DEVELOPING EXTENSIVE READING CARDS FOR THE SEVENTH GRADERS

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ABSTRACT: This study intends to develop extensive reading cards for the seventh graders. It adapts Borg and Gall’s model (1983) with several modifications. The product of this study is a set of extensive reading materials consisting of six descriptive and six procedure texts. The material was validated and tried-out to the seventh graders of SMPN 13 Malang. The results shows that the product has successfully suited to the students’ needs.

Keywords: development, extensive reading cards, the seventh graders

Reading is an activity that can add someone’s knowledge and vocabulary. Reading is an essential tool for lifelong learning. It enables students to get the information from English texts. Therefore, it is important for everyone to develop the fundamentals of reading as well as the culture of reading. Reading is one of the skills that foreign language learners should acquire. The mastery of reading skills in English is a priority for many foreign language learners. While reading, it is important that students have through understanding about the definition of reading skill.

Traditionally, reading has been classified into two types which are intensive and extensive reading. In broader terms, intensive reading may be described as the practice of particular reading skills and the close linguistic study of the text. Brown (1989) also explains intensive reading as calling attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationships, and the like. Extensive reading involves a learner to read a large quantity of materials which is within or quite often below their linguistic or comprehension level and his done for pleasure. According to Day and Bamford (2002:139), for extensive reading to be possible and to have the desired results, texts must be well within the learners' reading competence in the foreign language. It is important that learners read regularly and cover a large quantity of material.

By having the discussion on the differences of intensive and extensive reading, the existence of reading materials should be developed to provide extra materials for reading activity. Considering the importance of reading material, materials development is now not only undertaken by practitioners but also academician. According to Tomlinson (1998), material development refers to all the processes made use by practitioners who produce and/or use materials in language learning, including materials evaluation, their adaptation, design, production, exploitation and research.
Material development also has several advantages, they are; contextualization, individual needs, and timeliness. The reasons are the materials development should be suited to a particular learning environment and to the students’ needs, and provide up-to-date topics of reading text. The result of the preliminary study on the seventh graders of SMPN 13 Malang shows that the students’ reading interest was low. This was due to some factors, such as the limited class hours and lack of English text materials.

Limited class hour can be a problem. The curriculum of junior high school mentions that English subject has only six sessions a week, each of which lasts in 40 minutes. These six sessions should be enough to cover four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Direktorat Jenderal Manajemen Pendidikan Dasar, 2011). This creates a problem for poor readers who need much more time to understand the texts.

The learning materials can also be a problem. English teachers usually teach their students by using available textbooks. Preliminary study conducted shows that available textbooks do not provide adequate materials which suit with the students needs in terms of the amount of reading texts. However, no textbook is ideal for all classroom contexts.

These problems obviously need an immediate solution. Previous studies conducted argue that students should be given more time to read and the materials should be enriched. This can be done through reading outside the classroom. This is in line with the Government statement that the learners must develop a habit of autonomous learning (Direktorat Jenderal Manajemen Pendidikan Dasar, 2011). The condition supports the need to develop extensive reading cards for the seventh graders of junior high school to provide extra reading materials. As stated by Cunningsworth (1995), supplementary material especially extensive reading material is expected to answer the disadvantage of coursebook by improving varieties in text type, responding to individual student needs and problems, and also improving the creativity in language use. Therefore, choosing and creating materials that are appropriate for these students based on the standard of competence is indispensable.

**METHOD**

This study adapted the R&D design by Borg and Gall (1983) with several modifications. The development procedures consisted of 8 steps: (1) needs analysis, (2) materials development, (3) expert validation, (4) revision I, (5) teacher validation, (6) revision II, (7) try out, and (8) revision III. The needs analysis is to obtain preliminary data for product development. In this study, the researcher combined the first and the
third type of the target needs which is necessary. To know the students’ needs, the researcher did an observation and interview with an English teacher. The results of the students’ need analysis showed that the students should achieve the objective of learning language especially for reading as stated in the curriculum. To know the students’ wants, the researcher distributed the questionnaire. The result shows that the students like to read attractive printed materials. The students also like up-to-date, interesting and unique topics.

The material development process involved two main stages: designing and developing. Designing stage consisted of selecting topics, selecting and adapting materials, constructing the exercise and answer key, designing format, and organizing the materials. Developing stage consisted of the development of the product based on the feedback from the expert and English teacher. Expert and English teacher validation was to see the feasibility of the product. The result of expert and teacher validation used as the basis of improving the quality of the first draft before it was tried out.

The product try-out was carried out to see the suitability and the acceptability of the product directly from the students’ viewpoint. The try out was conducted at SMPN 13 Malang. The research instruments used in this study were needs analysis questionnaire, the validation checklist for the expert and the teacher, and also the students’ try-out questionnaire. The products were revised based on the results of the product validation and the try-outs. All data gathered in this research were analyzed and described qualitatively with a simple quantitative calculation adopted from Arikunto (2010).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The aims of product try-out were to check the suitability and acceptability of the product directly from the students’ viewpoint. To obtain data from the try-out, the instrument used was questionnaire which covered the following aspects: (1) the appearance, (2) the attractiveness, (3) the level of difficulty, (4) the coverage, and (5) the content. The data gathered from the product try-out were in the form of a collection of questionnaires which was distributed from twelve students that were chosen randomly by the researcher using simple random sampling technique.

Overall, almost all of the results in the try-out were positive which were very proper. The feedbacks gathered were described as follows.

1) The appearance

There is no problem with all the criteria on appearance. It means that the fonts used is readable in terms of the letter type and size (81%), the fonts used is interesting
(79%), the spacing is appropriate and consistent (81%), the design is interesting (81%), the picture is appropriate with the topic (90%) and interesting (83%), and the font color is in harmony (81%) and interesting (85%).

