DEVELOPING SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS OF GENRE-BASED READING FOR THE EIGHTH GRADERS AT SMP NEGERI 4 MALANG

Muhammad Khoirul Anwar, Johannes Ananto Prayogo
Email: khoirul_anwarping@yahoo.com; johannes_songky@yahoo.co.id
State University of Malang

ABSTRACT: The present study aims at developing the supplementary reading material for the eighth graders at SMP Negeri 4 Malang. The materials development, in general, covers three types of texts, namely descriptive, recount, and narrative texts. To conduct this study, the researcher adapted a model of Research and Development (R&D) initiated by Borg & Gall. Ironically, they do not use a particular course book during their learning English in the classroom. The findings emphasize that the students basically need more exposure on reading materials because it is a good way to help fulfill the students’ needs in learning English, specifically reading descriptive, recount, and narrative texts.

Keywords: development, supplementary materials, genre-based reading

The fact that English has been widely regarded as the world’s language has certainly made people aware to learn it for different purposes. Some people are willing to learn English as they want to keep pace with the global challenge in which English is spoken worldwide. Some others, however, would say that they learn English as they are to pursue the self-centered welfare for their personal motives, such as being promoted to a higher position in the workplace, studying overseas, et cetera. Of course, to achieve that, English language learners need to be familiarized with four kinds of macro language skills in English, one of which is reading.

Reading is an active process in which the reader constructs meaning from a text (Grellet, 1983). Reading is mostly dealt with comprehension. Furthermore, Harmer (1998) states that comprehension involves what the reader knows as well as the nature of the text itself. Simply put, comprehension occurs in the transaction between the reader and the text.

In Indonesia, the teaching of reading is based on the guidelines issued by Boards of the National Standards of Education or locally termed as Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP). To specifically mention, the teaching of reading in Junior High Schools is geared to develop the students’ oral and written communicative competence to reach the level of functional literacy (Depdiknas, 2006). Prior to this aim, skills in reading texts are taught in the hope that the students can understand the meaning of written texts. One of the reading skills mentioned in the
curriculum of Grade VIII in Junior High School is determining the stated and unstated details of a text.

Referring to the Standards of Content, Standards of Competence and Basic Competences of Junior High School, the teaching of reading mostly focuses on the comprehension of various text types, including *recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive* and *report*. These types of texts are oftentimes labeled as genre-based reading. According to Derewianka (1990), genre deals not only with types of literary texts but also with the predictable and recurring patterns of everyday, academic and literary texts occurring within a particular culture. In western countries, genre, either spoken or written, is commonly identified according to its primary social purposes. Interpretively speaking, it can be noted that genre will somehow differentiate English texts according to the social function/purpose of such texts.

Furthermore, Derewianka (1990) identifies six main genres according to their primary social purposes: (1) narratives; it is to tell a story, usually to entertain; (2) recounts; it aims at telling what happened; (3) information reports; it provides factual information; (4) instructions; it tells the listeners or readers what to do; (5) explanations: it explains why or how something happens; and (6) expository text which presents or argues a viewpoint. These social purposes of the text-genres in turn decide the linguistic inputs of the text, i.e. their linguistic conventions, often in the form of schematic structure and linguistic features. For the schematic structure, it is frequently referred to internal structure or text organization of the text type in forms of introduction, body and conclusion. Different from the schematic structure, language features mostly consist of linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, connectors, etc. that the writers have to use in order to translate information/ideas into a readable text (Nuttall, 1996).

All of the types of texts afore-mentioned have their own purposes, generic structures as well as linguistic features. Owing to these characteristics, the various text types should be introduced in EFL classrooms. In Junior High School, specifically in the eighth grade, students are exposed with three types of text-genres namely *descriptive, recount, and narrative* (Depdiknas, 2006). These types of texts are clearly stated on the Standards of Content for reading skill: “*memahami makna teks tulis fungsional dan esai pendek sangat sederhana berbentuk descriptive, recount, dan narrative yang berkaitan dengan lingkungan terdekat* (comprehending meanings in simple interpersonal and transactional written discourses, both formally and informally, in the form of *descriptive, recount* and *narrative* texts in everyday life contexts).”
Understanding the three texts mentioned earlier is a must for the students. Of course, much time and effort must be devoted to make the students really understand the text types. Yet, the facts illustrate differently. It is found out that English classes in *SMP Negeri 4 Malang*, including the eighth graders, only have five sessions, each of which approximately lasts for forty-five minutes. Due to the limited allocation time to learn English, the government recommends that the students develop a habit of becoming autonomous learners (*Direktorat Jenderal Manajemen Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah*, 2011).

