Interactive Teaching Materials Based on Character Education to Improve English Reading Comprehension of Elementary School Students

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh rendahnya pemahaman membaca bahasa Inggris di kalangan siswa kelas IV SD dan kebutuhan akan bahan ajar interaktif yang tidak hanya meningkatkan kemampuan akademik, tetapi juga karakter siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengembangkan dan menguji efektivitas bahan ajar interaktif berbasis pendidikan karakter untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa. Penelitian menggunakan metode Research and Development (R&D) dengan subjek penelitian siswa kelas IV SD. Instrumen yang digunakan meliputi lembar observasi, penilaian ahli terhadap konten dan struktur bahan ajar, serta kuesioner untuk mendapatkan umpan balik dari guru dan siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi di kelas, penilaian ahli, dan wawancara. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif untuk mengetahui efektivitas bahan ajar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bahan ajar interaktif, yang terdiri dari game digital, cerita, dan kuis, dapat meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa secara signifikan dan meningkatkan keterlibatan belajar mereka. Selain itu, integrasi pendidikan karakter dalam bahan ajar ini mempromosikan sikap dan perilaku positif pada siswa. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa bahan ajar interaktif berbasis pendidikan karakter efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan membaca, dan perlu diterapkan pada mata pelajaran lain dengan pelatihan guru yang berkelanjutan untuk hasil optimal.

ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the low reading comprehension of English among grade IV elementary school students and the need for interactive teaching materials that not only improve academic ability, but also students' character. This study aims to develop and test the effectiveness of interactive teaching materials based on character education to improve students' reading comprehension. The research uses the Research and Development (R&D) method with the research subject of grade IV elementary school students. The instruments used include observation sheets, expert assessments of the content and structure of teaching materials, and questionnaires to get feedback from teachers and students. Data was collected through classroom observations, expert assessments, and interviews. The data was analyzed using descriptive analysis to determine the effectiveness of teaching materials. The results of the study show that interactive teaching materials, consisting of digital games, stories, and quizzes, can significantly improve students' reading comprehension and increase their learning engagement. In addition, the integration of character education in this teaching material promotes positive attitudes and behaviors in students. The implication of this study is that character education-based interactive teaching materials are effective in improving reading skills, and need to be applied to other subjects with continuous teacher training for optimal results.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education has a very important role in improving the quality of human resources. Through education, individuals not only gain theoretical knowledge but also practical skills needed to face the challenges of the world of work and daily life. In addition, education also instils moral and ethical values that are essential to forming a responsible character and contributing positively to society (Novianti, 2017; Nugrahani, 2017a, 2017b). With wider and more equitable access to quality education, individuals can

increase their chances of securing better jobs, which in turn will result in higher income levels. This has a direct impact on improving the quality of life, both individually and in the community. Therefore, the learning process should be well designed and implemented to ensure that every individual has the opportunity to develop their potential to the fullest. This approach will produce human resources who are not only competent in their fields but also able to compete at the global level, innovate and adapt to rapid changes in various sectors (Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021; Hidayati, 2016; Songbatumis, 2017). Through this way, education can become a strong foundation for sustainable economic development and equitable social welfare.

One of the major challenges facing education in Indonesia is the low interest in reading among students, which directly affects their level of comprehension in reading (Al Falaq et al., 2021; Amin & Wahyudin, 2022; Fitria, 2019). The latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results for 2022 show that Indonesian students' reading interest is still at a concerning level, and this demands serious attention from various parties, including the government, educators, parents and the community. This low interest in reading not only impacts students' ability to comprehend texts but also affects their overall learning outcomes in various subjects. Particularly in English language learning, primary school students often face difficulties in comprehending English texts as well as in developing overall language skills. This challenge becomes more complex when students have no interest in English lessons, which can worsen the quality of their learning. These issues point to the need for a more strategic approach in increasing reading interest and improving learning methods, so that students can be more engaged and develop their literacy skills, especially in foreign languages such as English (Dewi et al., 2021; Suryantini et al., 2024).

