DEVELOPING READING MATERIALS USING ADOBE FLASH PROFESSIONAL FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Dwi Susanto, Rr. Hasti Robiasih
Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa University, dwsusanto13@gmail.com

Abstract

The advance of the nowadays computer technology gives a positive effect toward the students' motivation to learn, especially in reading. One of the nowadays computer technology applications is by developing reading materials using Adobe Flash Professional. In this article, the researchers carry out two objectives: (1) to describe the reading materials developed using Adobe Flash Professional for the seventh grade students of junior high school and (2) to describe the coverage of the reading materials developed. The researchers applied the steps of R&D in three sections namely (1) pre-design study from which the needs of reading material were analysed, (2) the materials development from which the product was constructed and (3) the post-design study from which the product was examined. The product is the reading materials about descriptive texts developed using Adobe Flash Professional. The product is based on the school-based curriculum (KTSP) that consists of four sections of learning namely BKOF, MOT, JCOT, and ICOT. Each section has different contents. The coverage of the reading materials include texts, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and micro and macro skills of reading.

Keywords: Adobe flash professional, R&D, reading materials.

Introduction

English has been taught to the students of junior high school since the first year until the third year of learning. The students' ability of using English may be shown by the language skills which consist of four skills namely speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Those four language skills based on the activities can be classified into two. Those are productive activities which include speaking and writing and receptive activities which include listening and reading.

In teaching and learning process specifically in reading, either the teachers or the students are often faced to some problems like the students' low motivation to read, students' limited knowledge of English, and teachers' monotonous ways of teaching or the way the teachers deliver the reading materials. The students may feel less motivated to learn due to the conventional and monotonous explanations of the reading materials in the class. The reading materials themselves seem to be rather difficult so that it will be harder for the students to get the message of the materials when they may have limited knowledge of English and they are less motivated.

Literature Review

Harmer (2002: 190) states that reading is an exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain. The eyes receive messages and the brain works out the significance of the messages. It is a process to understand the meanings of printed or written verbal symbols (texts) (Peter and Jain, 2008:113). Reading is very important to learn because by reading the students may get information to increase their knowledge. According to the standard competence of school based on curriculum (KTSP) 2006, the seventh grade students of junior high school are encouraged in reading to apprehend the sense of functional text and short essay in surroundings.

Beside the materials, the existence of the media also has an important role in teaching and learning process. In teaching and learning reading or the three other language skills, media helps the teachers in delivering the materials to the students (Sudirman in Suwarna, 2006: 128). Media can help the students understand the materials more easily and it may motivate the students to learn.

The media used in teaching and learning may be varied. One of them is by adopting computerized technology. In this digital era, with the advance of computer technology, there has been an interest in using computers for language teaching and learning (Warchauers & Deborah, 1998: 57). The advance of technology likely affects the preference of the students in learning language to use computerized technology rather than using conventional media like textbooks or handouts that might be less interesting for the students. Based on that consideration, bringing this technology into class to be played as a media to teach is apparently important. One that becomes the concern of this study is to develop reading materials for seventh grade of junior high school using software. From the available software, the researchers chose software called Adobe Flash Professional. The advantage of using this software rather than using conventional media to develop materials may be on its flexibility to compile many media such as videos, sounds, pictures, and other media possible in one. Adobe Flash Professional is one of the softwares that not only can develop the materials by compiling those into one but also it can design specific tasks. Easy *coding* is also the advantage of Adobe Flash Professional that can make the tasks flexible to design.

Method

The researchers applied Educational Research and Development or what is usually called as R & D in this study. It is a process to develop a valid educational product (Borg and Gall, 1983:772). The researchers applied five steps of R&D to develop the product of the study namely (1) research and information collecting, (2) planning, (3) developing the preliminary of the product, (4) preliminary field testing and (5) main product revision (Borg and Gall, 1983:775). Those five steps of R&D were divided into three sections: (1) pre-design study from which the researchers obtained the needs of the students of reading materials using interviews, (2) the materials development from which the researchers conducted the product development planning and made the preliminary of the product and (3) post-design study from which the researchers examined the product through experts' judgments and revised the product.

