

DEVELOPING DESCRIPTIVE READING MATERIALS ABOUT PALEMBANG HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

Arko Nica

*Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Sriwijaya University, Indonesia
Email: uchaarko16@gmail.com*

Ismail Petrus

*Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Sriwijaya University, Indonesia
Email: ismailpetrus@yahoo.com*

Machdalena Vianty

*Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Sriwijaya University, Indonesia
Email: machdalenavianty@fkip.unsri.ac.id*

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to find out the validity, practicality, and potential effect of developed descriptive reading materials about historical buildings. The developed reading materials were for the seventh-grade students. The development research was based on Akker's three phases: 1) analysis, 2) design, and 3) evaluation and revision. In the evaluation phase, the formative evaluation modified by Tessmer was applied and there were five stages: self-evaluation, expert review, one-to-one evaluation, small group evaluation, and field test evaluation. The validity was determined based on the results of the experts' review and the product was valid which was categorized as high validity. The practicality was determined based on the result of the one-to-one evaluation and the small group evaluation. The product was categorized as very high practical level. The potential effect was evaluated in the field test. The result showed that the product has a potential effect since the students reached the passing grade score. In conclusion, the developed descriptive reading materials about Palembang historical buildings were valid, practical, and has potentially effective for the seventh-grade students.

Keywords: *development research; descriptive text; historical buildings*

INTRODUCTION

In English language teaching and learning process, reading is one of the important skills that should be focused on. As stated by Carrel (1998), reading is one of four major skills considered as the most important in learning English. It is a skill that can help the students to get more knowledge and information. In Indonesia, learning English is a compulsory subject for junior and high school students. Based on the National Curriculum 2013 used, reading is one of the skills which has to be focused on teaching. It is also mentioned that the students have to be able to achieve good reading competencies.

However, students' reading achievement in Indonesia has not been satisfied yet. The data from

Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) showed the ability of Indonesian students to comprehend English texts was low. In 2017, Indonesia was on the 39th world rank out of 80 countries with a score of only 52.15. In 2018, Indonesia was on the 51st world rank out of 88 countries with a score of 51.58. This score was below the EPI average (56.64). In the Asia context, Indonesia was on the 13th rank out of 21 countries with a score of 51.58 in 2018. The score also was below the EPI average (53.49). This data implied that teachers should do something that can encourage the students to have better achievement in reading.

Some factors influence the student's reading achievement. Mohammed and Amponsah (2018)

found that the students lack the confidence to practice, poor motivation from the teachers, lack of pre-reader books, lack of the library, low phonemic awareness skills, and teachers' inadequate knowledge on phonemic awareness strategy. Another thing that the teachers need to focus on had to consider the cultural aspect in teaching English.

Based on Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan Indonesia (2006), curriculum development has to go along with the socio-cultural characteristics of local communities. In line with this, the Indonesian 2013 Curriculum points out that learning materials should be integrated with a variety of cultures or local cultures of where the students live. Indonesia's Government has supported the implementation of local culture materials in education. It is stated in the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 22 and 23 the Year 2006 that the Indonesian Government gives great opportunities for local culture to be integrated into various school subjects for both the curriculum of primary and secondary education.

In the Indonesian Curriculum of 2013 for junior high school, it is emphasized that the English teaching and learning process aims to develop the students' potential to have good communicative competence in interpersonal, transactional, and functional texts by learning some types of text. One of the text types is the descriptive text which is for the seventh-grade students who were the participants of this present study. Descriptive text is a text that describes the features of someone, something, or a certain place (Wardiman, Jahur & Djusman, 2008). It means descriptive text says what a person or a thing is like; it describes and reveals a particular person, place, or thing. The descriptive text tells about the characteristic of the subject and description of people, animals, and things in detail. Noprianto (2017) stated that introducing descriptive text to language learners as soon as possible is important because when students learn nonfiction genres, they automatically engage with the world outside themselves.