The teaching of English in primary schools in Indonesia faces a variety of complex challenges, which include aspects of the education system, the quality of teaching, as well as environmental factors. One of the main problems is the lack of qualified teachers to teach English, especially in rural or remote areas (Anggela et al., 2024; Fadilah et al., 2023; Oktavianti et al., 2023). Existing teachers often do not have sufficient language skills or effective teaching methodologies to teach English well. This results in a suboptimal learning process, where students do not get a strong foundation in English early on. In addition, many schools in remote areas also suffer from a lack of supportive learning facilities, such as adequate textbooks, language labs, or stable internet access. The absence of such facilities further deteriorates the quality of English language teaching and learning, as students do not have sufficient resources to develop their language skills. This reflects the need for more comprehensive interventions from the government and other stakeholders to improve the quality of English language teaching in primary schools, especially in underserved areas, so that all students have equal opportunities to learn and master English effectively (Lesmana et al., 2024; Nurfadila et al., 2024).

Initial observations showed that the teaching of English in the fourth grade of primary schools in Gugus IV Diponegoro Yehembang is still less innovative, with the main focus on vocabularies and tenses. One of the biggest obstacles faced is the lack of interactive teaching materials, which makes the learning process tend to be monotonous and less challenging for students. The lack of English reading materials also hinders the development of students' language skills, including grammatical understanding, critical thinking skills, character education, and general knowledge (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016; Nasution et al., 2022). Based on these problems, the development of interactive teaching materials based on character education becomes very important to integrate aspects of character education and at the same time improve students' English competence. There are three main reasons underlying the need for the development of interactive teaching materials based on character education. First, English materials that are contextualised and able to build students' character are currently not available, so there is an urgent need to fill the void. Second, the development of interactive teaching materials based on character education will help students build competence in using English more effectively and contextually. Third, teaching based on digital stories serves not only as a means to learn English but also as a tool to shape students' overall character, so that they are not only skill in language, but also have strong character values. Integrating these aspects in teaching materials will provide a more holistic and meaningful learning experience for students.

The novelty of this study is that this study focuses on the development and effectiveness of character education-based interactive teaching materials to improve English reading comprehension among elementary school students, which is still rarely discussed in the academic literature. The study highlights how the integration of character education in interactive teaching materials, such as digital games, stories, and quizzes, is able to create an immersive and meaningful learning experience for students. This study aims to explore and explain how interactive teaching materials based on character education can strengthen reading skills while shaping students' positive attitudes and behaviors. By identifying challenges and opportunities in the application of character education through interactive media, it is hoped that this

study can provide deeper insight into the important role of character education in the English learning process and its impact on improving the quality of basic education.

2. METHOD

This research was conducted in Gugus IV Diponegoro Yehembang, Jembrana Regency, Bali, which consists of 12 primary schools. The researcher designed interactive teaching materials based on character education. The character education-based interactive teaching materials have been designed to help fourth grade primary school students to improve English reading comprehension. English teachers served as the first informants in this research. This research uses questionnaires, interviews, and documentation as data collection methods.

In the first phase, the problem of English reading comprehension of fourth-grade primary school students was analysed. The documents that have been analysed are the English learning outcomes and the fourth grade *'My Next Word'* package book published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia to get the topics and materials. The second phase was the design process. The researcher created a blueprint containing themes, topics, English stories, and activities related to the topics as well as developing character values in each story. The next step was to create the English stories. The third phase is the development process. After the design process, the researcher developed everything into digital-based teaching materials for fourth grade primary school students. The last phase is evaluation.

This research design is R&D (Research and Development) which consists of four phases: analysis, design, development, and evaluation. These phases refer to solving students' learning problems. The product will be evaluated by (a) experts in English Language Education teaching for young learners in the context of content validation including materials, media, and English and also (b) educational technology expert in the context of the effectiveness of the animation product.