By definition, autonomous learners are those who explicitly accept responsibility for their own learning (Lin, 1995). The autonomous learner shows initiative regarding learning and evaluates the extent to which learning is achieved. Furthermore, the learner autonomy is oftentimes viewed as the ability to take personal or self-regulated responsibility for learning. More importantly, according to a large body of empirical research in social psychology, autonomy is a basic human need because it is nourished by, and in turn nourishes, the intrinsic motivation (Holec, 1981).

In relation to the autonomous learning, Lin (1995) further mentions if teacher-centric instruction is out, then student-centered approaches are definitely in, as is recognizing the need for learner autonomy and cooperative learning. This is because in the twenty-first century, individualized instruction is certainly becoming the norm. Not only is learning becoming more student-centered, but also student participation in the development of outcomes for learning is certainly on the rise (Tudor, 1996). Therefore, to encourage the students in becoming good autonomous learners, the availability of the materials needs to be taken into consideration. This, indeed, can be achieved by conducting research on materials development, specifically for reading descriptive, recount, and narrative texts.

Another crucial problem in the teaching and learning English is dealing with the limited learning materials. In *SMP Negeri 4 Malang*, the English teacher reveals that to find a suitable and interesting learning material for the students is hard to conduct. Furthermore, she clearly mentions that due to the lack of reading materials, the students need to have more exposure on reading various kinds of materials. However, she cannot provide the students with such an exposure because she rarely utilizes the internet as a resourceful means to obtain learning materials for the students. When teaching, she instructs the students to find their own learning materials on the
internet and study by themselves. In class, the teacher even does not use a textbook during the process of teaching and learning.

Based on the existing problems mentioned beforehand, the researcher believes that supplementary materials for genre-based reading are essential to be developed. Previous studies on materials development were also conducted by Prihatiningsih (2010) and Maria (2011). The former focused on developing Math and Science materials for the students of Senior High School, whilst the latter outlined the materials development on descriptive texts through the use of a social networking site called facebook. Unlike those two previous studies, the recent study focuses on developing supplementary reading materials intended for the eighth graders at SMP Negeri 4 Malang. The decision to choose the eighth graders as the subjects of this study due to the perspective that students in this age are at the age of a very fast development stage in all kinds of aspects (Depdiknas, 2006). From this viewpoint, however, we can noticeably frame that the students in this developmental phase are able to be escorted to develop their skills, specifically reading skills. Consequently, developing supplementary genre-based reading materials for students of the eighth grade is certainly worth researching.

METHOD

This particular study was R&D (Research and Development) in design since it basically focused on developing the instructional product for use at school. Therefore, a model of R&D proposed by Borg & Gall (1983) was adapted. The phases of this study mainly covered: (1) Need Analysis; (2) Materials Development; (3) Expert Validation; (4) Revision I; (5) Try-out; (6) Revision II; and (7) Final Product.

In the first developmental stage, need analysis was carried out. Need analysis or need assessment is defined as the process of identifying and evaluating needs in a community or other defined population of people (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004). In this particular study, however, need analysis was conducted to obtain as much information as possible in any given situation in the field. The information from the students and teachers related to the area of the study was surely needed as the basis to develop suitable materials for the students.

To obtain the data in need analysis, the researcher employed two kinds of research instruments. The first type of research instrument was the interview guidelines intended for the
English teacher, and the second one was a questionnaire. The interview was purposely established in order that the researcher obtained pieces of information from the teacher’s perspective in terms of how to teach reading in classroom, and how to find a good reading material for the students. On the other hand, the questionnaire was utilized to investigate what the students really need in learning reading, and what kinds of reading materials they really like to read. The questionnaire was then distributed to a whole class, which is Class VIII-G consisting of 44 students. Then, the results of the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively.

The next step to carry out was material development. To begin with, the researcher designed the mapping of the supplementary reading materials. The mapping largely covers the examples of the text (descriptive, recount, and narrative). The texts were mostly adapted from web-based resources. After selecting the texts, several types of exercises were developed, including True/False Questions, WH-Questions, Completion, Arranging Paragraphs and Multiple Choice Items. These question-types basically have two different functions (Grellet, 1983), they are: (1) the exercises are to clarify the organization of the passage. The questions mostly deal with the function of the passage, general organization, rhetorical organization, and cohesive devices (e.g. linking words), and (2) the exercises are to clarify the contents of the reading passage. The questions are in the form of direct reference (plain fact), inference (implied fact), and evaluation.

