

Designing Leveled English Reading Materials for Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School Medan

Aisah¹ Sri Minda Murni² Wisman Hadi³

1. Postgraduate Student, State University of Medan, UNIMED. Jln. Willem Iskandar Psr V Medan Estate, 20221, Indonesia
2. Department of English Applied Linguistik, State University of Medan, UNIMED. Jln. Willem Iskandar Psr V Medan Estate, 20221, Indonesia
3. Department of Bahasa, State University of Medan, UNIMED. Jln. Willem Iskandar Psr V Medan Estate, 20221, Indonesia

Abstract

This study deals with the design of leveled English reading materials for grade four students of Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School Medan through Authentic Materials Approach. The objectives of this study is to design the suitable English Reading Materials which are relevant to the Islamic School. This study was conducted by applying phases of Educational Research and Development (R&D). The phases are (1) Needs Analysis, (2) Reviewing Existing English Reading Materials and Syllabus, (3) Designing New Leveled English Reading Materials, (4) Validating the new Leveled English Reading Materials, (5) Tryout of the new Leveled English Reading Materials, (6) Final Result and (7) Testing the Effectiveness of the Products. The data of this research are the existing documents such as materials and syllabus also students' questionnaire and teacher's interview. The result of this research shows the existing reading materials are not suitable to the Islamic school students' needs. Therefore, new leveled English reading materials were designed in order to meet the Islamic students' needs. The new leveled English reading materials are concern with Islamic stories. They are My Two Journeys, I and Apple Tree, The Orphan Boy, The Blind Boy, Grapes, Valley of Sheep, Empty Hand of a Rich Man, and Fatimah Az Zahra. The leveled reading materials were designed by AMA (Authentic Materials Approach) principles. The materials were validated by three experts. Three of them agree that the new leveled English reading materials designed are suitable with the Islamic school students' needs. To know the effectiveness of the product was supported with the data obtained significant value of $0.000 < 0.05$ it can be concluded that the English reading materials is appropriate for fourth grade of Jabal Rahmah Elementary School Medan. Therefore it is suggested that the new leveled English reading materials designed are relevant to use for grade four of Jabal Rahmah Elementary School Medan.

Keywords: Leveled, English, Reading Materials, Authentic Materials Approach (AMA), and Elementary School

I. Introduction

There are four language skills in learning namely reading, writing, speaking and four listening. Reading is one of the four skills that must be mastered for all students. Reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret the information approximately. The process of drawing information and interpreting information requires the work of the brain. The purpose of reading activity is to get information from the text we read.

Reading skills area very important skill for supporting the learning process students. Therefore, teachers need pay attention to these skills since early so that students do not experience difficulties in learning. In the classroom, there are usually students with reading skills diverse. This is certainly require considerable handling seriously so that adherence to the process learning can run well. Because each student has a different reading abilities, teachers should think different reading strategies. Through habituation reading expected students can improve their reading skills. Habituation reading requires commitment from the entire school community.

Reading materials play an important role to the English Learning Teaching (ELT). This statement is supported by Harsono (2007). He stated that learning materials is one of the very crucial elements that has to exist to conduct teaching/learning activities. English reading materials are required in order to improve reading skill of students.

Chang & Goswami (2011) concluded that there are some factors that can promote and also hinder the learning process in the class, They are (1) teachers factors, (2) students factors (3) administrative support, (4) teaching resources or the materials. The teachers should try to give the relevant and also interesting materials to promote the students' learning motivation. Unfortunately there are so many irrelevant materials that must be learnt by the students (Wedhaswary, 2002). These materials can make the students become low motivation to learn. Reading materials prioritizes reading activities tailored to the needs of students consider various strategies learning, choice of materials according to the needs, and teachers responsive. The aim is to improve the capability and interest them to read. This relates to skills influencing students' reading achievement of their academic ability. If the reading skills of students better it will be good also their academic ability. This condition

also happens to grade fourth students of Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School Medan. That's why English reading materials must be designed to get improvement of reading skills for all the students especially for students of Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School Medan.

Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School is located on Jalan Balai Desa No.24 H Medan Sunggal. As the result of the interview with the principal, he said that he realized that English is very important for all of his students because there are two prioritizes in this school. One of them is English. As the program of that school, the school has English course for the teachers on Friday that can develop their English ability. Unfortunately, not all the teachers can follow the English course. From the interview of the English teacher, she revealed that it is very difficult to teach the students because there are so many factors happen. The most important factors is still limited teaching materials in the school. Reading lesson has held since 2016 in this school. So the English reading material has not been provided by the school. Another problem is the students are lack of vocabulary. In solving the problem, the English teacher uses a kind of strategy to increase the students' vocabulary. Every English lesson the teacher gives the students some new vocabularies with put the new vocabularies in a sentence and the students guess the meaning of the word and the teachers gives the students a text in English and then the students underlined the new vocabularies from the text. The students work in groups to find out the meaning of the word. After that the teacher will give the students the test about the vocabulary, that she calls it vocabulary test. By doing this, she tries to increase the students vocabulary abilities. Unfortunately, when the teacher was asked about the percentage of the students who have good English, the teacher said only thirty four percent of her students who have good English that can follow the lesson. This condition can affect their achievement in English.

