DEVELOPING MATERIALS FOR TEACHING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS THROUGH FACEBOOK FOR YEAR SEVEN STUDENTS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

With the boom in technology and the popularization of Facebook among school students, many teachers and students are now utilizing this information sharing network opportunity for academic purposes. In line with the newest curriculum, School Based Curriculum (KTSP), which allow schools to develop the curriculum, this Research and Development (R&D) has inspired me in developing descriptive text material through Facebook. The material is preferred for its importance to be taught in Year Seven Junior High School. In the process of developing the material, this study addresses three problems: (1) What is the initial condition of students before using the descriptive texts material developed through facebook? (2) How is the material in facebook developed for teaching descriptive text? (3) What is the influence of using the descriptive texts material developed through facebook to the students' achievement on writing competence?

The scope of the study is developing material through facebook for teaching descriptive text for Year Seven students of Junior High School so that they are able to create a simple short descriptive text or modify the text by using their experiences.

In developing the descriptive text material through facebook, the method, Research and Development (R & D) was adapted and simplified from the development stages of Borg and Gall. The process started from doing a survey. Then, it was followed by developing material through facebook, experts and teachers validation, doing first revision, trying out the material, doing second revision, and ended by producing the final product. The developed product is the material of descriptive text through facebook entitled "Let's describe it" addressed on letsdecribeit.co.cc. Whereas the content of the developed material was language features, generic structures, sentence based writing and genre based writing.

The real time in trying out the material was 270 minutes (excluding students' final writing). As indicated by the students' final writing and the teacher's opinion in questionnaires, also the result of the study, the material in "Let's describe it" facebook is appropiate for teaching descriptive text for Year Seven students of Junior High School. Hopefully, teachers are able to develop the descriptive text material for other language skills, grades or any other text-types.

Key words: *material development, descriptive text, facebook*

Introduction

It is inevitable that information and communication technologies play very important role in today's education settings. The technologies then expected to charge the nature of instruction and provide learners with cognitively challenging and attractive materials. Through the use of internet and multimedia, learners can engage in individualized instruction where they can investigate and learn concepts and contents to meet their specific needs. Educational researchers believe cognitive growth is informed by existing knowledge (Lee, 2003, Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). However, the existing of today's student technology is fundamentally different from past decades. There is a digital disconnection between how students use technology for their everyday communication and how the students use technology in the classroom. Outside the school students communicate through instant messaging, cell phones and internet. These technologies are not just toys, rather essential for students to communicate with the world. Nevertheless, schools are failing to recognize the digital world of students outside of schools. In order for teachers to tap into the everyday technology knowledge of students, teachers must believe these technologies can benefit classroom instruction.

Students are now heavily immersed in Web 2.0 technologies (i.e. Blogs, twitter, social network sites, virtual worlds, video sharing and photo sharing). They are crafting on-line lives that seamlessly meld with their off-line world. According to Munoz and Towner (2009), educators are now turning to Web 2.0 tools, drawing upon their ability to assist in creating, collaborating on and sharing content.

Social network sites are now quickly becoming ubiquitous online. With the boom in technology and the popularization of social networking among school students, many teachers and students are now utilizing this information sharing network opportunity for academic purposes.

According to the latest data (March 2010) of ebizmba.com there are more than 20 social network sites available today with the most popular one is facebook. Created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, facebook now has 722.434.829 users and most of them are students.

Facebook in Indonesia placed in the first rank of top ten popular social network sites surveyed by Axela.com in March 2010. The number of users then bring our country as the third biggest user of facebook in the world after USA and Turkey (mbzes.com). In addition, in line with other countries, students contribute the biggest number of facebook users in Indonesia. They typically spend an average of five or more per week on facebook and have an average of 800 "friends" (people connected to them on the website) most of them are other students.

Since facebook is the world's largest online student information sharing network, facebook is the ideal platform to spread academic information, course work, study material, and more in an inexpenssive and highly efficient way and in an environment that their students are most comfortable with.

