

# Development of Contextual-Based Indonesian Language Teaching Materials to Improve the Reading Ability of Grade VIII Junior High School Students

Irmaelianna Harahap<sup>1\*)</sup>, Rahmat Kartolo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Al-Washliyah Muslim Nusantara University, Medan, Indonesia

Email: [elliannairma@gmail.com](mailto:elliannairma@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [rahmatkartolo@umnaw.ac.id](mailto:rahmatkartolo@umnaw.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

Correspondence Authors: [elliannairma@gmail.com](mailto:elliannairma@gmail.com)

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop contextual-based Indonesian language teaching materials to improve the reading ability of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 7 Siobon, Mandailing Natal Regency. The background of this study is the low reading ability of students caused by the lack of interesting, contextual teaching materials that are in accordance with student needs and the curriculum. This study used a research and development (R&D) approach with a modified Borg and Gall development model. The development process was carried out through the stages of preliminary study, planning, product development, expert validation, limited trials, product revision, and field trials. The trial subjects were 30 grade VIII students, and data were collected through validation questionnaires, student response questionnaires, and reading ability test instruments. The validation results showed that the teaching materials received very good assessments from material and learning design experts, with an average score of 4.5 (very good category). Teachers' assessments also showed an average score of 4.2–4.5, which was categorized as good to very good. In the field trial stage, the average score of student responses to the teaching materials was 3.8 (good category), covering aspects of content suitability (3.98), language and image readability (3.7), material presentation (3.8), and visual appearance (3.7). In addition, from the results of the effectiveness test, there was an increase in students' reading ability based on the results of the pretest and posttest. Students showed an increase in scores on the indicators of the ability to find explicit and implicit information and to conclude the content of the reading. The developed teaching materials present contextual reading texts, reflective activities, evaluations, and exercises that are arranged based on a contextual approach, considering the students' environment and culture. Learning is arranged in stages and encourages students to think critically and actively to understand the content of the reading. Thus, the developed teaching materials are proven to be feasible, practical, and effective in improving the reading skills of grade VIII junior high school students.

Keywords: Teaching Materials, Reading Skills, Contextual Approach, Development

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading literacy is a fundamental prerequisite for academic success and lifelong learning. In the contemporary era of rapid technological development and information explosion, individuals are required to process increasingly large amounts of written information efficiently and critically. In the school context, reading ability not only determines students' performance in language subjects but also has a strong impact on learning in other disciplines, as most content areas rely heavily on written texts as primary sources of information (Gilland et al., 2025).

In Indonesian junior high schools, the Indonesian language subject occupies a central position in the curriculum and is one of the core subjects assessed in national examinations. Official curriculum documents emphasize that Indonesian language education should develop students' abilities to communicate effectively, think critically, and appreciate national literary heritage. Within this broad mandate, reading—especially reading for comprehension—plays a strategic role because it underpins students' capacity to access, understand, and evaluate information across subjects. Nevertheless, many students perceive Indonesian as an “easy” subject that requires little effort, which often results in low investment in reading tasks and superficial engagement with texts (Salindri et al., 2025).

Empirical evidence indicates that Indonesian students' reading ability remains a serious concern. International large-scale assessments, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), have repeatedly

shown that Indonesian students score below the OECD average in reading literacy, with a high proportion of students performing at the lowest proficiency levels. Many students can only decode or reproduce isolated pieces of information and struggle to integrate ideas, infer implicit meaning, or critically evaluate texts. National assessments and classroom-based observations at various levels of schooling corroborate this pattern, revealing weaknesses in fundamental reading skills as well as higher-order comprehension (Santi et al., 2025). Several factors contribute to this situation. First, classroom practices are often dominated by teacher explanations and question-answer sessions that focus on literal recall rather than strategic reading. Second, teachers tend to rely heavily on a limited number of textbooks or student worksheets (LKS), which may not be fully aligned with curriculum demands or students' characteristics. Third, there is a scarcity of teaching materials specifically designed to build reading skills systematically, especially materials that incorporate approaches known to support comprehension, such as context-based learning, strategy instruction, and metacognitive reflection. Consequently, students have few opportunities to engage in meaningful reading activities that connect texts to their own lives and communities (Oktavia et al., 2025).

