

English Book on Environmental Caring: Enhancing Students' Achievement and Environmental Caring Awareness

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Abstract

This study attempts to reveal whether or not the teaching material on the environmental caring English book developed by the researchers could enhance the students' English competence as well as the environmental caring awareness. The design of this research was R & D (Research and Development) and in the field of testing phase, the researchers tried out the teaching material to a large scale of population, one hundred and seventy one (171) students from seven (7) schools of junior high schools in Semarang city. However, before the teaching material was used knowing teachers' perception was needed in order to find out whether or not it fulfilled their needs viewed from its content, the performance/presentation and language use. The questionnaire contained the aspects of the content appropriateness, the performance/presentation, and the language used. Based on the teachers' perception it shows that the content appropriateness got score of 67, 21% which belongs to a good category and 19,67 % of excellent; the performance/presentation got score of 62,63% (good) and 7,69% (excellent); and the language used got 73,38% (good) and 9,52% (excellent). So based on teachers' perception, the book developed was in the category of good and excellent. After that to know students' English competence before and after using the environmental caring English book, the researchers gave the pre-test, treatments, and post-test to the respondents. The results of post-test from seven (7) junior high schools were various. The result showed that the mean score of the pre-test from all seven junior high schools was 67, 17 and it was categorized as average category. The mean score of post-test from all seven junior high schools was 76, 37 and it was categorized as good category. Besides, the interview was also conducted to find out the students' awareness of the environmental caring.. Based on the interview, it showed that the students' awareness towards the environmental caring was increasingly better than ever before. Students did some activities such as throwing the garbage to the provided dustbin in or outside the classroom, watering the plants at the school particularly in front of their classroom, growing plants using the polybags, switching off the electricity and the air conditioner in the classroom, etc.

Key words: appropriateness, environmental caring, English book, awareness

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1. Introduction

Developing English teaching materials is not as easy as one thinks for it needs great efforts, time, energy and finance to realize. First, researchers have to observe as many schools as possible to find out the availability of books used and learn whether or not they are compatible with the current curriculum. Then they have to observe the problems faced by the teachers and students concerning on the English books used by the schools. It can be viewed from their content, the presentation, the language used and the performance. Based on the data collected, the researchers then formulate and develop the material as needed by the students and teachers. When the draft is done, it should be tried out to find out whether it is already suitable and acceptable or not. The try out might not only be done once but it could be twice or three times in order to get the best acceptance of the teachers and students and whether or not could enhance the students' English competence.

Many English book designers may be successful in developing English books for the English teaching and

learning process at schools but not many of them were developed with reference to a certain kind of character building. The book entitled *Bahasa Inggris Karakter Peduli Lingkungan* is the book designed not only to enhance students' English proficiency but also to build the students' awareness on taking care of the environment. The book designed is also equipped with the electronic media. It is expected that after learning English using this teaching material, students will have better understanding not only on the English itself but also the environmental caring. Hopefully, students will have better attitude and behaviour towards the environment, and have the habits of keeping the environment clean. Forming the students' habits of being clean does not take a short time but a long one where the process through regular repetition, the behaviour will automatically become a habit. A habit may initially be triggered by a goal, but over time that goal becomes less necessary and the habit becomes more automatic. Realizing that language is the primary means through which school activities are conducted to achieve the goal (Schleppegrell, 2004:23) and the activities which are done over time will form habits; therefore, the teaching material of English language needs to be designed by referring to the habit formation with some activities that encourage the students to keep the environment clean either at home or at school. The themes of the lesson and activities in the book should be related to the environmental caring such as visiting friends in the hospital, appreciating friends' works, preserving the artwork, etc. Therefore, the objectives of this study are first to reveal the appropriateness of the environmental caring English book for enhancing students' English competence and to reveal students' awareness towards environmental caring based on the environmental caring English book.

2. Theoretical Review

Teaching and educating are inseparable being parts of the teachers' roles in the teaching learning process. In general, teaching is intended to help others to learn something as stated in the objective of the teaching. In this case the teacher has the role to facilitate or to give the knowledge the learners to learn in order to achieve the objective. Meanwhile, educating has the purpose to teach others to raise understanding or to value something which is good or bad, how to behave appropriately or ethically. Many scholars believe that education, which is considered to be the basic need for every human being since he has been in the womb has the primary role to develop his competencies and to build his character. A baby, for example is in the condition of helpless but the fact that he or she owns competencies that need to be developed and it is believed that through education the potencies will simultaneously develop well. Education gives guidance and direction to the goals to be achieved. Law No. 20, 2003 chapter 2, article 3 also states that the Indonesian national education is to develop and to build the character, as well as to build the dignified civilization within the framework of enriching the life of Indonesian nation and to develop the potencies of the students. In realizing the students' potencies, curriculum is needed. Curriculum is a set of plans and settings of the objectives, content, and teaching material as well the teaching methods employed for achieving the objectives of education. Richards (2002:39) argues that curriculum is all activities in which children engage under the auspices of the school. This includes not only what pupils learn, but how they learn it, how teachers help them learn using what supporting materials, styles and methods of assessment and in what kind of facilities. Dubin and Oshtain (1986:34-35) differentiate between curriculum and syllabus; curriculum contains a broad description of general goals by indicating an overall educational-cultural philosophy which applies across subjects together with a theoretical orientation to language and language learning with respect to the subject matter at hand. While syllabus is a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translate the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level. The components of syllabus in curriculum 2013 are core competence, basic competence, teaching material, evaluation, time allotment and learning sources. Thus, teaching material, the key component in most language programs (Richards, 2002: 251) and as the primary input of the students to learn the language needs to be developed the content of which should be in line with the goals of the national education, to build the young generations to be skilful, smart, to have good behaviour and attitudes. Many scholars agree that teaching material which also functions as a resource for presentation material (spoken or written) and a source of activities for learners to practice and communicative interaction (Cunningsworth (1995, 7) as cited by Richards, 2002) should be developed on the basis of cultural orientation (Shahed, 2013: 98) if the goal of education is intensively to build the students' behaviour and attitudes, or in short a