Based on the problems above the researcher would like to conduct a research on designing leveled reading materials for Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School Medan. The researcher designs the leveled reading materials are caused : (1) the existing of the English reading materials in Jabal Rahmah Mulia Medan is not suitable with the existing of Syllabus in Jabal Rahmah Mulia Medan. This is one of the examples reading text at Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School Medan and the syllabus can see at the appendix.

The students are poor ability in reading. It is shown by the table which obtained by the students after learning English especially reading. (2) The course book that the teacher used is published by Yudhistira entitled "English Speed Up 4". The English course book contains general English since it is used for all study programs. The content of the course book is all about grammar and vocabulary exercises. The pattern of the tasks is grammar explanation then followed by the tasks. There are no particular input texts and technical terms of Islamic School. We can know that from the text above. Meanwhile, it is important for them to recognize vocabulary and expressions which are useful for their future job. However, the course books contain general English inputs which do not meet the students' needs. Therefore, students cannot learn the competences which will be required in the target situation later. (3) The English reading material must be interesting for the students and make the students read the text so in the reading materials must use pictures to describe the text. The pictures can help the students to understand the text. But there is no pictures in the existing of English reading materials in Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School.

The interesting materials can also make the students develop their vocabulary because when the students read the text, they will find new vocabularies in the text. Reading text provide opportunately to study language like vocabulary, grammar and it can also help the students to show the way to construct sentences, paragraph and the text. (4) The English reading materials are limited in this school so the teachers also sometimes adapted supplementary materials from the internet. However the input texts still do not meet the students' needs. There are some weaknesses if the teachers always search the materials from the internet. The first is the text is not suitable with the syllabus. The second is the texts have difficult vocabularies for the students because the other problem is the students are lack of the vocabularies. This condition can affect students' achievement in English.

The students are poor ability in reading. It is shown by the Table 1.1 which obtained by the students after learning English especially reading.

Table 1.1 The Result of Students Reading Score

NO.	Students' Initial	Final Score
1	AY	55
2	AMA	52
3	ANMS	65
4	AZ	49
5	ANS	47
6	CBW	60
7	DHN	60
8	HB	49
9	HMS	66
10	HFA	86
11	JRH	25
12	MSW	60
13	MFF	65
14	MFS	57
15	NFH	39
16	PRA	18
17	RZA	65
18	RAS	55
19	SNI	60
20	SNA	65
21	SPB	56
22	ZFH	60
23	MFA	52
Averages		55,04

Based on the data, the average of the score is still far from perfection of 70 This is not suitable with the expectation which has been formulated in KKM where the standard score is 70. This condition is affected by some factors so Mrs. Sumi as the English teacher must work hard to get more scores because the prioritizes program in this school is English.

According to the realities above the writer would like to conduct a research on designing leveled reading materials for Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School with theme "I and Myself". In other words, this research will like to analyze the existing syllabus and also the English reading materials. There are previous studies that concern with designing english reading materials. The first thesis is entitled "Designing English Reading Materials for Alwashliyah Islamic Junior High School Tebing Tinggi" by Syawaluddin Ketaren (2015). In his thesis, he used research based development or educational research and development (R & D). The design of the new reading materials will use Authentic Materials Approach (AMA) in order to find the appropriate materials for the Islamic School students. Syawaluddin do the research at Junior High School and the writer will do the research at Elementary School. There is also Junior High School at YP. Jabal Rahmah Mulia School so the writer has plan to use Syawaluddin's reading Materials for the students' at Junior High School later. The second previous studies from international journal entitled "Designing a Reading Material Recommendation System for EFL Learners" by Chin-Hwa Kuo and Chen-Chung Chi (2014). In their journal, they used research based development or educational development (R&D). They found reading material recommendation systems should be designed based on learners' reading or vocabulary usage abilities.

Therefore, this study is devoted to studying and designing reading materials of English for students of Islamic School. In the other words, this research intended to analyze the existing syllabus and reading materials. If the existing reading materials are not suitable with syllabus and relevant to the Islamic school students' needs, designing English reading materials are really required.

II. Research method

This research was classified as educational Research and Development (R & D) in which the aim of the study is to develop educational products. Borg & Gall (1983: 772) state that R & D is a process used to develop and validate educational products. They point out that the goal of Research and Development is to take the research knowledge and incorporate it into a product that can be use in the schools.