Hence, the study is intended to bring and develop material through facebook in the classroom where both students and teacher can use it as tools of knowledge. The researcher conducted a study on Research and Development (R & D) to develop materials for teaching Descriptive text through facebook for Year VII students of Junior High School. The product is "let's describe it" facebook. Since the time for conducting try out, that is sheduled in May 2010 is in the material of descriptive text, so, descriptive is chosen to be material that will be developed in this study.

Problem Statements

According to the above background, there are 3 proposed questions:

1) What is the initial condition of students before using the descriptive texts material developed through facebook?

2) How is the material in facebook developed for teaching descriptive text?

3) What is the influence of using the descriptive texts material developed through facebook to the students' achievement on writing competence?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1) To examine the initial condition of students before using the descriptive texts materials developed through facebook.

2) To develop the material of decsriptive text through facebook for teaching descriptive text.

3) To examine the the influence of using the descriptive texts materials developed through facebook to the students' achievement on writing competence.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be assumed to be as follows:

1) Theoretically, a language competence (such as generic structures and language features) is essential to be explained in teaching descriptive text, especially in writing skills.

2) Practically, the materials developed through facebook is expected to be applied in students daily activities and hopefully, the students are able to develop and modify the materials through their own experiences.

3) Pedagogically, further studies should be conducted to develop materials through other social network sites and other approaches for teaching other language skills, grades or any other text-types.

The General Concept of Writing

In the classroom, there is a combination of two kinds of writing. Brown (2001:340) argues that another way to look at the authenticity issue in classroom writing is to distinguish between real writing and display writing. Moreover, he said that real writing is writing when the reader doesn't know the answer and genuinely wants informations. In classroom setting, the students are more likely to be given the opportunity to convey genuine information on topics of intrinsic interest

On the other hand, display writing gets the students to perform well in order to learn skills that will help them succeed in further academic pursuits.

Both the use of real and display writing are considered by the ages and levels of the study. For beginners, real writing is prefered than display one. Based on the limited vocabulary and the mastery of grammar that the students in this level have, it is easier for them to practice writing using a model from teachers. In order to create the model, the

teachers are able to do display writing by using any tools or facilitations available at school. Here, they sometime have to combine between spoken and written language.

Hyland (2004:111) points out that any language course needs a way of sequencing learning by integrating written and spoken genres. In the real world texts, the sequencing is by using families of genres. For constructing a descriptive text, it needs steps to achieve a goal as the main feature.

Material Development

According to Borg and Gall (1983:772) research and development (R & D) is one reseach design aimed at developing and validating educational products. the process involves identifying problems that need to be solved by educational products, like textbooks, syllabus, assessment instruments, etc., studying the principles of writing instructional media, developing the media based on the principles, field testing it in the setting where it will be used eventually, and revising it to correct the deficiences found in the field-testing stage.

Teaching and Learning Descriptive Text

In teaching and learning activities, there are a group of steps that is applied in each meeting. Feez and Joyce (2002:28) state five stages of teaching and learning activities. They are represented in figure 1 below.
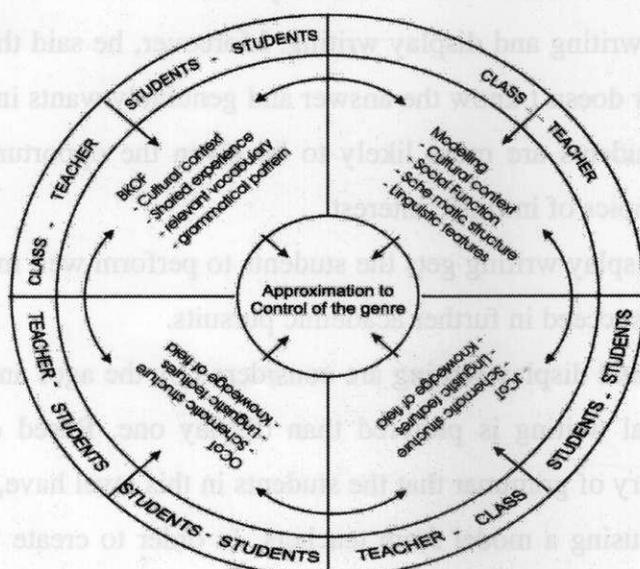
Figure 1.   Stages of Teaching / learning cycle, adapted from Feez and Joyce (2002:28)

In the classroom (as stated by 2004 Curriculum), two cycles of genre approach – spoken and written cycles consist of four stages for each. The four stages are Building Knowledge of the Field, Modeling, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction of the Text.