good character. It is of primary importance to suggest that teaching material covering students' awareness on the environmental caring is of great necessity. All content and activities in the teaching material in this case should be directed to elaborate the students' awareness on the environmental caring. As stated by Holmes (2013: 358) that the physical and cultural environment in which it develops influences the vocabulary and grammar of a language. It means that particular vocabulary and grammar dealing with environmental caring should also be taken into consideration.

Alberth (2013:10), Lie (2013: 60-61) and Floris (2014:141) in their studies state that ICT or social media play pivotal role in the life of the knowledge society that can promote students' achievement because this tool allows them to progress at their pace and needs. With reference to the crucial importance of the use of technology in teaching, the construction of electronic media is unavoidable. The media which are designed and constructed using electronic devices are meant to help students learn better where the activities performed in the electronic media are intended to support students' understanding on the teaching material. In short, the building of students' character, particularly the awareness of keeping the environment clean should not merely depend on the written teaching material but also with the activities that reflect the building of students' character through electronic media.

3. Research Method

The design used in this research was Research and Development (Borg and Gall (1983: 772) because the researchers tried to develop English teaching material which fulfilled the needs of the teachers and students. In this phase, field testing phase, the researchers tried out the teaching material to a large scale of population, one hundred and seventy one (171) students from seven (7) schools of junior high schools in Semarang city. Questionnaires were also distributed to the teachers to find out their perception on the appropriateness of the teaching material used.

The researchers conducted pre-test to the 171 students from seven (7) schools. After several times teaching using the environmental caring English book, post-test was given to find out whether or not the students' understanding on English was good. Besides, observation was done in order to find out the students' awareness on the environmental caring. Several teachers were interviewed to ascertain the appropriateness of the teaching material used in teaching English at junior high schools.

4. Findings and Discussion

With regard to the experts' suggestions and the result of focus group discussion among English teachers, the book which formerly contained 10 chapters changed into 8 chapters. They are (1) Keeping the Environment Clean, (2) Visiting Friend and Family in the Hospital, (3) My Activities on Holiday, (4) The Beautiful of Old City in Semarang, (5) Knowing Things around Us, (6) Appreciating Friends' Work, (7) Being a Good Student, (8) Preserving the Artwork.

The book was evaluated in terms of its content appropriateness, performance, and language used, each of which is shown in the following figure.

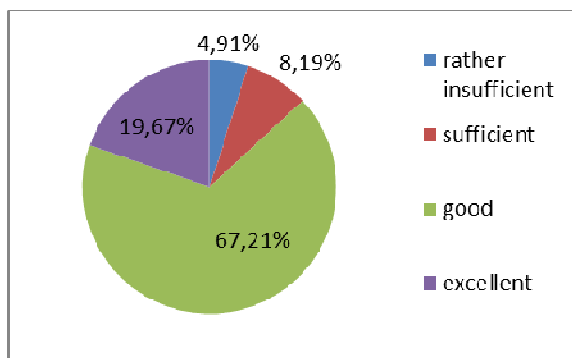


Figure 1. Content Appropriateness

Figure 1 shows that the teachers' perception on the teaching material was on sufficient (8,19%), good (67,21%) and excellent (19,67%) and only a few of them said insufficient. Thus, it can be concluded that the book developed belongs to "a good category" which means that the themes, the topic of discussion, the exercises in every chapter of the book is in accordance with the core and basic competences of the 2013 curriculum.

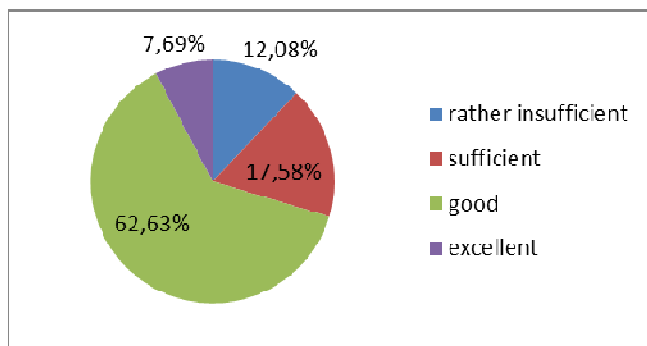


Figure 2. The Performance of the Book

Figure 2 shows that the teachers' perception on the performance of the book including the presentation of the material, the appropriateness of the pictures presentation, colors composition, cover and the book size belongs to a good category where 62,63% of the teachers stated good, 7,69% excellent and 17,58% sufficient. Thus, based on the graphic above it can be stated that the performance of the book belongs to a good category and is considered to be fulfilling the needs of the teachers.