Subsequently, the step was concerned with the expert validation. This phase dealt mostly with obtaining constructive comments from the experts for the improvement of the product. The expert to validate the product is a lecturer of English Department at Universitas Negeri Malang whose expertise is in the teaching of reading. In addition, the English teacher at SMP Negeri 4 Malang was also invited as the evaluator of the product. The validation process used a checklist covering four kinds of components: variety and presentations, suitability of the content, exploitability, and readability.

Each aspect mentioned in the checklist contains several sub-components. The criteria of the assessment are also presented in order to make each of the sub-components more understandable. The expert is also provided with four types of grading: excellent, good, fair, and poor. Excellent is worth 4 points, good is worth 3 points, fair is worth 2 points, and poor is only worth 1 point.
Afterwards, the product was revised. The product revision was completed twice. The first revision was carried out after the process of validation. In this process, qualitative data from experts’ judgment were collected and used as the basis of revision of the product. The second revision was achieved after the product try out. During the product try out or empirical process, the data were collected from the questionnaire containing the students’ feedback after they read the supplementary materials.

Then, the product was tried out in a small scale. Following Borg & Gall’s model, ten students were selected for the product try out. To conduct the try-out, the researcher distributed the supplementary reading materials to ten students of Class VIII-G at SMP Negeri 4 Malang. The students were given two weeks to read the materials at home. After they finished reading the materials and completed all the tasks, they were asked to put a check mark (✓) on a checklist asking their comments and suggestions about the materials.

The checklist includes the following items: (1) *variety and presentations* deal with the idea that the materials should be attractive for the students so that they can enjoy reading; (2) *suitability of the content* focuses on the variety of the topic whether it is appealing for the students; (3) *exploitability* highlights some points on whether the text develops the students’ competence as readers; (4) *readability* discusses the notion that the materials should be at the right level of difficulty for the students of the eighth grade.

Lastly, the final product of supplementary reading materials was developed based on what has been revealed from the data gathered during the overall processes. The completion of the final product has also benefitted comments from the expert, the English teacher and the students involved in the current study.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following section discusses the results of the research during the development of the product and its discussion.

**Results**
The major aim of conducting the product try-out was to help collect the data from the students who, in this case, used the supplementary reading materials. In this current study, the product was tried out to 10 students of Class VIII-G at SMP Negeri 4 Malang. The results of the product try-out are outlined as follows.

The first element to highlight from the checklist is about the variety and presentations of the materials. In this category, ten students answer “Yes” that the design of the materials is attractive. Similarly, 10 students agree and certainly put a check (✓) on columns “Yes” that the typing, spacing as well as the font-selecting is clear, appropriate, and readable. However, seven students put a check (✓) on “Yes” column that the layout and illustrations are clear and attractive. The remaining students do not agree with that and definitely put a check (✓) on the column “No”. They argue that the picture about “The Junkanoo Parade” in Chapter 1 is not really interesting. They suggest that the picture is changed with a more attractive one.

Also, the students strongly recommend that the lines indicating the language features of the text in each unit be made much thinner in order not to distract the eyes while they are reading the text. Likewise, the picture of the teddy bear in text “The Story of Goldilocks and the three Bears” is not well-designed. The students further thinks that the picture has to be made more nice-looking.

In addition to the aspect of variety and presentations of the materials, ten students definitely think that the pictures and illustrations go well with the reading texts. More importantly, the students further judge that the inclusion of the pictures and illustrations really helps them to understand and comprehend the text well. Therefore, all of them agree to give a check (✓) on the “Yes” column. From the overall sub-categories previously discussed, it is obtained that the average score given by the students for the variety and presentations is 84 of 90. This indicates that 93% of the students say “Yes” about the variety and presentations of the supplementary reading materials.

The second aspect mentioned in the checklist deals with the suitability of the content. This pertinently asks the students about whether the texts are wide in topics and thus making them more interested to read. Therefore, five sorts of different criteria are incorporated along with the big category of suitability of the content. From the results, it is revealed that ten students
undeniably agree that the texts in the supplementary reading materials are varied and interesting to read. Therefore, ten “Yes-es” are certainly obtained for these two criteria.

