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Development of Foreign Language Teaching Material Based on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) to Increase Students' Literacy Skills

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to develop an foreign language teaching material based on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and to investigate the impacts of the implementation of the teaching material in increasing students' literacy skill. This study used research and development approach by adopting ADDIE model which consisted of 5 steps (Analyze-Design-Develop-Implement-Evaluate). The participants of the study were 25 students who took English subject in the German education study program in the fifth semester. An assent form was given to all the participants. Data were collected by using study test results, scale and interview. The data of the study were 1) the results of validation test from five expert validators regarding the teaching material being developed, 2) the results of students' study test comprised of writing and reading tests, and 3) qualitative data regarding students' responses to the teaching material being developed. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to make categorization of pre-test and post-test scores, while inferential statistics were used to analyze the paired sample t-test to know if there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test. The results of the study showed that the implementation of HOTS-based teaching material being developed had positive impacts significantly on the improvement of students' literacy skill, which were in this regard the results of learning General Writing and Reading course. Students responded favorably to the implementation of the teaching material because it allowed them to think critically and creatively.

Keywords: Teaching material, Foreign language teaching, Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), Studens' literacy skill.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching English for non-native English speakers has been studied by researchers using various approaches and objects of the study (Jiang, et al., 2019; Lee, 2019; Lee, et al., 2019; Yu, 2019; Chen, et al., 2019; Mantasiah, et al., 2018; Mantasiah, et al., 2020; Mannahali et al. 2020). Some studies took advantage of information and communications technology (ICT) in the process of teaching English (Jiang, et al., 2019; Atyang, et al., 2018; Lee, 2019), and some others developed teaching models or materials in English learning, such as blended-learning model, augmented reality, diagnosing and review mechanism, and other learning models or methods. Furthermore, some studies focused on the language learners' attitudes, such as academic motivation, self-efficacy, and self-integrated learning, in the learning process (Mantasiah & Yusri, 2018; Yusri, et al., 2017; Hu & Gao, 2018). In general, the implemented approach in the learning process has been adjusted with the learners' needs. Therefore, some learning models or teaching materials that have been developed are not all able to be implemented to all English learners due to the adjustment to the learners' needs.

There are two skills that English learners should develop that are receptive and productive skills. Receptive skills consist of listening and reading skills, while productive skills are writing and speaking skills. It has been explained previously that the approaches required in the English learning process depend on the results of analysis on students' needs; one of which is which skills students want to master. The learning models for listening are certainly different from the learning models for reading as well as for reading and speaking. As a result, teachers should take needs analysis into account when developing a learning model or teaching material.

The current study focuses on the students' literacy skill in learning English, including reading and writing skills. Much research has been done to study students' reading skill in English learning, including the development of learning method to improve reading skill, the development of teaching material, and factors contributing to students' reading skill (Yu, 2018; Liu, 2018; Davis, et al., 2018; Calderon & Slakk, 2018; Koda & Yamashita, 2018). Besides, many studies have been conducted to investigate students' writing skill in English learning process (Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Haghghi, et al., 2019; Wang, 2019). The results of those studies showed that in addition to grammar and vocabulary, another problem most students encountered in writing was the lack of ideas.

Based on the observation during the process of teaching English, it was found that students still had low interest in reading English texts, such as English textbooks, journal articles, and other English reading sources. Students' low interest in reading negatively affected vocabulary mastery, speaking skill, and more importantly writing skill (Jannah & Mulyadi, 2019; Poedjiastutie, 2018; Shih & Reynolds, 2018). Low interest in reading is closely related to students' literacy skills. It has been explained before that literacy skills in language learning are defined as reading and writing skills of the learners. Trenkic & Warmington (2019), Goodrich, et al., (2019), McKinley (2019), Miles (2019), Babinski (2018) explained that literacy skills are basic skills which must be considered in language learning because low literacy

skills have negative influence on the vocabulary mastery, speaking skill, and the results of language learning in general.

One of the important skills learners must possess to help them learn English, especially in writing and reading, is higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). HOTS are skills that require language learners to master critical and creative thinking skills (Krulik and Rudnick, 2000). Krulik and Rudnick (2000) added that HOTS involve reasoning skill and critical thinking. HOTS have become one of the most common approaches used to increase learners' critical thinking skill. In general, HOTS are defined as an approach in learning where students are taught to think critically, logically, reflectively, metacognitively, and creatively. Studies about the implementation of HOTS in foreign language learning have been done (Singh & Shaari, 2019; Salleh & Halim, 2019; Febrina, et al., 2019; Setyarini & Ling, 2019; Setyarini, 2019; Ntatamala, et al., 2019). Those studies showed that HOTS had positive impacts on the improvement of the learners' writing, reading, and English skills in general.

