area reading. There were four reading materials which had been developed. Two descriptive texts which discuss about animal (Orang-utan) and plants (Pitcher Plant/Kantong Semar). And two recount texts about someone's last holiday and Andy's diary.

The new materials were developed by adopting and adapting from the existing materials. The existing materials provided the text which is constructed by unfamiliar vocabularies and unclear text structure only with a picture and some exercises. Meanwhile, the recommended materials provided such as:

- The illustrations or related pictures which can attract the students' interest in reading,
- The glossary or vocabulary list which have specific words and meaning, the phonetic symbol to help the students pronounce the words, and the word class.
- The additional exercises to measure the students' comprehension about new materials. The exercises are various such as True/false exercise, Yes/No question and cross words puzzle.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

After gathering the data and analyzing them from syllabus, lesson plan and textbook, the conclusion drawn is the existing materials were not in line with syllabus and lesson plan which demanded the materials related to the students' environment. And because English is included content area reading which uses technical vocabularies, most of them are odd for the students. Therefore, the reading materials developed based on content area which focused on strengthen the vocabularies by giving glossary or related picture. The recommended reading materials were then validated by two experts who are English lectures, Prof.

Amrin Saragih, M.A., Ph. D and Dr. Anni Holila Pulungan, M. Hum. The recommended materials are based on their English proficiency which is for Junior High School students in grade VIII.

Suggestion

In relation to the conclusion above, the writer suggested the institution, English teachers and other researchers.

For the institution, they should find the books which proper to the students' proficiency. The number of references of English reading materials had to be increased to ease the students learning English. Institution also should consider the syllabus when choosing textbook for school. Institution should choose textbook which agree with the syllabus from government.

For teacher, he or she should regularly analyze the students' needs and proficiency to choose the most appropriate and best materials for students. The learning process can be successful if the reading materials were useful for the students' daily life and learning environment. And appropriate materials can motivate students to gain their achievements.

Last is for other researcher, those should find many references to support in developing reading materials. The open questions of questionnaire should be considered to give the students' chance to express their wants in new reading materials.

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