

An Evaluation on an English Textbook: *Interactive English for the Seventh Grade of Junior High School*

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Abstract: The objective of this research was to discover whether the English textbook analyzed met the criteria of a good textbook proposed by *Pusat Perbukuan (Pusbuk)* and some ELT experts and whether the textbook was relevant to the *2013 Curriculum*. This research was categorized as a content analysis study which employed four procedural steps proposed by Ary, *et.al.* (2002). They were: (1) referring to the criteria of English textbook evaluation suggested by *Pusbuk* in 2011 and some ELT experts and making some modification to suit the *2013 Curriculum*, (2) deciding on the evaluation subject, that was an English textbook entitled *Interactive English for Junior High School* for Grade VII, (3) applying the criteria for textbook evaluation by using a simple tick and cross system as judgments, and (4) analyzing the textbook. The data were gathered by evaluating the English textbook using the checklists containing the criteria of textbook evaluation. In the data analysis, the calculation was done by dividing the total of criteria points which were met in the textbook for each sub-aspect with the total of criteria points in each sub-aspect. Then, it was multiplied by 100 % to achieve the sum points. For ensuring the credibility of the research, consensus and triangulation were applied. The results showed that *Interactive English for Junior High School* had fulfilled the criteria of a good textbook by achieving the fulfillment score of 61 % with coverage 71 % for relevance of materials to the curriculum, 100 % for materials accuracy, 30 % for supporting materials, 56 % for language appropriateness, 50 % for presentation technique, 67 % for teaching and learning technique, and 56 % for presentation coverage. The textbook was relevant to the *2013 Curriculum* due to the presentational activities and character building. It was then recommended that teachers should modify the tasks which did not meet the criteria of a good textbook especially in the area of content aspects.

Key words: *content analysis, textbook evaluation, Pusbuk, 2013 Curriculum*

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Introduction

English has now become one of the most important languages in the world. It has been used as an international language that takes an important role as a means of communication in many countries. Learning English language is not only aimed at being able to communicate with people from other countries but also at increasing the prosperity of those countries themselves because it has become the main language used in business matters.

Considering its importance, the Indonesian government has decreed English as a compulsory subject in schools and it now becomes a subject which determines the students in passing their educational degree. English has been taught from primary schools to senior high schools.

The success of the education programs in Indonesia is influenced by the teaching and learning process occurring in every educational level, including in junior high schools. To succeed, the schools then provide learning materials for the students equipped with a set of learning materials. The materials used in the teaching and learning process should be contextualized with the needs of the students of every grade in the school. Hence, to make students able to achieve English materials, students are equipped with a set of term of textbook as their reference or guide for what they should learn.

In Indonesia, the textbooks were designed by the authorized publishers based on the latest curriculum. As launched by Education National Standardization Board (*Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan/ BSNP*), our educational system had implemented different curricula, i.e. Competency-based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi / KBK*), School-based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan / KTSP*), and the most recent, 2013 Curriculum (*Kurikulum 2013*). Along with this continuous changing, English textbooks must be developed and revised based on the prevailing curriculum, including English textbooks available on the markets which are developed based on 2013 curriculum.

With the varieties of textbooks available in the markets, teachers are greatly responsible for selecting good materials suitable for students and making judgment about them. English teachers have to be able to evaluate the worthiness of the textbooks in order to select the suitable books to be implemented in the teaching and learning process.

Therefore, a research study in relation to the evaluation of the English textbook used in junior high schools in Indonesia, particularly in Yogyakarta, needed to be conducted in order to discover whether the English textbook chosen meets the standard of a good textbook.

English Language Teaching in Indonesia

Indonesian's ELT practitioners have done some innovation from time to time to improve the quality of English Language Teaching in Indonesia (TEFLIN: 2011) both in terms of policies and in terms of implementation. The teaching of English as a foreign language here seems to be on the crossroads due to two different curricula implementation. Curriculum changes are mandatory; however, the changes should not be counter-productive to the attainment of expected learning competency.