The situation observed at SMP Negeri 7 Siobon, Mandailing Natal Regency, reflects many of these national trends. Informal observations and initial interviews with teachers revealed that Grade VIII students experienced difficulties in understanding longer texts, identifying main ideas and supporting details, and summarizing or drawing conclusions from what they read. Students tended to be passive during reading lessons, participate minimally in discussions, and show low motivation for independent reading. Teachers acknowledged that the available textbooks were limited in variety and did not sufficiently support the development of reading skills, particularly reading that requires higher-level comprehension and critical engagement. The materials also tended to focus on grammatical structures and literal questions, paying less attention to contextual understanding and real-life relevance (Puspitaloka et al., 2026).

Meanwhile, national policy frameworks explicitly call on teachers to develop and adapt learning materials in accordance with curriculum standards and learners' needs. Government regulations on national education standards state that teachers are responsible for elaborating core competencies and basic competencies into teaching materials that are appropriate for their students' developmental level, learning context, and sociocultural background. This requirement implies that teachers should not only select from existing textbooks but also be able to design or adapt materials that fill gaps in available resources and respond to specific learning problems, such as low reading proficiency (van der Lans et al., 2025).

One promising pedagogical framework for such material development is contextual teaching and learning (CTL). CTL conceptualizes learning as the process of actively constructing meaning through interactions between new information and learners' prior knowledge and experience. It emphasizes that content should be connected to students' real-life contexts—such as family, community, local culture, and contemporary social issues—so that learning becomes meaningful, engaging, and functionally relevant. Within CTL, students are encouraged to inquire, ask questions, collaborate, observe, reflect, and apply what they have learned to new situations. Authentic assessment is used to capture students' performance in real or realistic tasks rather than merely measuring short-term recall (Riyana et al., 2025).

In terms of reading instruction, CTL suggests that texts and activities should be selected and designed in ways that allow students to connect textual content with their lived experiences and local environment. Reading tasks may involve exploring issues that are familiar and significant to students, such as environmental conditions in their village, local cultural practices, family life, or regional economic activities. Through guided inquiry, students can be led to identify problems, seek information from texts, discuss possible solutions, and reflect on the implications for their own lives. Such an approach is expected to increase motivation to read, deepen comprehension, and foster higher-order thinking skills, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (McIlroy & Kamata, 2025).

In addition to pedagogical considerations, the quality of teaching materials must also be evaluated according to formal criteria. National evaluation instruments for textbooks and teaching materials highlight four essential aspects: content suitability with curriculum standards; clarity and coherence of presentation; appropriateness and readability of language; and attractiveness and functionality of graphic design. For reading materials, these criteria translate into demands that texts and tasks should be accurate, age-appropriate, well-structured, linguistically accessible, visually engaging, and diverse in genre and source. Teaching materials that meet these criteria can support both teachers and students in organizing learning activities and achieving targeted competencies (Musfidah et al., 2025).

Against this backdrop, the development of contextual-based Indonesian language teaching materials focusing on reading for Grade VIII at SMP Negeri 7 Siobon is both necessary and timely. Such materials are expected to: (1) provide teachers with a concrete model of a reading-oriented, CTL-based teaching resource aligned

with the current curriculum; (2) offer students engaging and meaningful reading experiences that reflect their sociocultural environment; and (3) contribute empirical evidence regarding the feasibility, practicality, and effectiveness of contextual-based teaching materials for improving reading ability (Joshi, 2026).

Therefore, this study was designed with three main objectives. First, it sought to describe the process of developing Indonesian language teaching materials that are pedagogically sound, contextually grounded, and oriented toward improving students' reading ability. Second, it aimed to specify the characteristics and components of the resulting teaching materials in terms of content, structure, language, and design. Third, it examined the feasibility, practicality, and effectiveness of the developed materials based on expert judgment, teacher evaluation, student responses, and students' pretest and posttest performance in reading. By systematically documenting the development process and outcomes, this study aspires to inform practitioners and researchers interested in designing similar materials in comparable contexts.