Integrating local culture into teaching materials gives valuable benefits for students because it can engage them to be aware and care of their own culture while learning English. Students can add their knowledge about their own culture, maintain and promote their culture to others. Learners who

gain certain cultural knowledge can develop more positive attitudes towards and come to be more tolerant of other cultures (Nguyen, 2017). Furthermore, Agustina, Harahap, and Syahrial (2018) found that the students interested in the reading materials developed. Besides, Wulandari, Vianty, and Fiftinova (2018) found that the integration of local culture in reading materials could improve students' reading comprehension. Integration of local culture in the curriculum will guide the development personality of creative learners so they can choose the cultural values, then applied into their real life. There are three ways to insert the local content (Hartini, 2012), such as culture in teaching material. First, insert the local content in the form of ideas including norms, morals, ethics, and religious values. Second, insert the activities including the traditional ceremony. The last is inserting the artifacts including historical or tourism places, food, and stories. For this present study, historical buildings served as the base for developing the reading materials.

The historical building is an object in the surrounding as documents of cultural expressions or artifacts. They are generally considered buildings or structures that have historical values. The buildings hold special historical interests related to particular historical events or periods. Historical buildings are one kind of local culture in Palembang. Integrating historical buildings into teaching materials is very important to enrich the students' knowledge. It is also considered for having better moral values and it can help to create meaningful learning and influence the students' learning. The most important point of integrating historical buildings as the reading topic is to make the students always remember and be proud of their own culture. Historical buildings in Palembang included Benteng Kuto Besak (BKB), Balaputera Dewa Museum, Sultan Mahmud Baddarudin II Museum, Monpera, Water Tower, Limas House, Siguntang Hill, Masjid Agung Palembang, Rakit House, and Kampung Kapitan.

This present study was started by having an informal interview with the English teacher of a junior high school in Palembang. It was found out that the English teachers only used one textbook "When English Rings a Bell" which was provided by the Indonesian government. In the textbook, there is only one descriptive text entitled "I'm

Proud of Indonesia”. The content of the textbook lacked the local content especially the one that is related to the culture. Whereas, it is important to provide reading text that consists of the students’ background or prior knowledge. Besides, the readability level of the text in the textbook is not relevant to the student’s reading level at level 3. This was the reason why this present study was conducted. It is considered necessary to have supplementary reading materials related to students’ local culture. In this case, supplementary reading is related to the place where the students live. They need to know well, describe and promote the tourism places, products, and local cultures to others.

The previous studies (Ningtyas, 2016; Indriyani, 2016; and Mariana, 2017) have developed Palembang local cultures related to clothes, folklores, and tourism destinations. Some studies conducted local culture in reading materials (Pitaloka, 2015; Susanti, 2017; Monica & Vianty, 2019; Sopian, Inderawati & Petrus, 2019; Elviana, Inderawati & Mirizon, 2020; and Azizah, Inderawati & Vianty, 2021).

This present study focused on developing a supplementary reading on the historical buildings in Palembang. As previously mentioned, the content of descriptive text lacks of the local content and only one paragraph is concerned. The study also aims to use historical buildings in reading materials because no one is exposed to local culture, especially historical buildings in reading materials. It also enriches the students’

local cultural knowledge through the developed reading texts. There is detailed information about historical buildings in the text, so the students will be more familiar with that famous places. In addition, the students can promote and spread widely the existence of Palembang historical buildings in the global world. From the explanation above, the researchers are interested in developing descriptive reading materials about Palembang historical buildings.

METHOD

This present study used a development research method to develop descriptive reading materials about historical buildings. It was described by Akker (1999) who stated that development research aims to design a product for certain purposes through three phases: (1) analysis, (2) design, and (3) evaluation and revision. In the evaluation phase, the formative evaluation modified by Tessmer (1993) was applied. Formative evaluation is a judgment of the strengths and weakness of interaction in its developing stages, for purposes of revising the interaction to improve its effectiveness and appeal. There are five stages in the formative evaluation: self-evaluation, expert review, one-to-one evaluation, small group evaluation, and field test.

This research was conducted at one of the junior high schools in Palembang, involving the seventh-grade students of the academic year 2019/2020 as the participants of the study (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Participants of the study*

No	Formative Evaluation Stages	Number of Students	Descriptive of the Students
1	One-to-one Evaluation	3	1 student for each reading level category, i.e: frustrational, instructional and independent.
2	Small Group Evaluation	9	3 students for each reading level category, i.e: frustrational, instructional and independent.
3	Field Test	30	All students in a real class.
TOTAL		42 Students	

The participants of this study were selected based on their reading level. Their reading levels were determined based on reading level tests by using Jennings Informal Reading Assessment which was developed by Jennings (2001). The student’s reading level is categorized into three levels: frustrational, instructional, and independent

reading levels. The students were selected randomly in each reading level category.