The data collection method consists of two types, namely qualitative data collected using documentation techniques, quantitative data collected by distributing questionnaires and t-test: (a) Documentation study. This technique was used to collect data on topics or themes for English materials. The documents analysed were the English learning outcomes and the teacher's handbook My Next Word. The English materials were designed based on the English learning outcomes used by teachers in the independent learning curriculum. From the analysis, topics were determined. Then, the characters that can be inserted in each topic from the Pancasila learner profile were determined. Furthermore, documentation study was also used to collect information about story-based learning activities. Here, the documents analysed were books containing materials on literature-based teaching; (b) Distributing questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed to measure the quality of the developed product. The questionnaire covered 5 dimensions, namely: content, book structure, activities, language, and cover and layout. The questionnaire used a Likert scale with a range of 1-5. The questionnaire was given to experts where they were assigned to measure the quality of the developed book based on the questionnaire; (c) The t test is conducted to determine how far an independent variable affects the variation in the dependent variable.

The analysis method was conducted to find the content validity of the e-learning-based reading materials developed. This analysis method involves two experts to evaluate the product based on the prepared expert assessment sheet. Both experts assessed the product whether it was relevant to the blue print that had been developed previously. If both judges believe that an item has strong relevance, it will be placed in cell D. If the first judge believes that an item has strong relevance but the second judge judges that the item has weak relevance, it will be placed in cell B, but if the first judge feels that the item has weak relevance, and the second judge feels that the item has strong relevance, it will be placed in cell C. Whereas if both judges feel that the item has weak relevance, it will be placed in cell A. If all the data has been analysed, the content validity is formulated.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Interactive teaching materials based on character education to improve English reading skills of grade IV elementary school students are developed in the form of textbooks and web applications (barcode scanning) that can be opened or accessed online by teachers and students. This character education-based interactive teaching material is developed with the help of applications and inserts story content with the following titles: The Forest Festival, Gebogan, The Adventure of Botak, The Lion's Plan, Preparing for Galungan and Kuningan, Pancoran, Botak and Mango Tree. The results of the design and development of interactive teaching materials are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Title and Descriptions on Character Education-Based Interactive Teaching Materials to Improve Elementary English Reading Comprehension

No.	Picture	Description
1	The Forest Festival	Character insertion : cooperation Language focus : (Simple Present Continuous Tense) To Be (am/is/are) + verb *ing* (preparing, working, gathering, decorating, setting, building, bringing, making, organizing, dancing, singing, enjoying, performing, having)
2	Gebogan	Character insertion : teamwork Language focus : (Numbers 51-100) (+) = plus (-) = minus (:) = divided by (x) = times / multiple
3	The Adventure of Botak	Character insertion : dicipline Language focus : Rooms in house (bedroom, bathroom, living room, dining room, garage, kitchen, study room). Preposition (on, in, beside, behind, between)
4	The Lion's Plan	Character insertion : hard-working Language focus : Simple Present Tense **Example:** The lion helps the animals. The animals dig a pond.
5	Preparing for Galungan and Kuningan	Character insertion : respect and gratitude to the God Language focus : Preposition (on, between, in)
6	Shower	Character insertion : creativity Language focus : Simple Present Tense (don't, doesn't)
7	Botak and Mango Tree	Character insertion : independent Language focus : Modal Auxiliary (can, can't)

Interactive teaching materials based on character education to improve reading comprehension of grade IV elementary school students have been validated by three expert judgement who have expertise in their respective fields. This validation process aims to ensure that the teaching materials developed are not only effective in terms of pedagogy, but also relevant and in accordance with the needs of students. Table 2 is a detailed explanation of the experts involved in the validation process. Interactive Teaching Material Validation Results in Table 2.

Table 2. Interactive Teaching Material Validation Results

Assessed aspects	Average	Level
Content	4.8	Very High
Structure Books/Apps	4.7	Very High
Activities/Interactive Quizzes	4.8	Very High
Language	4.8	Very High
Cover/Layout	4.9	Very High

Based on the assessment results, the following Table 2 presents the average and level for each aspect assessed: Content: The average score is 4.8, with a Very High level. This indicates that the content presented is very appropriate and relevant to the learning needs. Book/Application Structure: Average score of 4.7, with a Very High level. A good structure allows users to easily understand and access the required information. Interactive Activities/Quizzes: Average score of 4.8, with a Very High level. The interactive activities and quizzes provided are effective in increasing student engagement and understanding. Language: Average score of 4.8, with a level of Very High. The use of clear and easy-to-understand language supports students in the learning process. Cover/Layout: Average score of 4.9, with a level of Very High. The attractive cover and layout design adds visual appeal and makes users more interested in using the app. Overall, the assessment results show that the app is feasible and quality in various aspects, creating a positive learning experience for students.