## II. METHODS

### A. Research Design

This study employed an R&D design to produce and test an educational product in the form of Indonesian language teaching materials for reading. R&D is an approach that combines development activities with systematic evaluation to generate and validate instructional products. The model adopted in this study was adapted from Borg and Gall, which outlines a cyclical process comprising several interrelated stages, starting from needs analysis and ending with product refinement after field testing.

The choice of R&D design was aligned with the study's dual purpose: to generate a tangible instructional product and to examine its quality and effectiveness in authentic classroom settings. Rather than merely describing existing practices, the study sought to intervene by proposing, developing, and empirically validating an alternative solution to the identified problem of low reading ability and limited reading materials (Creswell, 2021).

### B. Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 7 Siobon, located in Mandailing Natal Regency. The school serves students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, with many coming from rural and semi-rural communities. The focus was on Grade VIII students because they occupy a transitional position between lower and upper secondary schooling and are expected to handle increasingly complex texts across subjects.

Several groups of participants were involved at different stages of the research. First, two university-level experts served as validators: one specialist in Indonesian language teaching and materials development (material expert) and one specialist in instructional design (design expert). Second, Indonesian language teachers from SMP Negeri 7 Siobon participated as evaluators of the practicality and classroom relevance of the materials. Third, Grade VIII students participated in a limited trial (small group) and a subsequent field test (larger group). The field test involved 30 students, representing a mix of low, medium, and high initial reading ability, as indicated by previous teacher assessments (Sugiyono, 2019).

### C. Development Model and Procedure

The R&D process followed in this study consisted of several major stages:

#### Preliminary Study and Needs Analysis

At this stage, the researcher conducted a review of the curriculum, especially the core and basic competencies related to reading for Grade VIII. Existing Indonesian language textbooks and teaching materials were analyzed to identify gaps in coverage, depth, and alignment with contextual teaching principles. Informal classroom observations and interviews with teachers were conducted to document current reading practices, perceived difficulties, and constraints in using available materials. This analysis confirmed the need for teaching materials that explicitly target reading skills, incorporate contextual content, and offer varied and interactive tasks (Moleong, 2022).

#### Planning

Based on the needs analysis, specifications for the teaching materials were formulated. These specifications included the overall objectives of the materials (improving students' reading ability), targeted competencies (such as identifying main ideas, locating explicit and implicit information, and summarizing texts), the contextual approach to be embedded, and the structure of the teaching materials. Decisions were made regarding the format (printed module), unit organization, types of texts to be included (e.g., narrative, descriptive, and expository texts relevant to students' lives), and the integration of CTL components such as

constructivist activities, inquiry tasks, questioning prompts, group work, modelling, reflection, and authentic assessment.

#### Draft Development of Teaching Materials

In this stage, an initial draft of the teaching materials was produced. The draft comprised the following: (a) an introduction explaining the purpose and how to use the book; (b) a table of contents and concept maps; (c) units organized around themes related to students' daily experiences; (d) clearly stated learning objectives for each unit; (e) reading texts with local, regional, and broader relevance; (f) while-reading and post-reading activities; (g) exercises designed to develop speed and comprehension, including tasks that require students to locate specific information, infer meaning, and summarize; (h) reflective activities linking the text to students' personal experiences; and (i) formative assessment tasks aligned with unit objectives. Visual elements, such as illustrations and layout, were designed to enhance readability and motivation.

#### Expert Validation

The initial draft was submitted to two experts for validation. Using structured validation instruments, the material expert evaluated the accuracy, relevance, and completeness of content, alignment with curriculum standards, and appropriateness of texts and tasks for Grade VIII readers. The design expert assessed the organization of units, clarity of instructions, coherence of task sequences, integration of CTL components, and graphic design aspects, such as typography and layout. Each item in the validation instruments was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where higher scores indicated better quality. Experts also provided written comments and suggestions for improvement.