The curriculum has changed several times, to mention only a few of the latest ones: from the 1980 Curriculum, the 2006 Curriculum (KTSP), and the 2013 Curriculum. The changes have affected a sort of pessimism and optimism among language educators, educationist, and practitioners. The two different curricula, namely KTSP (School-based curriculum) and 2013 curriculum are the latest

implemented in Indonesia. In the fields, competencies, learning materials, approaches/ methods/techniques and evaluation procedures are organized in slightly different sequences of frameworks (cf. Howel and Wolet, 2005). Responding to the controversies, the government makes various attempts and efforts through trainings and conferences to enrich the teachers' comprehension and skills toward this change.

The 2013 Curriculum

The latest curriculum implemented is *Kurikulum* 2013 or 2013 Curriculum which has been implemented at school starting at the academic year of 2013/2014. The new curriculum has lasted for 6 months because there is an alteration of policies in Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, but some schools are still applying it.

Curriculum 2013 is formulated from determining SKL (*standar kompetensi lulusan*) based on students' abilities and needs. As stated in the preamble of regulation of Minister of Education and Culture number 68 year 2013 on basic framework and curriculum structure of junior high school and *madrasah tsanawiyah*, the objective of curriculum 2013 is to prepare young generation to develop their competence as an individual and a part of society that is faithful, productive, creative, innovative, affective and contribute to the society, country and world.

The learning paradigm has shifted from 'students have knowledge because they are taught by a teacher' to 'students have knowledge by themselves'. It reflects that the students are actively engaged in learning from different sources exceeding the teachers and the educational units or institutions (Kemdikbud, 2013). The curriculum focuses its learning on the attainment of *Kompetensi Inti* (core competence) and *Kompetensi Dasar* (basic competence).

The core competence pivots around (1) religious belief and its application, (2) upholding good characters, (3) gaining factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge, and (4) trying, processing and presenting in concrete and abstract domains. While the basic competence transforms the core competence into observable cognition, affection and action (*Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 2013).

Textbook Evaluation Criteria by *Pusat Perbukuan* (*Pusbuk*)

Pusat Perbukuan, Ministry of National Education defines several criteria for evaluating English textbooks published in Indonesia. These criteria are actually based on School-based Curriculum (*KTSP*). However, it can also be applied to evaluate 2013 Curriculum-based English textbooks after given some modifications, since both curricula apply genre-based approach.

Some aspects suggested by *Pusat Perbukuan*, Ministry of National Education consist of:

1. Aspects of Content
 - a) The conformity between reading materials and curriculum
 - b) Kind of genres found in the reading materials

- c) The arrangement of reading materials based on the level of difficulty
 - d) Reading tasks which are given to develop students' ability
 - e) The reading material which are supporting life skills
 - f) The reading materials which are consider about the aspects of gender, religion and race
2. Aspect of Presentation
- a) Learning purpose which stated explicitly and lead to mastery of communication competence.
 - b) The presentation of each chapter reflects the logical path and coherence.
 - c) The presentation of each chapter arranged from easy to difficult materials.
 - d) The conformity between tasks and materials.
 - e) The presentation of each chapter engaging students to communicate using English actively.
 - f) The presentation of each chapter supporting students to be interested in English subject.
 - g) The presentation of each chapter supporting students to reflect and evaluate their self.
3. Aspects of language use and readability
- a) The standard of English language use according to the language rules.
 - b) The use of English which is appropriate with needs of communication learning.
 - c) The presentation of paragraphs which are presented effectively by considering coherences and cohesiveness.
 - d) The use of illustrations which are functional and relevant with the materials.
4. Aspects of the relation between chapters
- a) The relevancy between the materials with education purposes
 - b) The relevancy between the materials with the development of knowledge, technology and arts.
 - c) The relationship between materials in the textbook.
 - d) The relationship between materials, and anatomy, norms/ ethics and the completeness of a textbook.

Research Method

The type of this research is a content analysis study as it is concerned with analyzing the content of a textbook, in this case is the English textbook. It is one of the types of descriptive qualitative research (Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen, 2010: 29). The subject of the research is *Interactive English for Junior High School Grade VII*. The book is written by Amalia Iragiliati S, Iswahyuni, Farida Ulfa, Maria Anungsiata M.I, and Fitri Hariana O. It was published by Yudhistira in 2013 and aranged based on the Curriculum 2013.