Moreover, ten students think that the texts in the book are useful for them to widen their knowledge. They clarify that they gain a lot of new information after they have read the text. Henceforth, there is no hesitation for them to just simply put a check (✓) on the “Yes” column. Nevertheless, when asked whether the texts can be fully understood, only six students confirm this matter; while the others certainly do not understand. The students say that they still need the help of a dictionary to really understand what the text is actually talking about. An example can be found in the text about “An Earthquake” in Chapter 2. They assert that one-time reading is not enough, they need to read the text at least twice to grasp the message of the text itself. Thus, “Yes” and “No” columns acquire six and four check-marks (✓) for each.

Apart from that, ten students obviously agree that the materials do not discriminate a particular tribe, religion, race, or custom, locally termed as SARA (Suku, Agama, Ras, Adat). From the overall criteria aforementioned, it is revealed that the score for the suitability of the content is 46 of 50. Obviously, 92% of the students are indeed answering the “Yes” columns for this particular aspect.

The third element asked to the students is concerned with the exploitability. In this category, two different criteria are employed. From the criteria, it is found out that 10 students think that the texts in the supplementary reading materials are at the appropriate level of their difficulty. Furthermore, they also note that the language used in the text is suitable with their level of literacy. Though there are several new vocabulary items from the texts, they find it challenging because the book actually already provides them with vocabulary building before they are reading the texts. Therefore, in terms of the exploitability, the students give an ultimate score: 20 of 20 scores. Statistically speaking, 100% of the students consistently say “Yes” for this aspect.

The last aspect evaluated by the students is about readability. In this part, students are to express their ideas about the books from three different criteria. Firstly, 10 students put a check (✓) on the “Yes” column for the clarity of the instructions. They think that the directions for the tasks are not confusing. They can understand the directions clearly so that they know what they require to do and how to do the tasks. Secondly, 10 students also agree to put a check (✓) on the “Yes” column for the variety of the exercises. The students mention that each unit in the book is
definitely supplemented with lots of reading activities, all of which are varied. Thirdly, 10 students certainly answer “Yes” on the sufficiency of the materials. They think that the texts presented in the supplementary reading materials are helpful for them to obtain more understanding about descriptive, recount, and narrative texts. More importantly, they can develop their reading skills by practicing more reading exercises from the supplementary materials. Therefore, from the overall criteria, the students undoubtedly give an ultimate score: 30 of 30 scores. In other words, 100% of the students completely agree to answer “Yes” for the facet of readability.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that 96% of the students largely answer “Yes” for the four components: variety and presentations, suitability of the content, exploitability and readability. The results of the try out illustrate that the supplementary reading material has met the needs of the students. For sure, the product can help them develop their reading skills and understand more about descriptive, recount and narrative texts.

Discussion

The outcome of this type of study was in the form of paper-based supplementary reading materials covering three text types, namely descriptive, recount, and narrative texts. The product was purposefully designed for the students in Class VIII-G at SMP Negeri 4 Malang. The development of the product used the paper-based format due to the following reasons.

Firstly, the paper-based supplementary reading materials do not require the students to make use of IT devices, such as laptops, computers, tablets, etc. This is certainly suitable with the current condition happened in SMP Negeri 4 Malang, specifically in Class VIII-G. Mostly, the students do not have a laptop. Therefore, the supplementary reading materials were not made in computer-based format. Computer-based reading materials highly rely on the use of computers or laptops. Without a computer or a laptop, the students cannot read and complete all the tasks in the materials. For sure, to make the students read with ease, the supplementary materials were developed by using the paper-based format.

Secondly, an aspect of developing paper-based supplementary reading materials is concerned with the practicality. The students do not need to get connected with the internet to access the materials in the product. They just simply read the materials at home and did all the
tasks designed in each chapter. They, for sure, could bring the materials practically anytime and anywhere since the materials only consist of 55 pages and are not too thick. In terms of the size, the book is neither too small nor too big. It was printed in A4 format just like the standard size of a school textbook. In short, the development of the paper-based product was certainly appropriate to make it practical in use.

Apart from that, the supplementary reading materials which were developed in this current study also have several strong points. For the strength of the product, it is important to highlight that the texts are various and intriguing. The notion implies that the students could obtain lots of information while deepening their knowledge from reading the materials. For instance in Chapter 1, the students learned about “The Rotating Tower” in Dubai. They could also learn the description of the most romantic place on earth while working on the exercises on that particular chapter. A piece of information conveyed in the texts is truly worth reading for the students and thus sharpening up their horizons about the world.