#### Revision I (Post-Validation)

The researcher analyzed the experts' quantitative ratings and qualitative feedback to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the draft. Revisions were made to clarify instructions, refine the selection of texts, adjust the difficulty level of tasks, improve the balance between individual and group activities, and enhance the visual design. Sections were reorganized or condensed where experts indicated redundancy or a lack of coherence.

#### Teacher Evaluation

The revised draft was evaluated by Indonesian language teachers at SMP Negeri 7 Siobon. Using an evaluation sheet similar in structure to the expert validation instrument, teachers rated the practicality of the materials, including clarity of objectives, feasibility of implementation within available time, suitability for students' characteristics, and usefulness as a classroom resource. Teachers also commented on the potential of the materials to support reading instruction and any anticipated challenges in their use.

#### Revision II (Post-Teacher Evaluation)

Based on teacher feedback, further revisions were conducted. These included adjustments to time allocation per unit, simplification of some task instructions, addition of teacher notes or suggestions for differentiation, and refinement of examples and exercises to better align with local contexts and students' interests.

#### Limited Trial (Small-Group Try-Out)

A limited trial was conducted with a small group of approximately 15 Grade VIII students with varying reading ability levels. The students used the selected units of the materials under the guidance of the classroom teacher. After completing the activities, they filled out a response questionnaire regarding the clarity of text and instructions, interest level, perceived difficulty, and overall satisfaction. Observations of student engagement and difficulties during the trial were also documented.

#### Revision III (Post-Limited Trial)

Data from the limited trial (questionnaire responses and observations) were analyzed to identify necessary refinements. Revisions at this stage typically focused on improving wording, adjusting task difficulty, adding examples, and resolving any practical issues encountered during implementation.

#### Field Test (Larger-Group Try-Out and Effectiveness Test)

The improved teaching materials were then implemented with a larger group of 30 Grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 7 Siobon. Prior to the intervention, the students completed a reading ability pretest designed to assess their skills in locating explicit information, inferring implicit information, and summarizing texts. Over a series of lessons, the teacher used the newly developed materials as the main resource for reading instruction. At the end of the implementation period, the students took a post-test equivalent in structure and difficulty to the pretest. They also completed a more comprehensive response questionnaire covering the content, language, and illustrations, organization, and visual presentation of the materials.

#### D. Data Analysis and Final Product

Quantitative data from expert validation, teacher evaluations, and student response questionnaires were analyzed descriptively to obtain mean scores and qualitative categories (e.g., "good," "very good"). Pretest

and posttest scores were compared descriptively to examine changes in reading ability. Qualitative data from open-ended comments, observations, and teacher reflections were used to interpret and enrich the quantitative findings. The final product was a revised version of the teaching materials that incorporated all feasible improvements identified during the development and testing processes.

#### Instruments and Data Analysis

Four main instruments were used: (1) expert validation sheets for material and design experts; (2) teacher evaluation sheets; (3) student response questionnaires; and (4) a reading ability test. The validation and evaluation instruments employed a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated “very poor” and 5 indicated “very good,” accompanied by spaces for written suggestions. The student response questionnaire also used a Likert format and was organized into aspects such as content feasibility, language and illustrations, presentation, and visual appearance. The reading test comprised texts and questions designed to measure key indicators of reading comprehension aligned with the curriculum and targeted competencies.

Descriptive statistics (means and qualitative categories) were used to summarize questionnaire data. The interpretation of mean scores followed pre-defined criteria, in which higher means reflected better perceived quality. The effectiveness of the materials was evaluated by comparing pretest and posttest scores, focusing on overall improvement and patterns across indicators of reading ability.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Feasibility Based on Expert Validation and Teacher Evaluation

The study involved all 30 sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 357 Natal. Descriptive analysis of home reading habits revealed a generally favorable profile. Individual scores on the home reading habits questionnaire ranged from 60 to 94. The mean score was 84.53 with a standard deviation of approximately 8.38, indicating that, on average, students demonstrated relatively strong home reading practices, although there was meaningful variability among them.