This section presents the results of research on testing the effectiveness (influence) of the implementation of Interactive Teaching Materials Based on Character Education to Improve Reading Ability of Elementary Students in Gugus IV Diponegoro Yehembang. Testing the effectiveness (influence) of the implementation of Interactive Teaching Materials Based on Character Education to Improve Reading Ability of Elementary Students was carried out through statistical analysis of data on the value of students' reading ability from the application of learning using these teaching materials. The analyses conducted include: (a) Table 3 presents descriptive statistical analysis, which includes statistical data on students' English reading comprehension in the sample school SDN 5 Yehembang; and (b) Table 4 presents hypothesis testing.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Pretest and Posttest Results

Group	Sample		
	Lowest Score	**Highest Score**	**Average**
Pretest	70	80	75
Posttest	80	92	86

The results of the pretest and posttest are summarized in Table 3, highlighting the effectiveness of the interactive teaching materials. In the pretest, students scored between 70 and 80, with an average score of 75. This indicates a moderate level of reading comprehension before the intervention. After implementing the interactive teaching materials, the posttest scores showed significant improvement. The lowest score in the posttest increased to 80, while the highest score rose to 92, resulting in a new average score of 86. This increase in both the lowest and highest scores, along with the higher average, suggests that the students demonstrated notable progress in their English reading comprehension after using the interactive materials. These findings reflect the positive impact of incorporating character education into the learning process.

The paired t-test was used to compare English reading comprehension before and after using interactive learning materials based on character education to improve reading comprehension of fourth grade elementary school students. Testing the normality of the data using the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality* in the SPSS programmed. The basis for decision making can be done based on probability (Asymtotic Significance), namely: (a) If the probability> 0.05 then the distribution of the regression model is normal; (b) If the probability <0.05 then the distribution of the regression model is abnormal.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

Value	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
Groups	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	0.132	26	0.200	0.942	26	0.152
Posttest	0.160	26	0.086	0.934	26	0.099

The test results with the t-test can be done by observing the significant value of t at the α (0.05) level. The analysis is based on the comparison between significant t and significant 0.05. The basis for the decision taken in the t-test is: (a) If significant t < 0.05, then the H0 hypothesis is rejected. This means that the independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable; (b) If significant t > 0.05, then the H0 hypothesis is accepted. This means that the independent variable has no significant effect on the dependent variable. This test will use paired-sample t-test to analyze the difference between pre-test and post-test in a sample. This test aims to: (a) Measure the significant improvement in students' reading ability after the use of interactive teaching materials; (b) Comparing the improvement with the pretest to see if the

character education-based interactive teaching materials are more effective than conventional learning methods.

Discussion

The research on the design of interactive teaching materials based on character education aims to enhance English reading comprehension for fourth-grade elementary students (Inderawati et al., 2022; Kurniaman & Zufriady, 2019). These materials are created as both textbooks and web applications, which can be accessed online via barcode scanning. The content includes engaging stories, each focused on a specific character trait, such as cooperation, teamwork, and respect. For instance, "The Forest Festival" emphasizes cooperation while teaching the Simple Present Continuous tense, whereas "Gebogan" focuses on teamwork through numbers and basic arithmetic operations. The interactive materials not only address language skills but also integrate character education to foster moral values in students (Sakti et al., 2024; Sukarno & Riyadini, 2024). The story "The Adventure of Botak" teaches discipline through vocabulary related to rooms in a house and prepositions, while "The Lion's Plan" illustrates hard work with examples in the Simple Present tense. Other stories, such as "Preparing for Galungan and Kuningan," highlight respect and gratitude to God, reinforcing cultural values alongside language learning. This approach reflects a holistic educational strategy, promoting both language proficiency and character development, which is essential in shaping well-rounded individuals. As noted by researchers, integrating character education into academic curricula can lead to more meaningful learning experiences (Aghni et al., 2020; Putri et al., 2020; Thoyyibah et al., 2019). Overall, these interactive materials present a comprehensive method for improving English reading comprehension while instilling important life skills in young learners.