Method of the Material Development

The study used R & D approach, since the objectives of the study are to develop and innovate the descriptive text materials through facebook for Year Seven students of Junior High School. According to Borg and Gall (1983:772) research and development (R & D) is one reseach design aimed at developing and validating educational products. The process involves identifying problems that need to be solved by educational products, like textbooks, syllabus, assessment instruments, etc, studying the principles of writing instructional media, developing the media based on the principles, field testing it in the setting where it will be used eventually, and revising it to correct the deficiences found in the field-testing stage.

The R & D process has been constructed in developing written descriptive text materials in facebook for the year seven students of junior high school. It was held in this level by considering on the descriptive text that has basically taught in semester 2 year 7.

The process of the materials development involves seven stages which is scaled down from the original R&D cycles by Borg and Gall. The stages are:

(1) Stage 1: mapping

The materials that was developed consistent with the content standard for year seven of junior high school of 2009/2010 academic year, has already been decided to be implemented in second semester. The specification of the materials was made based on the integration of four language skills. It was represented in mapping result.

Mapping here means a plan or format of the integrations. Content standard's mapping consists of Standard of Competences, Basic Competences, language skills, text-

types, and number of meetings. Likewise, mapping is also used to recognize the situation and condition during teaching-learning process combined with educational calender.

After the mapping refered to the Content Standard, the writer made the syllabus and lesson plan based on the Standard of Competences and Basic Competences. The syllabus, as mentioned before, was based on the Content Standard.

In addition, in this stage, in order to obtain data about the initial conditions of students before being taught by the materials developed through facebook, I employ questionnaire and pre test writing which are given to Year VII students of SMP Negeri 8 Semarang. They are aimed at examining the students' initial conditions and whether they are familiar or even have a facebook account.

While SMP Negeri 8 Semarang is chosen for its heterogenous achievements of the students, the latest rank from "Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Semarang" in 2009 is eight. Moreover, the school is facilitated with library and language laboratory which is equipped with some computers and internet access which can be used by the students freely.

Before the questionnaire is distributed to students and teachers, its validity will first be tested by experts.

(2) Stage 2: develop preliminary form of product

In this stage, I developed the materials of my facebook based on the result of the mapping. I put my attention on developing the materials of descriptive text through facebook for teaching descriptive texts for Year VII students of Junior High School.

The product is descriptive text materials in facebook. The facebook enclosed photos and tables. The writer applied Microsoft Word 2007 in making the written materials and Adobe Photoshop CS3 and Microsoft Office Onenote 2007 in presenting both table and pictures in the facebook. Moreover, the materials developed in facebook was presented in "Notes" feature.

(3) Stage 3: experts and teachers validation

Before the materials in facebook is used in the real classroom setting, they need to be tested by English lecturers, and English teachers in order to gain some valuable suggestions dealing with the effectiveness of the facebook. All the experts will be given

numerical scoring instrument sheet containing indicators, scores and some spaces for additional suggestion.

All of the mapping, syllabus, lesson plan, developing materials (the facebook) were validated by experts and teachers. The forms of experts and teachers validation were altered and taken from Byrd (2000) in Murcia (2001:425), Richard (2002:274), and Depdiknas (2004) since the three resources overlapped each other.

The viewpoint of the forms were subject matter, language (vocabulary and structure), exercises, suit to the curriculum, suit to the students and teachers for legalizing student book, and suit to the teachers for legalizing the facebook.