A questionnaire and a reading comprehension test were used to collect the data which were analyzed to determine its validity, practicality, and potential effect. The validity of the product was determined based on the experts’ evaluation. The

products are classified as valid if the average score of the questionnaires is not less than 2.51. The practicality of the product was determined based on the result of the questionnaire that was given to the students in one-to-one and small groups. The product is considered practical if the average score is not less than 2.51. Finally, the potential effect of the developed reading materials was determined based on the result of the field test. The developed product is considered to have the potential effect if the students' score is not below the passing grade (70) and the total percentage of the students who pass the passing grade was 70%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis phase

Instructional analysis

The researcher analyzed the materials related to descriptive text available in students' textbooks. From the textbook, there is one descriptive text entitled "I Am Proud of Indonesia". This descriptive text is available in the textbook for seventh graders but there is no local cultural values in the text. The textbook used by the students entitled "When English Rings the Bells" provided by the Indonesian government. The writer also analyzed the 2013 Curriculum to determine the basic competence, learning indicators, and learning objectives for developed materials.

Students' need analysis

Students' need analysis was conducted to obtain the following information: 1) students' opinion toward reading, 2) obstacles in reading comprehension, 3) perception of the teaching and learning process, 4) perception about the available reading materials, and 5) students' expectations on the developed reading materials. A questionnaire consisted of 30 items was given to the seventh-grade students to obtain the information. Based on the results of students' need analysis, it can be concluded that developed reading materials (i.e. descriptive text about Palembang historical buildings) were needed to be developed.

Students' reading level analysis

The analysis was conducted to find out students' reading level that was used as the reference for determining the readability levels of the developed descriptive text. In this analysis, Jennings Informal Reading Assessment by Jennings (2001) was given to the students. The level of reading texts in the test included levels 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The reason for giving these reading levels to the seventh graders because based on the English teacher reports and the students' reading achievement was at a low level. Table 2 presents the result of the students' reading test.

Table 2. *The distribution of students' reading level*

Text Level	Reading Stage					
	Frustrational (Correct number ≤ 4)		Instructional (Correct number 5-6)		Independent (Correct number 7-8)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Level 1	100	69.4 %	26	18.0 %	18	12.5 %
Level 2	88	61.1 %	35	24.3 %	21	14.5 %
Level 3	66	45.8 %	40	27.7 %	38	26.3 %
Level 4	99	68.7 %	27	18.7 %	18	12.5 %
Level 5	143	99.3 %	0	0 %	1	0.6 %

*N = Number of students

*% = Percentage of students

Design phase

In this phase, the writer developed the reading materials about historical buildings in Palembang as the topic of the text. Based on the result of students' reading level analysis, this developed product was designed for reading level three students. There are ten descriptive texts constructed which are seven texts for reading material and three texts for reading comprehension. Every reading

text has different readability levels that were checked by using Flesh Kincaid.

Reading texts for reading materials was used as an instrument to determine the potential effect of the developed product. The items were informed of multiple choices and true or false statements which consist of 70 items of questions. Reading texts for reading comprehension consists of 30 multiple-choice questions. The content validity and

instructional design validity were validated based on the experts' judgments.

Evaluation and revision phase

Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation was conducted by the writer to re-check the developed reading materials. Some grammatical mistakes and misspelling words were found. Afterward, necessary changes were done to correct the mistakes.

Expert review

The language and content as well as the instructional design were validated based on the experts' judgments. The comments and suggestions as the results of the experts' judgments were used to improve the quality of the product.

One-to-one evaluation

In this phase, three randomly selected participants were involved. They had different levels of reading that represented each level of reading i.e.

frustrational, instructional, and independent reading levels. This evaluation was conducted by video call. Each student was individually shown the developed product to read and they were asked to give comments about the strengths and weaknesses of the product. After that, the students were given the product and completed the exercises in the Google Form.

The one-to-one evaluation aimed to determine the practicality of the developed product and it was done by analyzing the results of the questionnaire given to the students.

The researcher calculated the students' average score from 15 items of the questionnaire and the average score was 3.17 showed in table 3. It can be concluded that the developing descriptive reading text materials about Palembang historical buildings for seventh graders were practical with the high category.