The categorization of the home reading habit scores showed that almost half of the students fell into the highest category, while only a small fraction were in the lowest categories. Specifically, using established percentage-based criteria, many students were classified as having “high” to “very high” home reading habits, with only a few students showing “moderate” or “low” levels. This pattern suggests that, despite socioeconomic constraints, a substantial proportion of students engaged in regular reading activities outside school hours.

Descriptive statistics for Indonesian language learning outcomes in determining main ideas also indicated relatively strong performance. The scores on the main-idea test ranged from 82 to 94. The mean score was 88.07, with a standard deviation of approximately 3.61. According to the school’s grading criteria, most students were categorized as having achieved levels ranging from “good” to “very good, and none fell into the “poor” or “failed” categories. This suggests that, overall, the cohort had achieved satisfactory mastery of main-idea identification tasks.

However, even within this favorable overall picture, differences in both home reading habits and main-idea achievement were evident. Some students with lower home reading habit scores tended to cluster toward the lower end of the achievement distribution, while students with stronger reported reading habits were more frequently represented near the upper end of the achievement scale. This pattern provided an initial descriptive indication of a positive association between the two variables, which was subsequently examined more rigorously through inferential analysis.

A summary of the key descriptive statistics and the main correlation results is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Expert and Teacher Evaluations of the Teaching Materials.

Evaluator Group	Number of Evaluators	Mean Score (1–5)	Qualitative Category
Material Expert	1	4.5	Very good
Instructional Design Expert	1	4.5	Very good
Indonesian Language Teachers	2 (approx.)	4.2–4.5	Good to very good

Both the material and instructional design experts assigned the same average score of 4.5, which falls into the “very good” category. This indicates that, from a scholarly standpoint, the content of the materials is accurate, relevant to the Grade VIII curriculum, and sufficiently comprehensive to support the target competencies. It

also suggests that the organization of units, clarity of objectives, logical sequencing of activities, and integration of CTL principles were positively appraised.

Teacher evaluations yielded mean scores ranging from 4.2 to 4.5, corresponding to the “good” to “very good” categories. Teachers highlighted the clarity of instructions, the feasibility of using the materials within regular lesson time, and the alignment with students’ characteristics and school context. They considered the materials to be practical for classroom use, capable of guiding lesson planning and classroom activities, and supportive of students’ engagement in reading tasks.

These results confirm that the developed teaching materials meet the formal criteria of feasibility and are acceptable to both experts and practitioners. From a theoretical perspective, the strong ratings resonate with the principles of high-quality teaching materials, which emphasize relevance to curriculum standards, coherence of structure, appropriateness for learners’ developmental level, and integration of pedagogical frameworks such as CTL. The positive expert ratings on content and design suggest the successful implementation of these principles in the product.

#### B. Student Responses: Practicality and Attractiveness

The second dimension of product quality relates to students’ perceptions of the materials’ clarity, attractiveness, and usefulness for learning. After using the materials during the field test, 30 Grade VIII students completed a response questionnaire. Their responses were analyzed across several aspects, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Student Response Scores by Aspect (n = 30)

Aspect	Mean Score (1–5)	Qualitative Category
Content feasibility	3.98	Good
Language and illustrations readability	3.70	Good
Presentation of materials	3.80	Good
Visual appearance (layout, design, graphics)	3.70	Good
Overall student response	3.80	Good

The overall mean score of 3.8 indicates that students generally perceived the materials as “good.” Among the specific aspects, content feasibility achieved the highest mean (3.98), suggesting that students found the topics, texts, and activities relevant and meaningful. This aligns with the CTL principle that learning becomes more engaging when content is connected to learners’ real-life experiences and interests. Texts that reflected local culture, familiar environments, and issues related to students’ daily lives likely contributed to this positive perception.

The means for language and illustrations, presentation, and visual appearance (3.7–3.8) also fell within the “good” category. These results imply that students did not encounter major difficulties in understanding the language used in the materials and that illustrations and layout were generally supportive of comprehension and motivation. The positive responses to presentation suggest that the sequencing of activities and clarity of instructions were adequate for guiding students through reading tasks.