The evaluation scores were 4 (excellent), 3 (good), 2 (adequate), 1 (poor), and 0 (zero). The teachers who do the validations were English teachers who have at least five years experience in teaching. The experts as well as the teachers may give any suggestions for the materials' improvements.

(4) Stage 4: first product revision

In line with the checklist of validation forms and suggestions from the experts and teachers, the writer intended to do some revisions. She consulted the revised materials development to her advisors before doing a tryout. When they were sure about the validity, she was able to move on the next step.

(5) Stage 5: first main field testing

There was a school where the writer would tried out her materials development in one class. Here, she would observe some data about the school.

(6) Stage 6: second product revision

The criteria employed for the validity of the tryout in sorting out the materials development are suitability with the curriculum. The level of difficulty, the attractiveness, the effectiveness, the practicality, the clarity of the length, the content, the speed of delivery, and the style of delivery. They are stated in questionnaire (questionnaire for the teacher). At this activity, the questionnaire might be responded by the teacher as the tryout completely done. When 80% of them estimate the criteria as at least fair, the materials did not need to be revised.

The materials development is catagorized to be successful if the frequency of the students' scores attain at least 72 (the minimum standard score of passing grade of SMP N 8 Semarang which can be dissimilar in each school) from 80% of the students.

(7) Stage 7: producing final product

Finally, the writer should do the editing and revising the materials in order to generate better products. The final descriptive text materials was written and finalized with some illustrations related to the theme 'Superman". Then, the fixed materials development was ready to be published to public through the internet.

Findings and Discussion

In order to know the initial conditions of students before being taught with the descriptive text materials developed through facebook, the writer employed both questionnaire and pre test writing. The activity was started from February to March 2010. The questionnaire consits of eleven questions that asking whether students have already been familiar with facebook, whether they have a facebook account, their common activity on facebook, their opinion about descriptive text materials and the sources of learning descriptive text and their willingness to accept the idea of teaching descriptive text through facebook.

The result of the students questionnaire showed that all the students are familiar with facebook and there are 32 students have facebook account (from total 36 students). It means that facebook has already known by the students. Dealing with their opinon obout the descriptive text materials there are 28 students (64%) said that such materials is difficult. Moreover, the source of learning descriptive text are only from their teacher and the text book.

Though the teacher sometimes using computer and LCD as the media to teach, but the teacher did not present the materials through those media but pictures and films. Hence, all the students answered yes for the last question which asking their willingness in accepting the idea of learning descriptive text with the developed materials through facebook.

After distributing questionnaire, the writer conducted a pre test writing that asking the students to write a short descriptive text about their favourite stuff or figure.

Considering the scoring rubric of writing, the result of pretest showed that the passing grade of the students reached only 22,2%. It means the result of the students writing failed to fulfill the standard requirement of class passing grade that is 80%. Thus, after knowing the initial conditions of the students, the writer then doing a curriculum mapping.

In line with the curriculum framework and the graduated competence standard, the mapping of the basic English in Content Standard for Year Seven,

Semester 2 of Junior High School consists of four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), four text-types (transactional & interpersonal, short functional, procedure, and descriptive texts), and 36 numbers of meetings. The actualization of Content Standard in teaching learning process in a School Based Curriculum is based on Standard of Competences and Basic Competences. By doing a survey through the mapping of Content Standard and collaborating with official educational calender, this study of developing descriptive text materials through facebook was presented notably for only writing skill. It was contributed in 4 meetings being aligned with the School Based Curriculum development principles to equalize between national and local needs under the coordination and supervision of "Dinas Pendidikan Provinsi".

Afterwards, the mapping process was persisted by formulating the syllabus and lesson plan based on the Standard of Competences and Basic Competences. The syllabus which was centred on the Content Standard was compiled on the standard of competences and basic competences, instructional materialss, learning activities, indicators, evaluations, time allotment, and sources.