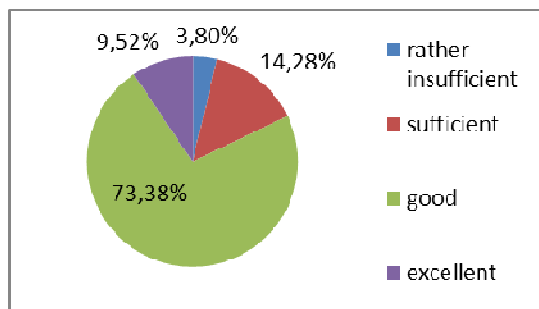


Figure 3. The Language Used

Figure 3 shows that 9,52% of the respondents chose excellent, 73,38% chose good, 14,28% chose sufficient and 3,80% insufficient. So, the language used in the book based on the figure belongs to a good category. It means that it is communicative, interactive, motivating, easy to be comprehended, easy to be used by the teachers and the level of difficulty is sufficient. In short, the book developed by the researchers fulfills the needs of the teachers for its content appropriateness, performance and the language used.

In relation to the students' English competence before being taught using the English book based on the environmental caring character, the result shows that the students in different schools achieved different pre-test scores as shown in the following table.

Table 1. The mean scores of pre-test from seven (7) junior high schools in Semarang.

No	Institution Name	The Mean Score of Pre-test
1	SMP 6	72,75
2	SMP 7	69,7
3	SMP Krista Mitra	86,18
4	SMP Nusa Putera	69,21
5	SMP Mardisiswa 2	52,82
6	SMP Muhammadiyah 5	43,56
7	SMP Purnama 1	76
TOTAL		470.22/7
MEAN SCORE		67,17

From table 1, it is clearly shown that the mean scores of pre-test from seven (7) junior high schools in Semarang is 67,19. It is categorized as average.

Then after giving several treatments by using the English book based on the environmental caring character, students are given the post-test. The results of the post-test can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. The mean scores of post-test from seven (7) junior high schools in Semarang

No	Institution Name	The Mean Score of Post-Test
1	SMP 6	82,75
2	SMP 7	79,55
3	SMP Krista Mitra	96
4	SMP Nusa Putera	78,71
5	SMP Mardisiswa 2	61,85
6	SMP Muhammadiyah 5	49,73
7	SMP Purnama 1	86
TOTAL		534,59
MEAN SCORE		76,37

From the table above, the mean score of post-test is 76,37. It is categorized as good category for there is a significant increase on the post-test score. It can be concluded that there is the significance difference of students before being taught using the environmental caring English book and after being taught using the environmental caring English book.

To find out the the influence of the teaching material towards the changing of students' attitude and behaviour, the researchers interviewed seven (7) teachers from seven (7) junior high schools. The researchers give some questions dealing with the students' attitude on the awareness of the environmental caring and the result shows that most of the students have better empathy, appreciation on others and know discrimination to their friends. Based on the teachers' observation outside of the classroom, it was also found out that the students' attitude and behaviour is getting better than ever before, for example, the willingness to see their friends who are sick is good. They collect money and buy some fruit given to the students or visit them who are hospitalized. They respect and appreciate more on their friends' comments

or suggestions. Thus it can be concluded that the English teaching material developed by the researchers give positive impact to the students' English attainment and students' attitude and behaviour.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

As it was stated earlier, teaching material plays a big role in educating the students to be better in attitude and behaviour. The fact that the material developed for the teaching of English to the students of junior high schools could enhance their English understanding and even could change their attitude and behaviour due to the insertion of character building in the material. If formerly they were apathetic or uninterested in keeping the environment clean, after being taught using the teaching material developed by the researchers, they have great concern on the environmental caring. So it can be concluded that the use of the English book based on environmental caring equipped with the electronic media gives two fold advantages. On the one hand, it can enhance students' understanding on the English itself and on the other hand, it can enhance the students' awareness on the environmental caring. Thus, it can be suggested that teachers of English should not rely on the teaching material provided by the schools but they can create their own which is much more applicable for the students. Besides, it is also suggested to use the teaching material developed for it is proven can increase students' English understanding and can change their attitude and behaviour toward environmental caring to be better.

It is quite clear then that if character values are integrated in the teaching material, it does not mean that students learn merely on character but they learn it through the medium of language. Character is the content in the teaching material which is stressed to be taught to the students. What is meant by content here is the use of environmental caring as the subject matter which may consist of topics or themes based on the students' need to be integrated in the teaching material. The fact that it was proven the English book on the environmental caring equipped with electronic media can change students' attitude and behaviour.

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