This study aims to develop a HOTS-based teaching material that can be useful in writing and reading class. This teaching material focuses on getting students familiarized with how to think critically and creatively. The implementation of the teaching material is expected to improve students' HOTS which have favorable impacts on students' literacy skills, including writing and reading skills. The development of this teaching material is hopefully able to increase the quality of English learning, especially at university level.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research and Development

The study used Research and Development approach. ADDIE (Analyze-Design-Develop-Implement-Evaluate) method was employed in the current study and has been used by many previous researchers to develop teaching materials (Siti & Paulus, 2019; Astuti, 2019; Hartini, et al., 2019; Mulyadi, et al., 2019). This model is considered capable of being the guideline in developing effective, dynamic, and practical learning tools and infrastructure. This model is comprised of five phases: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation.

¹⁴ Participants

The participants of the study were 25 students of German Education program in the fifth semester taking English subject. An assent form regarding the consent to be involved in the study was given to all participants.

Data Collection Techniques

Learning test, documentation, interview, observation, and questionnaire were used to collect the data. The data were divided into two types. First, the results of validation test from the validators who were expert in the development of English teaching materials. Before implemented in the learning process, the teaching material was tested by five expert validators. Second, the results of the learning test of the students by taking writing and reading tests. IELTS general writing and IELTS general reading were used as the writing and reading tests. In

writing test, students were instructed to write an essay with a predetermined topic consisting of a minimum of 250 words within one hour. On the other hand, the reading test was comprised of 40 questions from five passages done within one hour. Another type of data was qualitative data regarding students' responses to the teaching material being developed.

Data Analysis Techniques

Two techniques to analyze the data were employed that are descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to categorize data regarding the results of validation on the teaching material as well as pre-test and post-test scores. Inferential statistics were the analysis of paired sample t-test used to discover if there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test data. The results of validation on teaching material before it was implemented were the data of the study. The method of assessment used by the validators was Likert scale with four-point scales for each component (Arikunto, 2007). It is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Criteria of Validation on the Teaching Material Using Likert Scale

| Score | Criteria |
|-------|---|
| 4 | Good/interesting/feasible/easy/appropriate. |
| 3 | Slightly good/slightly interesting/slightly feasible/ slightly easy/slightly appropriate. |
| 2 | Less good/less interesting/less feasible/less easy/less appropriate. |
| 1 | Not good/not interesting/not feasible/not easy/not appropriate. |

There components were used by the validators in the assessment process which were the feasibility of the material, the presentation, and the language usage.

Tabel 2. Specifications of Validation by Experts

| Validated Components | Indicators |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Feasibility of the Material | a. The material and the assignment in the teaching material require students to think critically. b. The material and the assignment in the teaching material require students to think creatively. c. The material is accurate (no concept is wrong). d. The types of reading materials and the topics for writing are very up to date. e. The material in the book is in accordance with the curriculum of English teaching in general. |
| Feasibility of Presentation | a. The material presentation is performed in a coherent, systemic, straightforward, and intelligible manner. |

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| | b. The material in reading assignment highly supports writing assignment. |
| | c. The material in the book contains no SARA (ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations) and pornography, accommodates diversity, and acknowledges gender orientation. |
| | d. Chapters, subchapters, and concepts are interrelated. |
| | e. Font types and sizes are readable. |
| Feasibility of Language | a. The language used is easy to understand. |
| | b. The use of terms, symbols, and/or icons is appropriate. |

The collected data were then categorized based on the criteria of validity developed by Akbar (2013) cited in Mantasiah et al (2020).

Table 3. Value Scales of Validity of the Teaching Material Being Developed

| Value Scale (%) | Level of Validity |
|-----------------|---|
| 85.01 – 100.00 | Very valid, can be used but needs minor revisions |
| 70.01 – 85.00 | Valid, can be used but needs minor revisions |
| 50.01 – 70.00 | Less valid, can be used but needs major revisions |
| 01.00 – 50.00 | Not valid, cannot be used |

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Results of Validity Test on the Teaching Material

The teaching material being developed was later validated by five expert validators who have considerable experience in the development of English teaching materials for non-English speakers. ¹³ The results of validity test are presented in the following table.