Developing Materials of Descriptive Text In Facebook

Materials was developed into a product of descriptive materials in facebook. The texts were adapted/ modified from people around the students that were suitable with their environment. The contents come from many authentic books,magazines and internet. While the photos were taken and edited from a digital camera or Adopted Photoshops. Both illustrations of the pictures and photos were rearranged by applying symbols, shapes, images, from Office 2007.

After the drafts of materials development were gathered, they were systematically arranged based on writing activities. The writing sections were presented in stages (Building Knowledge of the Field (BKoF), Modelling of the Text (MoT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCoT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICoT)). Moreover, the materialss presented in facebook are divided into 15 activities. Each activity followed by some instruction for students. The instruction then directs the students to follow the materials.

a. Experts and Teachers Validation

In developing written procedure text materials, there were three experts and two English teachers who did validations.

The experts are:

1) Dr. Abdurrachman Faridi, M.Pd, an English lecturer of Semarang State University, a tutor and a text book writer and reviewer.

2) Ahmad Sofwan, P.hD an English lecturer of Semarang State University, and The Head of English Department of Semarang State University.

The English teachers are:

1) Nur Zaida, S.Pd, M.Pd, an English teacher and a Junior High School text book writer.

2) Budi Hartanto, S.Pd, an English teacher of SMP N 8 Semarang.

The result of the experts and teachers validation

Product	The average of the validation				
	Experts		Teachers		Average
	1	2	1	2	
"letsdescribeit" materials	3,30	2,96	3,48	3,70	3,36
"letsdescribeit" facebook	3,57	2,86	3,61	3,57	3,40

The table above shows that the average of the experts and the teachers' validation on "letsdescribeit" materials and "letsdescribeit" facebook were between 3.36 and 3.40. It means that the product is appropriate with the criteria of the materials standard. The judgments and the suggestions from the experts and the teachers were applied to revise the product.

b. Doing First Revision

In accordance with the experts' comments, judgments, and suggestions, the first expert viewed the language used in the descriptive materials. They should be better written in the simple sentences (not more than 7 words for each sentence) and the choices answer for the particular questions should not be bias.

Another expert commented on the contents, it needed to be more developed. The first activity was suggested to be in the form of question not command. in addition, some activities should be answered in the comment box, not just orally. the instructions given for each activity should be clearer.

Besides, one English teacher pointed out two matters that should be revised. First was still about instructions in each activity. They should be simplified so that students did not have misunderstandings. Second, the address of the facebook which first regarded too long to remember.

c. **The Tryout**

The tryout was conducted in two weeks (every Wednesday and Saturday). On Wednesday, the meeting took three periods (3 X 40 minutes), while on Saturday the meeting took only two periods (2 X 40 minutes).

All the materials development was saved as a draft in the notes box. It was the writer who was responsible to publish few minutes before class begins. Hence, when the class begins, the teacher just followed the activities published in facebook. Moreover, all the students activities were recorded in comment box of each activity.

d. **Doing Second Revision**

In revising the materials development that is comprised into 'suitability with the curriculum, the level of difficulty, the attractiveness, the effectiveness, the practicality, the clarity of the length, the content, the speed of delivery, and the style of delivery criteria', the writer did not only refer to the first revision and the result of the tryout but also the teacher's questionnaires. The first revision showed that most of the experts and teachers estimated more than adequate on the materials. As the result, in this second revision, the materials did not need to be revised. The suggestions of the teacher about adding some interesting picture had been completed.

e. **Producing the Final Product**

In the last part of developing materials, the writer did editing and revising in order to generate a better product. Thus, she add the label of BKOF, MOT, ICOT and JCOT in each activity in order to help teachers follow the teaching stages.

The final descriptive text materials was published with the picture of Superman put in the wall and use the slogan of Superman (It's not a bird, It's not a plane, It's Superman.....) to get the wall more attractive to both students and teacher.