From the perspective of materials development theory, student responses are crucial indicators of practicality and user-friendliness. Even if experts and teachers rate a product highly, it may fail in practice if students perceive it as confusing, irrelevant, or uninteresting. In this study, the “good” ratings across all aspects indicate that the materials achieved a satisfactory level of acceptance among the target users. The slightly lower scores in language and layout, compared with content feasibility, may point to areas where future refinement is possible—for example, simplifying certain linguistic elements, increasing the variety or clarity of illustrations, or further optimizing the layout for easier navigation.

The findings also support the assumption that CTL-based materials can enhance students’ motivation and engagement in reading. By situating reading tasks within meaningful contexts, offering varied activities, and encouraging active participation through group work and reflection, the materials appear to have provided students with learning experiences that they valued.

#### C. Effectiveness in Improving Reading Ability

The ultimate test of the developed teaching materials lies in their effectiveness in improving students' reading ability. The effectiveness of the developed teaching materials was examined by comparing students' performances on a reading test administered before and after the implementation of the materials. The test assessed key indicators of reading comprehension, such as the ability to locate explicitly stated information, infer implicit information, and draw conclusions or summarize the content of texts.

Although detailed numerical data are reported in the original thesis, the analysis showed a clear improvement in students' reading scores from pretest to posttest. Students' performance increased across all assessed indicators, indicating that they became more capable of identifying important information, interpreting implied meanings, and synthesizing content into coherent summaries. Informal observations during the intervention further suggested that students became more confident and willing to engage in reading activities, contributed more actively to discussions, and were better able to justify their answers using evidence from the texts.

These gains can be interpreted in light of the features of the developed materials and the CTL framework underpinning them. First, the inclusion of pre-reading activities that activated prior knowledge and linked the text to students' experiences may have facilitated initial comprehension and provided a scaffold for deeper understanding. Second, while-reading activities encouraged students to focus on specific reading purposes—for example, locating particular pieces of information or identifying main ideas—thereby promoting strategic reading. Third, post-reading tasks such as summarizing, reflecting on the message, or relating the text to personal or community issues likely contributed to the development of higher-order comprehension skills.

Moreover, the integration of group work and discussion within reading lessons may have supported comprehension through collaborative meaning-making. When students discuss texts with peers, they can clarify misunderstandings, consider alternative interpretations, and construct a deeper understanding than they might achieve individually. This aligns with sociocultural views of learning that emphasize the role of social interaction and language in cognitive development.

From a broader perspective, the observed improvement in reading ability corroborates prior research findings that well-designed, contextually grounded teaching materials can have a positive impact on literacy outcomes. By intentionally embedding CTL components and focusing on core reading skills, the developed materials appear to have addressed some of the limitations of existing textbooks, which often emphasize grammar and literal comprehension at the expense of contextual relevance and critical engagement.

#### *D. Discussion*

The findings of this study have several important implications. First, they demonstrate that teachers can play an active role as developers of teaching materials, in line with national regulations that encourage teacher autonomy and professionalism in curriculum implementation. With appropriate theoretical grounding and systematic procedures, teachers and teacher-researchers can produce materials that comply with curriculum standards and respond to the specific needs and characteristics of their students.

Second, the study highlights the value of CTL as a guiding framework for the design of reading materials. By explicitly connecting texts and tasks to students' sociocultural contexts, CTL-based materials can make reading more meaningful and relevant, which in turn may enhance motivation and persistence. The positive student responses and improvements in reading ability suggest that CTL principles were effectively operationalized in the product (Kim & Jang, 2025).

Third, the study underscores the importance of multi-step validation and iterative refinement in the R&D process. The combination of expert validation, teacher evaluation, limited trials, and field testing ensured that the materials were examined from multiple perspectives and at different levels of implementation. Each stage contributed distinct insights: experts focused on theoretical and technical quality, teachers on practicality and classroom fit, and students on usability and engagement. This iterative process increased the likelihood that the final product would be of high quality and well adapted to real classroom conditions (Ase et al., 2025).