Table 4. Results of Validity Test on the Teaching Material by Expert Validators

| Validated Components | Indicators | Percentage (%) | Validity |
|-------------------------|--|----------------|------------|
| Feasibility of Material | The material and the assignment in the teaching material require students to think critically. | 87.5 | Very Valid |
| | The material and the assignment in the teaching material require students to think creatively. | 87.5 | Very Valid |
| | The material is accurate (no | 80 | Valid |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------|-------------------|
| | concept is wrong). | | |
| | The types of reading materials and the topics for writing are very up to date. | 80 | Valid |
| | The material in the book is in accordance with the curriculum of English teaching in general. | 80 | Valid |
| Feasibility of Presentation | The material presentation is performed in a coherent, systemic, straightforward, and intelligible manner. | 80 | Valid |
| | The material in reading assignment highly supports writing assignment. | 100 | Very Valid |
| | The material in the book contains no SARA (ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations) and pornography, accommodates diversity, and acknowledges gender orientation. | 93.3 | Very Valid |
| | Chapters, subchapters, and concepts are interrelated. | 93.3 | Very Valid |
| Feasibility of Language | The language used is easy to understand. | 87.5 | Very Valid |
| | The use of terms, symbols, and/or icons is appropriate. | 87.5 | Very Valid |
| | Total Score | 86.96 | Very Valid |

Based on the data above, it can be seen that the average validity of the teaching material being developed is very valid with the total score of 86.96. Some improvements that had been done based on the suggestions from the validators are: 1) the topics of the reading and writing assignments should vary greatly so that students are able to acquire a wider range of vocabulary, 2) the level of grammar difficulty in writing assignments should be adjusted with the curriculum of teaching English at universities, 3) the explanation of “registers” should be given and put next to each passage, 4) reading passages should be organized coherently based on the level of difficulty, and 5) the instructions of assignments should be given more clearly. The suggestions from the validators were taken into account to revise the teaching material. After the revision, the teaching material was used in English reading and writing class.

Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Reading Class

Table 5 below describes the ⁵ pre-test and post-test scores of the students in General Reading class.

Table 5. *Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Students in General Reading Class*

| Correct Answers | Band Score | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | |
|-----------------|------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | | Number of Students | Percentage (%) | Number of Students | Percentage (%) |
| 39-40 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 37-38 | 8.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 35-36 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 32-34 | 7.5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 20 |
| 30-31 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 28 |
| 26-29 | 6.5 | 6 | 24 | 10 | 40 |
| 23-25 | 6 | 4 | 16 | 3 | 12 |
| 18-22 | 5.5 | 13 | 52 | 0 | 0 |
| 16-17 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 13-15 | 4.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10-12 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 25 | 100% | 25 | 100% |

Table 5 above indicates that the students' reading scores increase. Before the intervention, the majority of students (52%) received the band score of 5.5 with 18-22 correct answers and the students' maximum score was 28 with the band score of 6.5. After the intervention, however, most students (28%) received the band score of 7 with the correct answers 30-31 and the maximum score was 34 with the band score of 7.5. The increase of the students' scores in General Reading course can be seen in the table below.

¹⁰ **Table 6.** *Paired Samples Statistics*

| Pair | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------|-----------|-------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| Pair | Post-Test | 28.76 | 25 | 3.140 | .628 |
| | Pre-Test | 22.04 | 25 | 3.482 | .696 |

In Table 6, it can be seen that the average pre-test score was 22.04 with standard deviation of 3.482, while the average post-test score was 28.76 with standard deviation of 3.140. Therefore, it can be concluded that the value of the increase was 6.720. To find out the significance of the score improvement, ² paired sample t-test was conducted. The results can be seen in the following table.

Table 7. Results of Paired Sample T-Test

| | Paired Differences | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|-------|--------|-----------------|-------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | | | | Upper |
| Post-Test – Pre-Test | 6.720 | 1.242 | .248 | 6.207 | 7.233 | 27.046 | 24 | .000 |

The results of paired sample t-test shows that the significance level was 0.000 lower than the standard significance level used which was 0.05. The t-table and t-count values also need to be considered. The value of t-count was 27.046 higher than that of t-table which was 2.063. These two values prove that there was a significant increase on the students' learning results in General Reading course after the intervention.

Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Writing Class

Table 8 below describes the students' pre-test and post-test scores in General Writing course.

Table 8. Pre-Test and Post Test Scores of the Students in General Writing Class

| Band Score | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | Number of Students | Percentage (%) | Number of Students | Percentage (%) |
| 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| 6.5 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 24 |
| 6 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 20 |
| 5.5 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 16 |
| 5 | 4 | 16 | 6 | 24 |
| 4.5 | 10 | 40 | 3 | 12 |
| 4 | 11 | 44 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 25 | 100% | 25 | 100% |

In general, it can be seen that there was a difference in students' study results before and after the intervention. Regarding the pre-test results, 44% of students received the band score of 4 and 40% of received 4.5. However, in regard to post-test results, the same number of students (24%) obtained the band scores of 6.5 and 5. Based on the pre-test results, the students' minimum band score was 4

and the maximum was 5. Meanwhile, based on the post-test results, the students' minimum band score was 4.5 and the maximum was 7.