Table 3. Result of questionnaire in one-to-one evaluation

Aspects	No.	Average Score	Remarks
The appropriateness between materials and students' needs	1.	2.66	High Practicality
	2.	2.00	Low Practicality
	3.	3.33	Very High Practicality
Content presentation	4.	2.66	High Practicality
	5.	3.33	Very High Practicality
	6.	3.33	Very High Practicality
	7.	3.66	Very High Practicality
	8.	3.33	Very High Practicality
	9.	3.33	Very High Practicality
Exercise and evaluation aspects	10.	3.33	Very High Practicality
	11.	3.33	Very High Practicality
	12.	3.33	Very High Practicality
Attractiveness of the content	13.	3.66	Very High Practicality
	14.	3.33	Very High Practicality
	15.	3.00	High Practicality
AVERAGE SCORE		3.17	High Practicality

Small-group evaluation

In this phase, the product was given to nine participants who had different reading levels. There were three students in each reading level i.e. frustrational, instructional and, independent reading level. The students who had joined in the one-to-one evaluation were not involved. This phase was similar to the one-to-one evaluation, each student was shown the developed product to read and they were asked to review or evaluate it. The questionnaire was the same used in the one-to-one

evaluation.

After that, the students were given the product and did the exercises in the Google Form. Then, the result of the questionnaire was calculated to determine the practicality of the product. The result in Table 4 shows that the average score was 3.44. It can be concluded that the developing descriptive reading text materials about Palembang's historical buildings for seventh graders were practical with the very high category.

Table 4. Result of questionnaire in small group

Aspects	No.	Average Score	Remarks
The appropriateness between materials and students' needs	1.	3.11	High Practicality
	2.	3.11	High Practicality
	3.	3.66	Very High Practicality
Content presentation	4.	3.55	Very High Practicality
	5.	3.66	Very High Practicality
	6.	3.44	Very High Practicality
	7.	3.22	High Practicality
	8.	3.33	Very High Practicality
Exercise and evaluation aspects	9.	3.77	Very High Practicality
	10.	3.66	Very High Practicality
	11.	3.55	Very High Practicality
	12.	3.55	Very High Practicality
Attractiveness of the content	13.	3.44	Very High Practicality
	14.	3.22	High Practicality
	15.	3.33	Very High Practicality
AVERAGE SCORE		3.44	Very High Practicality

Field test

The field test was a phase in which the developed products were implemented in a real class of seventh graders of junior high school. The students who were participating in the one-to-one evaluation and small group evaluation were not involved anymore in the field test. Thirty students from the real class of seventh grade involved in the field test. The test consisted of three reading texts with 30 multiple-choice questions. Similar to Inderawati, Nurhayati, Sitinjak, & Susanti (2019) who developed narrative text reading material, Haryanti, et al. (2021), and Agustina, Petrus, & Inderawati (2021) who also produced descriptive reading materials. The developed descriptive reading materials on historical buildings in Palembang were given to determine the potential effect of the developed product. The result of the student's achievement in the reading comprehension test is shown in Figure 1.

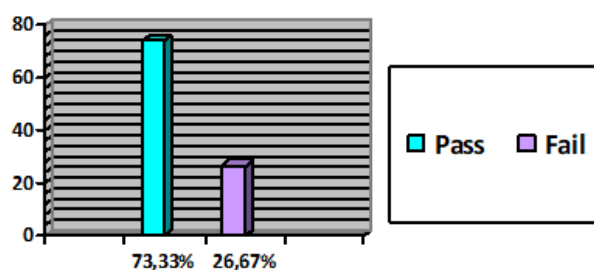


Figure 1. The result of the student's achievement in the reading comprehension test

CONCLUSION

The developing descriptive reading text materials about Palembang historical buildings for seventh graders was valid, with an average score was 3.20. From the validity categorization, the developed descriptive reading materials were categorized high validity. The developed product was also practical based on the results of the one-to-one evaluation with a score of 3.17, the product had a high practical level. In the small group evaluation, the average score was 3.44. Therefore, it can be concluded that the developed product had a very high practical level. Finally, the result of the field test confirmed that the product was valid and had a potential effect on students' reading achievement since 73.33% of students reached the passing grade.

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