In addition to the strength of the product, each chapter was developed equally in terms of the texts and the number of exercises. For instance, Chapter 1 consists of 8 (eight) kinds of descriptive texts and 5 (five) kinds of different reading activities. Likewise, there are also 8 (eight) kinds of recount texts and 5 (five) types of exercises in Chapter 2. Similar treatments were also applied in Chapter 3 consisting of 8 narrative stories and 5 kinds of reading tasks. Entirely speaking, the product provided a balanced portion in each of the chapters so that the students’ needs to have more exposure in reading could, for sure, be alleviated.

A point of distinctive feature in the product is the inclusion of reading for enjoyment. The kinds of materials for enjoyment consisted of poems and chants. The activities were matched with what the students have learned in each chapter. For instance, the poem is about describing a thing and the chant is about telling a story. Certainly, this product could enable the students to have more fun reading activities.

However, the product also has a possible weakness. This prototype of reading materials only covered three monologue texts, namely descriptive, recount, and narrative texts. Therefore, it is suggested that future researchers develop other types of texts with the inclusion of short functional texts, such as advertisements, shopping lists, announcements, etc.
Briefly put, the supplementary reading materials were made to fulfill the needs of the students in developing their reading skill. With the strong points of the product mentioned earlier, the students could make use of the product maximally for independent study. Still, a possible weakness of the product seems unavoidable and is expected to be lessened in the future studies on materials development.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The conclusions and suggestions after conducting the study will be elaborated as follows.

Conclusions

To conduct this study, the first step was the problem identification or need analysis. After identifying what the need is like in the targeted situation, the reading material was developed. Next, the supplementary reading material was evaluated. Evaluation here is associated with a matter of judging the fitness of the product.

In the evaluation phase, the supplementary reading materials were immaculately scrutinized by an expert of English language teaching. To accommodate this, several guidelines for course book evaluation were employed. The guidelines proposed by Cunningsworth (1995) are elaborated as follows.

First, the materials in the textbook should correspond to the learners’ need. This is evidently proven from the supplementary reading material because it is basically developed after identifying the needs of the students in the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 4 Malang. The material is designed with a careful consideration related to the students’ need in which they desirably want to be exposed with more interesting and up-to-date reading materials. Therefore, the development of the supplementary reading material certainly omits the texts which are presumably too common for the students.

Second, a textbook should match the aims and objectives of the language-learning program. This particular criterion is certainly fulfilled in the development of the supplementary reading materials. As mentioned earlier, the supplementary reading material is intended for the eighth graders of Junior High School to help them develop their reading skills. Of course, the production of the supplementary reading materials is certainly based on the standard of competence of the English curriculum for the eighth graders of Junior High School. Therefore, the
supplementary reading materials discuss three texts (descriptive, recount, and narrative) as mentioned in the curriculum.

Third, a textbook should cover general elements such as the availability of grammar references (explanation), the adequacy of materials for vocabulary building, and materials design (layout). Viewed from this particular guideline, the supplementary reading material consistently provides an explanation of a grammatical item in each unit and includes some activities requiring the students to determine the meanings of some vocabulary items. Additionally, the materials are also designed attractively with appealing illustrations which can help the students understand the texts.

Lastly, a textbook should have a clear role as a support for learning. Obviously, the supplementary reading material is purposefully designed to assist the students to maximize their learning on reading. It is also meant to encourage learners to develop their own learning strategies and to become independent.

Simply speaking, the availability of the supplementary reading material on the current study mostly characterizes what a good book should have. This shows in general that the supplementary reading material is good and relevant to the eighth graders of Junior High School. Therefore, the students can develop their reading skills from the availability of the supplementary reading materials.

Suggestions

In relation to this study, the subsequent suggestions are recommended. The suggestions are addressed to those who want to conduct similar studies, or more advanced studies, or those who want to use the product. As stated previously, the supplementary reading materials cover only three types of texts, namely descriptive, recount, and narrative, thus for those who are interested to carry out similar studies are expected to make an extension on the materials to be developed. Future researchers can include short functional texts (transactional and interpersonal) along with the development of the monologue texts. More importantly, the development of future product can also provide materials with integrated skills.

In addition to the future development, a wider topic of reading material is worth prioritizing in order that the students do not feel bored reading the similar kinds of texts.
Alternatively, would-be researchers can also develop supplementary reading materials with the utilization of computer or internet. For example, the materials are designed by using the multimedia software to make other innovative inventions for English language teaching and learning.

Last but not least, another point to bear in mind is that the English teacher can also use the product for classroom teaching and learning. Additionally, the students can benefit from this product by using it as a means to develop their reading skills on understanding descriptive, recount, and narrative texts.

REFERENCES