Discussion

In the pre-design study, the researchers obtained the students' needs of the reading materials developed using Adobe Flash Professional. The data was collected through interviews. This data collecting was done to base the reading materials development.

1. Pre-Design Study

In this section, the researchers applied the research and information collecting step (Borg and Gall, 1983:775). The researchers interviewed seven students from seven different junior high schools to obtain the difficulties in learning reading and the needs of the reading materials developed using Adobe Flash Professional. The obtained data is served in the tables below:

Table 1

The students' difficulties in learning reading

No.	The difficulties of the students in reading	Descriptions
1.	The materials	• The reading materials are rather difficult to understand. • The texts given are too long that make the students feel bored in reading. • The vocabulary in the texts is difficult.
2.	The materials explanations	• The explanations of reading materials are too fast. • The students feel that the materials explanations are less clear.
3.	The media	• The media used in teaching and learning processes are less interesting.

Table 2
The students' needs of the developed materials

No.	The students' needs of the developed materials	Descriptions
1.	The materials.	• The texts used may be easy to comprehend. • The texts may be not too long that the students did not feel bored by reading the long texts. • The vocabulary used may be not too difficult.
2.	The exercises.	• The exercises may be varieties. • The product may contain interesting exercises like games. • The individual exercise may be in the form of multiple choices due to practical to be done.

Based on the interviews, the researchers found that the students faced some difficulties in learning reading. They said that the reading materials were quite difficult to understand. The texts given to them were long so they felt bored reading the texts. They also mentioned that they often met some difficult vocabularies in the texts. The students said that they could not follow the materials explanations because the explanations were too fast and less clear that caused the student less understood.

The media used in teaching and learning reading was also less interesting for the students. According to the interviews, the students mentioned the media used were only whiteboards, books, and LCD projectors. The students said they were interested in the reading materials which could be used in computer. In the reading materials developed, they wanted the texts were not too long and also the texts might not use difficult words. The exercises should be interesting and not tiring for them. They suggested giving interesting exercises like games in the developed materials. In addition, they preferred to have multiple choices rather than an individual exercise because they said multiple choices exercise was practical to be done.

In this section, the researchers described the reading materials developed using Adobe Flash Professional and the coverage of the reading materials. The researchers also discussed the result of the expert judgment which the product was examined.

1. Materials Development

The researchers conducted the development planning and made the preliminary form of the product (Borg and Gall, 1983:775) to develop the reading materials. In the planning step, the researchers determined the instructional goal(s) and conduct instructional analysis. The goal of the product is to support learning and teaching processes that the product can help the students in comprehending the sense of functional texts specifically the descriptive texts. Instructional analysis is the step from which the researchers determined reading as the skill and the contents of the product. The contents of the product are based on the pre-design study result. In developing the preliminary form of the product, the researchers worked with Adobe Flash Professional and some supporting softwares such as image editor software, word editor software, and graphic design software.

The product is the reading materials about descriptive texts developed using Adobe Flash Professional. The product has four sections of learning: BKOF, MOT, JCOT and ICOT. Every section has different contents. The product has a guessing game as an interactive warming up activity and it is followed by the vocabulary used in the models of descriptive texts. The guessing game and vocabulary are in BKOF. In MOT, the researchers gave the models of texts in the product. There are some models of descriptive texts, the theories and some exercises related. The exercises are in the form of questions and answers with score, reading aloud, and generic structure analysis exercises that correct the students' works. For the JCOT or a joined activity, the product has a reading puzzle game that can be played in pairs. This game encourages the students to learn descriptive texts by solving the reading puzzle game. The last is ICOT which the product has an interactive multiple choices quiz combined with jigsaw puzzle game. This is an individual exercise that enables to check students' answers automatically and has a scoring system.