This study has been conducted at Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School Jalan Balai Desa No. 24 H Medan Sunggal. This school is selected as the place of the study because (1) That school has never been used for

the research, (2) The main program in this school is English, (3) The students have low motivation in Reading. And planned research would be carried out for three months.

Data sources were the subjects where the data can be obtained. Data sources are from:

1. English teachers
2. Head of Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School Medan
3. Expert of Education, and ESP
4. Grade Fourth Students of Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School
5. The existing syllabus and English reading materials are documents

The researcher applied several techniques in collecting the data. They are : Observation, Discussion with experts, Interview, Competence test.

III. Research findings

Based on the result above, can be concluded that there is increase from the first validation until the third validation. So the new leveled English reading materials can use for the grade four of Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School. After the writer revise the materials so in the second teachers' responses is 90 %. There is increase, the new leveled English reading materials can use by the students. Based on the students' responses result, the results are very good or can be used but needs to be revised. The students' responses can be seen in the diagram below. To know the effectiveness of the product was supported with the data obtained significant value of $0.000 < 0.05$ it can be concluded that the English reading materials is appropriate for fourth grade of Jabal Rahmah Elementary School Medan. Therefore it is suggested that the new leveled English reading materials designed are relevant to use for grade four of Jabal Rahmah Elementary School Medan.

This English leveled reading material, as the end product of this research has several limitations, including:

1. This English reading material is structured on the basis of basic competence in understanding the story from the text.
2. The materials presented in leveled reading materials are limited to Islamic stories so the use of materials are limited to Islamic school. For the other public schools it can be used as a reference as a learning resource.
3. The materials designed in this study have been through the process of validation by academic experts. But limited to three experts.
4. Teachers and students who requested their responses to materials designed to be limited only to fourth-grade teachers and students in the study.
5. To determine the effectiveness of materials designed, only limited post-test questions and the results compared with the students' result taught with the existing reading material. This result test has not been fully able to measure students' learning process.

IV. Conclusion and suggestion

4.1 Conclusion

After analyzing the data, the conclusions were the existing reading materials are too general for Islamic School students because there are not any Islamic messages in it. The stories in the existing materials are about animals. The messengers in those stories are too general and don't tell to tend to the Islamic issues. The existing materials is not suitable with the existing syllabus in Jabal Rahmah Mulia Elementary School Medan.

New leveled English reading materials are designed in order to help the students to gain their needs as the Islamic students. The new leveled English reading materials are designed through AMA (Authentic Materials Approach) in order to find the suitable materials for the Islamic school students. In designing the new leveled English Reading materials, there are three indicators to be used to make the new leveled English reading materials suitable with the students' needs. They are (1) suitability of the content, (2) authenticity and (3) readability.

The new leveled English reading materials were validated by three experts by giving them questionnaire. The questionnaires Consists of dimension of linguistics features, processes, contents, and lay out. The experts checked whether the dimensions were found in the new leveled English reading materials. To know the effectiveness of the product was supported with the data obtained significant value of $0.000 < 0.05$ it can be concluded that the English reading materials is appropriate for fourth grade of Jabal Rahmah Elementary School Medan. Therefore it is suggested that the new leveled English reading materials designed are relevant to use for grade four of Jabal Rahmah Elementary School Medan

4.2. Suggestion

In realization of the conclusion above, the suggestions are the school should prepare the existing materials which suitable with the existing syllabus in the school and the materials are not too general and are not suitable with the students' need.

The English teacher should provide the English reading materials based on related principles, theories, or

criteria of effective instructional that have been studied. The English teacher can use Authentic Materials Approach (AMA) principles as an teaching approach in order to develop suitable English reading materials for the students.

The teacher can use leveled English reading materials to teach the students because the content of leveled English reading materials are not too general. The contents have Islamic values and it is suitable for the Islamic school.

References

- Basthomi, Y. *A critical reflection on the praxis at English Department in indonesia. Learning- working in and by paradoxes*. Paper presented at a talk at the State Islamic Collage Kediri, Indonesia, 2011.
- Bloom, B.S. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain*. New York: David Mc Kay, 1995.
- Javed, M. *Developing Reading Comprehension Modules to Faciliate Reading Comprehension among Malaysian Secondary School ESL Students*. International Journal of Instruction vol 8, No.2. 2015. p- ISSN:1694-609X
- Kuo Chin-Hwa. *Designing a Reading Materials Recommendation System for EFL Learners*. Journal of Applied Science and Engineering. Vol. 17, No. 4, 2014. pp. 371-382
- Miles, B., M, Huberman, A. M. Michael & Saldana, Johhny. *Qualitative Data Analysis: a Methods sorcebook*. Edition 3. USA: SAGE. 2014.
- Reddy, S.V & Al-Beckay, E. *Developing English Reading Skills among the Young Arab (Libyan) Learners*. International Journal of Education and Training (InJET) 1 (1) June: 1-8, 2015.