The study on the validity of character education-based interactive teaching materials reveals a strong endorsement from expert evaluators. Three specialists in education, specifically focused on teaching English to children and interactive media development, assessed the materials. Their evaluations aimed to ensure that the teaching resources are not only pedagogically sound but also tailored to meet the needs of fourth-grade students. The validation results are impressive, with high average scores across several key aspects. The content received an average score of 4.8, classified as "Very High," indicating its relevance to the learning objectives. The structure of the book and application scored 4.7, also categorized as "Very High," which suggests that the materials are well-organized and user-friendly. Interactive activities and quizzes garnered an average score of 4.8, demonstrating their effectiveness in engaging students and enhancing understanding. Additionally, the language used was rated 4.8, affirming that it is clear and accessible for young learners. The cover and layout received the highest average score of 4.9, reflecting a visually appealing design that likely attracts students' interest. Overall, the assessment confirms that these interactive teaching materials are both valid and high-quality, contributing positively to the learning experience of students (Rughoobur-Seetah & Hosanoo, 2021; Wang & Zhu, 2019). Such findings are supported by the research indicating that well-designed educational materials significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes (El-Sabagh, 2021; Jibililu, 2024; Shen, 2024).

The research on the effectiveness of interactive teaching materials based on character education for improving English reading comprehension among fourth-grade students at Gugus IV Diponegoro Yehembang reveals significant positive outcomes. The study utilized descriptive statistical analysis and hypothesis testing to evaluate the impact of these materials on students' reading abilities. Descriptive analysis of pretest and posttest results showed that before the intervention, students scored between 70 and 80, with an average of 75. After using the interactive materials, the posttest scores ranged from 80 to 92, with an improved average of 86. This notable increase in both the lowest and highest scores indicates substantial progress in students' reading comprehension, highlighting the effectiveness of integrating character education into their learning. To further assess the effectiveness, a paired t-test was conducted. The normality of the data was confirmed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. Results showed a significant t-value, indicating that the interactive materials had a meaningful impact on students' reading skills compared to conventional methods. Overall, the findings support the notion that character education-based interactive teaching materials can significantly enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes (Maryam, 2023; Novianti, 2017; Wahono, 2018).

The results of this study make an important contribution to understanding the effectiveness of character education-based interactive teaching materials in improving English reading comprehension of elementary school students. This study shows that the integration of character education in interactive teaching materials can provide a learning experience that is not only fun but also immersive and meaningful for students. These interactive teaching materials not only play a role in honing students' reading skills, but also play a role in the formation of positive attitudes and behaviors, which are important for the overall character development of students. Efforts to incorporate character education in the English language learning process are gaining increasing attention, reflecting the awareness of the importance of a holistic

approach in primary education. These findings can be the basis for further research on the development of interactive teaching materials that support character education in the elementary school curriculum. The research also underscores the need for a more inclusive and innovative approach to English language learning for children, which can ultimately support broader educational goals in building a generation of intelligent and characterful people. One of the limitations of this study is the limitation in evaluating the long-term impact of the use of character education-based interactive teaching materials on the formation of student character. Therefore, further research is recommended to study the long-term effects of these teaching materials as well as how their interactive design can be continuously improved.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research demonstrated that interactive teaching materials based on character education significantly improve English reading comprehension among fourth-grade students. The analysis showed a marked increase in students' reading scores after using these materials, indicating their effectiveness in enhancing learning outcomes. By integrating character education into the curriculum, the materials not only improved language skills but also fostered important values in students. This study suggests that such interactive approaches can be beneficial for developing both academic abilities and character in young learners.

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