¹¹ **Table 9.** Paired Samples Statistics

| | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--------|-----------|-------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| Pair 1 | Post-Test | 5.660 | 25 | .7461 | .1492 |
| | Pre-Test | 4.360 | 25 | .3686 | .0737 |

Table 9 indicates that the average pre-test score was 4.360 with standard deviation of 0.368, while the average post-test score was 5.660 with standard deviation of 0.746. It can be concluded that there was an increase of 1.300. To find out the significance of the increasing value, ² paired sample t-test was performed. The results can be seen in the table below.

Tabel 10. Paired Samples Test

| | ² Paired Differences | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | |
|----------|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|--------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | | | | Upper |
| Post-Pre | 1.300 | .4564 | .0913 | 1.1116 | 1.4884 | 14.24 | 24 | .000 |

Table 10 above illustrates the significance values was 0.000 lower than the standard significance value which was 0.05. In addition, the values of t-count and t-table were also obtained. The t-count value was 14.241 higher than the t-table value which was 2.063. The significance value as well as the t-count and t-table values indicates that there was a significant increase of students' study results in General Writing class after the intervention.

Discussion

One of the causes why students are not familiarized with high order thinking is the use of conventional methods in the learning process which is mostly teacher centered. As a result, teachers' role is highly dominant. Besides, some test results suggested that teachers conducted tests to examine low cognitive abilities, such as remembering or memorizing. Ball & Garton (2005) and Aksela (2005) said that low order think skills include remembering, memorizing, and little understanding, while high order thinking skills cover problem solving skill in a higher level of a basic thinking skill. Ball and Garton (2015) added that to solve problems well requires the abilities to apply, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, generalize, compare, deduct, clarify information, conclude, and make decisions. One of the methods to familiarize students with high order thinking is by developing HOTS-based teaching materials.

The results of the study suggested that English teaching material being developed was able to significantly improve students' literacy skills which are

reading and writing skills. The teaching material did not merely give instructions to students to memorize or remember, but required them to be able to conclude, hypothesize, analyze, implement, synthesize, evaluate, and compare. To answer Higher Order Questions, students needed good reasoning skill by thinking logically using knowledge, comprehension, and skills they possessed and made associations with new situations covered in the questions. One of the advantages of the teaching material being developed is that the assignments given to students were adjusted with the learning condition in the classroom and outside the classroom related to daily life. The topics of the reading passages or the topics developed by students into essays were contemporary and frequently discussed by public so that they were able to attract the students' interest.

The findings of the current study are similar with previous studies that proved that students' HOTS influenced their literary skills, including both reading and writing skills (Febrina, et al., 2019; Singh & Shaari, 2019; Setyarini, et al., 2018; Chew, et al., 2018; Susiati, et al., 2018). The literacy skills in those studies can be applied not only in learning English, but also in learning other subjects. The current study is different from previous studies in terms of how the concept of HOTS is implemented. Previous studies implemented HOTS in the learning models or approaches, while the current study integrated HOTS with the teaching materials. The advantage of the integration is to facilitate teachers in teaching English.

The findings of the study can also be implemented in the process of foreign language learning globally since the results of the study can reinforce the process of English learning for non-English speakers. The teaching material can be employed not only by the learners from Indonesia, but also by the learners from other countries. This is because the topics of the teaching material are global although adaptation or modification is necessary. The current study recommends that one of the effective methods in increasing students' literacy skills in learning foreign languages, including English, is the use of teaching materials that require students to have high order thinking skills. This is because high order thinking skill had a favorable influence on the students' literacy skills.

CONCLUSION

The development of the HOTS-based teaching material proved effective in significantly increasing students' literacy skills, including reading and writing skills. The data collected from expert validators and students' reading and writing classes showed that the teaching material was effective and feasible to be implemented in the process of English learning at universities. The current teaching material has several advantages: 1) the current teaching materials allow students to be the center so that they have more dominant roles than teachers; 2) students are familiarized with assignments that require them to be able to draw conclusions, make hypotheses, implement, synthesize, evaluate, and compare; remembering and memorizing are not the case anymore; and 3) students develop contemporary and various topics so that they feel more interested in reading and writing. These advantages that distinguish the currently developed teaching materials from other teaching materials impact positively on students' literacy skills.

9 **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article

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