The developed reading materials cover some points namely texts, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and micro and macro skills of reading. The texts used in the product are descriptive texts. The researchers determined the descriptive texts as the models of text in the product referred to standard competence and basic competences of school based curriculum (*KTSP*) for the seventh grader level.

The vocabularies used in the product were taken from the texts provided in MOT. There are about eighty four words of adjective, verb, adverb, or noun with the meanings in the product. Every word has a marker of the word classes to point out the class of the word. In addition, the words are attached with the phonetic transcriptions that students can learn pronouncing the words correctly.

The grammar provided in the product is about simple present tense. Simple present tense is a tense used to state an action which is regular or true. The descriptive texts use simple present tense to show the fact about the object described. Besides simple present tense, the students also may learn about attributive and identifying process, adjective and nominal group.

The product has parts to learn pronunciation. First in BKOF, the words in vocabulary list have the phonetic transcriptions. Those are provided for the students in order to help them pronounce the words correctly with the teacher's guidance. Second In MOT, the students have some models of descriptive texts that they should read aloud the texts. With the guidance of the

teacher and the words pronunciation they have learned in BKOF, they may read the texts with correct pronunciation.

There are some micro and macro skills covered in the developed materials. The covered micro skills consists of :(1) recognize the grammatical words classes systems, patterns and elliptical forms and (2) recognize cohesive devices in written discourse and their role in signalling the relationship between and among clauses. The macro skills covered are: (1) Recognize the communicative functions of written texts, according to the form and purpose, (2) infer links connections between events, ideas, etc. deduce causes and effect and detect such relation as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification, and (3) develop and use a battery of reading strategies such as scanning and skimming, detecting discourse markers, guessing the meaning of words from contexts, and activating schemata for the interpretations of texts.

2. Post-Design Study

In the post-design study, the researchers applied the preliminary field testing and main product revision steps (Borg and Gall, 1983:775). To examine the product, the researchers used experts' judgments. The experts were two selected competent lecturers of Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa University. The data was obtained through questionnaires.

Based on the result of the experts' judgments, the product of is an innovative and tool for learning and teaching of seventh grader level. The experts argued that the product is easy to use with clear layout, instructions, materials presentations and animations. The materials in the product are well selected and arranged. Besides, the materials are also matched with the standard competence and basic competences of school based curriculum (KTSP 2006). The product has exercises that are interesting and relevant with the materials. The product also can attract the students' motivation to learn reading and it can help both the students and the teachers in teaching and learning reading. Besides, the experts also give some technical suggestions such as dimmer color selection for the background of the product, some revisions in JCOT and ICOT exercises, and grammar mistakes. Those feedbacks are used to revise the product in main product revision.

Conclusion

The product of this study is the reading materials developed using Adobe Flash Professional for the seventh grader students of junior high school. The product is an innovative and interactive tool for learning and teaching. There are four sections of learning in the product namely BKOF, MOT, JCOT and ICOT which every section has different contents with their features. The reading materials also cover some points such as the texts, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and micro and macro skills of reading. The product can either help the students or the teachers in teaching and learning processes. The product may attract the students' motivation to learn reading in a more interesting way and it may also encourage the teachers to teach in a more various and more innovative way.

References

Borg W. R and Gall, M. D. (1983). *Educational Research: An Introduction.* New York: Longman.

Harmer, Jeremy. (2002). *The Practice of English Language Teaching (3rd Edition).* London: Longman.

Patel, M.F & Praveen M. Jain. (2008). English Language Teaching: Methods, Tools, and Techniques. Sunrise Publisher and Distributor.

Suwarna. (2006). Pengajaran Mikro. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana.

Wauchers, Mark and Debrah H. (1998). *Computers and Language Learning: An Overview.* Cambridge University Press. Vol: 31. pg. 57-71.