2) The attractiveness

The result on the attractiveness is quite similar with the result on the appearance. In term of the topic, one students states that the topics used in the extensive reading materials are quite interesting. The other eleven students state that the topics are interesting. Other criteria in attractiveness was the texts, the students give positive agreement that the texts used are interesting (77%), can expand their knowledge (79%) and help them to increase their reading ability (79%).

3) The difficulty level

This component gets the most varied responses. Starting from the length of texts, most of the students states that the text is appropriate in terms of the reading ability level (77%). The opposite opinion was given for the selection of vocabulary used in the materials, four students said that the selection of vocabulary used is not appropriate with their level. Then, for the grammar used in the materials, the students agreed that the grammar used is appropriate with their reading ability level (77%). Other criteria in difficulty level of the materials was the direction used, the students give positive agreement that the direction used is easy to understand (77%). In addition for the level of difficulty, it shows that the amount of the wrong answered made by the students in the range of 2-3 questions.

4) The coverage

Most of the students gave positive agreement that all the criteria in the coverage are fulfilled. The number of questions is sufficient (81%), the answer key is clear (77%) and appropriate with the questions (79%), the reflection can increase students motivation to find more information (81%), the information in the enrichment section is interesting (83%) and can increase students knowledge (81%).

5) The content

All students agree that the content of the materials cover descriptive and procedure texts (81%). In addition, there are testimonials given by several students in the benefit aspects of the materials. They state that the extensive reading materials can increase their knowledge and the information was interesting to them. This testimonial shows that the students are motivated to learn the materials. Whereas, for the weaknesses aspects of the materials, they state that the researcher should add a glossary of the text to make it easier for the students to understand the text and to make the size of the pictures in the materials bigger and more appealing.
REVISION

The revision was done based on the feedback from the students after the product was tried out. The revision was based on the questionnaire for the try-out especially on the product layout, the attractiveness of the product, the level of difficulty of the product, the coverage of the product, and the substance of the materials. The layout of the product deals with the font letters, typing, space, design, picture, and colour. The attractiveness of the product deals with the selection of topics and texts. Having the same meaning with the name, level of difficulty is related to the language use, readability, and vocabulary. Then, the coverage of the product deals with the exercise and related content of reflection and enrichment. The data from the tryout were used to revise the draft and make it into the final product.

Based on the results of the data analysis, the products merely need a minor revision. All the components are valid and do not need further development. The addition and alteration were based on the students’ suggestion. The first addition was to add glossary to make them understand the text. Therefore, the researcher added glossary to each text that was written in English and Indonesian. The second alteration was to make some revision on the picture. Due to the poor quality of printer, the pictures were not well-printed. Therefore, the researcher provided larger and more appealing pictures.

Based on the result of findings, this product has some strengths and weaknesses. The strength points of this product are explicated as follows. Firstly, this product is designed with attractive design. It provides pictures and colorful design. It is supported by Day and Bamford (2002) statement that the materials or texts should be attractive and ideally chosen by the student who read it. They also state that it is important for the learners to feel free when they read. Therefore, the fact that the material is interesting to the reader can be seen as being the key to success.

Secondly, this product provided descriptive and procedure text with various topics as well such as technolife, unique animals, unique places, how to make, how to do, and how to play. The texts presented not only various topics but also unique information. It means that the information of this product focuses on educating students as well as entertaining them. It is in line with Krashen’s (1984) statement that reading should be done enjoyably and students feel motivated to read more if they fell they read well.

Thirdly, in terms of the coverage of the materials, the product was printed in two sheets of A4 CONCORD, 220 gram and laminated. The first sheet is two sided whilst the second sheet is one sided. It made this product durable and portable. The benefit of using durable materials is because the materials can be used more than once
and by many different students. This reason is supported by Hawkridge (1999) statement that the printed media should have characteristics which are accessible, readable, durable, and portable.

The last strength, the product supports autonomous learning which is promoted by the government (Direktorat Jenderal Manajemen Pendidikan Dasar, 2011). Dealing with autonomous learning, it has been approved by the students during the product try-out. The students agreed that the materials have a clear instruction and useful exercise. The answer key was provided to help the students do self assessment. In order to support autonomous learning, the materials were designed in such a way to facilitate enjoyable learning.

However, due to the limitation of time and production cost, the weaknesses may appear in this product of study. In terms of the number of texts, the product consists of only 12 texts. It is not adequate since the students are expected to read more. The product is also produced in one copy and cannot cater for the whole class. Then, the product does not complete with the sources of the text and pictures.

CONCLUSIONS

The result of the product try-out showed that the product of this study is good in terms of its appearance, level of difficulty, attractiveness, coverage, and substance. The final product of extensive reading materials in this study has been improved and is much better than the first draft. The final product is extensive reading cards for the seventh graders. The feedbacks from the expert, teacher, and the subject of product try out made the materials much better that the original version and made them appropriate to be used as extensive reading materials for the seventh graders.

After evaluation, this product of the study gets many improvements in the content, language and design. The final product of this study has its own characters, in example (1) this product is suited with the students’ needs and aroused the students’ reading ability, (2) this product contains descriptive and procedure texts based on the syllabus for second semester of the seventh grade, (3) this product is designed for autonomous learning, (4) each materials of this product is designed for extensive reading, (5) this product is designed to be interesting with many pictures and colorful design, (6) this product is equipped with glossary, questions, answer key, reflection and enrichment to help and motivate the students get more information.

In addition, the procedure in this study proved to be successful in developing extensive reading card for the seventh graders to overcome the limited class time and the
lack of extra reading materials. These materials can arouse the students’ interest in reading English texts.

REFERENCES