The Influence of Using the Developed Materials through Facebook to the Students' Achievement on Writing Competence

Here, the teacher and the writer collaborated checking students' scores fr writing descriptive. The writer gave the teacher scoring rubric of how to assess writing. The scoring was done by both teacher and the writer. The teacher gave a score for each criteria of the students writing and the writer counted the final score they got.

As indicated by the students' answers and the teacher's opinions in questionnaires, and the result of the study, the **letsdescribeit** materials through facebook is appropriate to grade seven students of Junior High School.

According to the agreement of the school stake holder, the minimum standard score of passing grade of this school at least reaches 72 from 80% of its students. In this materials development, the writer used the same. It meant that a student was categorized having achieved the individual learning mastery, if he/she got at least 72 score. Along with the students' final writing results above, most of the students were categorized having achieved the individual learning mastery.

The highest score for writing descriptive is 92 and the lowest score is 67. The passing grade of students writing reach 80,56 %, means that it has fulfilled the school standard. Furthermore, though the effectiveness of an instructional product can not be measured only by considering their final achievement the letsdescribeit materials has successfully in getting the students excitement and triggering their curiosity to learn. From the personal interviewed conducted after the tryout, the students revealed that after applying letsdescribeit for teaching descriptive text, they became understand the use of descriptive, when the need to use it and how to construct a descriptive text.

The Teacher's Opinion on the Materials

Fortunately, the teacher is not only teaching English but also ICT (Information Communication Technology), so he was very excited to apply **letsdescribeit** materialss through facebook in his English class. Thus, made the writer not to spend much time to explain how to use this materials.

During this study, he remarked the practicality (the ease of preparing & implementing the materials development) and efficiency of applying this facebook for teaching descriptive (the function of using the materials development in teaching-learning process). He added using facebook for mediating the communication during the teaching and learning process is brilliant idea, since facebook is becoming ubiquitous online among the students, brought it to the classroom will be very attractive.

Moreover, in order to support the conclusions of the study, the teacher was invited to give any responses related to the materials development by filling a questionnaire. They could whether the contents were suitable for them and the time allotments were agreeable.

Conclusion

The action of the materials development through and the result of this study are summarized as follows:

a) The result of the students questionnaire showed that all the students are familiar with facebook and there are 32 students have facebook account (from total 36 students). It means that facebook has already known by all students. Dealing with their opinon obout the descriptive text materials there are 28 students (64%) said that such materials is difficult. The source of learning descriptive are only from their teacher and the text book and though the teacher sometimes using computer and LCD as the media to teach, but the teacher did not present the materials through those media rather pictures and films. The result of pretest showed that the passing grade of the students reached only 22,2%. It means the result of the students writing failed to fulfill the standard requirement of class passing grade that is 80%.

b) Developing Materials, was combined by some activities. The activity was started by adapting some texts from existing materials/ text books and articles in the internet. The next process is competent experts and teachers validation on the developed draft product (the mapping, syllabus, lesson plan and **letsdescribeit** materials through facebook) as the result in developing the materials. By referring to the validation forms of the experts and teachers, the writer did a revision. The next stage is trying out upon the developed product. In the tryout of the materials, there were teaching and evaluation activities. After trying out, the writer did second revision and produced the final product.

c) After being taught by using the developed materials through facebook, the total average of students' achievement writing competence (based the average of students' writing test) was 77 raised from the pre test which only reach 63. Moreover, the students passing grade reach 80 %. The students revealed that after applying **letsdescribeit** for teaching descriptive text, they became understand the use of descriptive, when the need to use it and how to construct a descriptive text.

Recommendations

In line with the conclusions of this study, the recommendations presented below may be proposed into a similar study as well as English teachers who are going to apply this materials development in their classrooms.

a) The product of this study is practical as one of groundwork in developing teaching-learning materials by using available school facilities.

b) Generally, teachers who apply the product should attempt it first before conducting teaching-learning process.

c) Specifically, further writers are able to develop materials through other social network sites and other approaches for teaching descriptive text for other language skills, grades or any other text-types since this materials development focuses only on one language skill, one text-type, and one grade.

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