Finally, while the study provides encouraging evidence, it also suggests directions for further work. The improvements in reading ability, although positive, should ideally be substantiated through more detailed statistical analyses and, where possible, controlled comparisons with classes using conventional materials. Longer-term follow-up studies could explore the sustainability of gains and the potential for scaling up the use of such materials across schools with similar profiles. Additionally, future development could expand the range of genres, incorporate digital formats to respond to evolving literacy practices, and explicitly integrate assessment tasks aligned with national examinations and international literacy frameworks (Teixeira et al., 2026).

Overall, the results support the conclusion that the developed contextual-based Indonesian language teaching materials are feasible, practical, and effective for improving Grade VIII students' reading ability at SMP Negeri

7 Siobon. They also contribute a concrete example of how R&D methodology can be applied in educational settings to address persistent instructional challenges in a methodical and theoretically informed manner.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to develop and validate contextual-based Indonesian language teaching materials aimed at improving the reading ability of Grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 7 Siobon. Using an R&D design with an adapted Borg and Gall model, the research followed a systematic sequence of needs analysis, planning, product development, expert validation, teacher evaluation, limited trials, and field testing. The findings indicate that the resulting teaching materials are feasible and of high quality. Material and instructional design experts rated the product in the “very good” category, while Indonesian language teachers rated it “good” to “very good” in terms of practicality and classroom relevance. Student responses were consistently “good” across aspects of content, language, and illustrations, presentation, and visual design, with the highest appreciation for the contextual relevance of the content. Effectiveness testing through a pretest–posttest comparison showed improvements in students’ reading ability, particularly in locating explicit information, inferring implicit meanings, and summarizing texts. These gains suggest that the integration of CTL principles—such as connecting texts to students’ experiences, fostering active inquiry and discussion, and providing reflective and authentic tasks—can enhance reading comprehension at the junior secondary level. In conclusion, the developed contextual-based teaching materials are suitable for use as supplementary resources in Indonesian language classes, especially for strengthening reading instruction in Grade VIII. The study demonstrates the potential of teacher-led R&D to produce context-responsive materials that align with curriculum standards and effectively address specific learning needs. Further research is recommended to replicate the development and testing in different school contexts, explore digital adaptations, and conduct more rigorous comparative studies to strengthen the evidence base for contextual-based reading materials in Indonesian education.

#### Funding Statement

" This study received no external funding."

#### Ethical Compliance

All procedures performed in the studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committees and the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

#### Data Access Statement

A data access statement is a section in a scientific publication or research report that explains how the data used or generated in the study can be accessed by readers or other researchers. This statement aims to promote transparency, support research reproducibility, and comply with applicable open access policies.

Common Elements in a Data Access Statement:

1. Data Location: Specifies where the data are stored, for instance, in online repositories (e.g., Zenodo, Dryad, or institutional repositories).
2. Access Instructions: Provides information on how to access the data, such as direct links, Digital Object Identifier, or contact details.
3. Data Availability: This section indicates whether the data are publicly accessible, available upon request, or restricted due to ethical, legal, or privacy considerations.
4. Data Licensing: If the data are open, the applicable license is specified (e.g., Creative Commons).

Examples of Data Access Statements:

1. Open Data:
  - "The data supporting this study are openly available in Zenodo at [DOI:10.xxxx/zenodo.xxxx]."
2. Restricted Data:
  - "The data that support the findings of this study are available upon request from the corresponding author. Owing to privacy concerns, the data are not publicly available."
3. No Data Available:
  - "No datasets were generated or analyzed in the current study."
4. Conditional Access:
  - "The data supporting this study are available under restricted access and can be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, with permission from the ethics committee."

Purpose of a Data Access Statement:

- Reproducibility: Enables other researchers to replicate or verify the findings.
- Collaboration: Encourages further collaboration by sharing data.
- Compliance: Adherence to the policies of funding agencies or journals that require open access to data.

### Conflict of Interest Declaration

The authors declare that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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