There were some procedural steps arranged in conducting this study. They were: preparing the study, analyzing the textbooks, and writing down the report. The instruments used to analyze the data in this study were checklists. The areas and belief statements in the checklist were based on the textbook evaluation criteria

issued by *Pusbuk* and several additional criteria modified from other ELT experts. Based on the textbook evaluation checklists, the criterion which was met was valued 1 point, while a criterion which was not met was valued 0 point. Thus, the calculation of the result of data analysis was given to each textbook. This was done by dividing the total criteria which has been met with the total number of criteria. Then, it was multiplied by 100 % to achieve the sum points.

Findings and Discussions

There were seven checklists used to evaluate the textbook. The checklists include: 1) the relevance of materials toward the curriculum, 2) material accuracy, 3) supporting learning materials, 4) language appropriateness, 5) presentation technique, 6) teaching and learning technique, and 7) presentation coverage. There were 53 criteria covered by these seven sub-aspects which were drawn from three aspects of textbook evaluation, i.e., content, language and presentation.

As can be seen in Table 1, in the relevance of materials to the curriculum criteria, the textbook fulfilled five of seven criteria. They were 1) transactional texts; 2) functional texts; 3) character building; 4) exposure; and 5) retention. Thus, the textbook had got 71 %. This meant that the book was categorized “good” in the category of the relevance of textbook to the curriculum.

In materials accuracy criteria, the textbook fulfilled all the criteria. They were 1) maintaining interpersonal relation with people through interpersonal texts; 2) getting things done through transactional texts; 3) enabling students to represent the social functions of functional text; 4) elements of chronological and systematic thinking skills in interpersonal and transactional texts; 5) elements of meaning in short functional texts; 6) accuracy and appropriateness of the language; and 7) relevance of the language towards the communicative context. Thus, the textbook had got 100 %. This meant that the book was categorized “excellent” in the category of materials accuracy.

In supporting learning materials criteria, the textbook fulfilled three of ten criteria. They were 1) relevance of the materials towards the topic discussed; 2) academic skill development; and 3) appreciation towards democratic values. Thus, the textbook had got 30 %. This meant the book was categorized “poor” in the category of supporting learning materials.

In the language appropriateness criteria, the textbook fulfilled five of nine criteria. They were 1) relevance of language towards students’ socio-emotional state; 2) grammar accuracy; 3) coherence and unity of ideas in each unit; 4) good grammar presentation and practice; and 5) good vocabulary presentation and practice. Thus, the textbook had got 56 %. This meant the book was categorized “fair” in the category of language appropriateness.

In the presentation technique criteria, the textbook fulfilled one of two criteria. It was the criterion of organized presentation of materials in the form of texts, communicative activities, and illustrations. Thus, the textbook had got 50 %. This meant the book was categorized “fair” in the category of presentation technique.

In the teaching and learning technique criteria, the textbook fulfilled six of nine criteria. They were 1) interaction in English among students and between students and teachers; 2) communicative activities both oral and written based on students' own initiative creatively and critically; 3) activities for knowledge and comprehension; 4) activities for application; 5) activities for analysis; and lastly 6) activities for creation. Thus, the textbook had got 67 %. This meant the book was categorized "good" in the category of teaching and learning technique.

In presentation coverage criteria, the textbook fulfilled five of nine criteria. They were 1) preface; 2) table of content; 3) introduction; 4) learning load; and 5) bibliography. Thus, the textbook had got 56 %. This meant the book was categorized "fair" in the category of presentation coverage.

Table 1. Evaluation Summary

Aspects of Evaluation	No	Sub Aspects of Evaluation	Fulfillment
			Textbook
Content	1	Relevance of Materials to the Curriculum	71 %
	2	Materials Accuracy	100 %
	3	Supporting Learning Materials	30 %
Language	4	Language Appropriateness	56 %
Presentation	5	Presentation Technique	50 %
	6	Teaching and Learning Technique	67 %
	7	Presentation Coverage	56 %
Average (%)			61 %
Criteria			Good

Conclusions

This research evaluated an English textbook for seventh graders of Junior High School by applying a content analysis method. Thus, there were two objectives of this research. First, this research was aimed to discover whether or not the English textbook analyzed met the criteria of a good textbook suggested by *Pusbuk (Pusat Perbukuan)* and some ELT experts. Second, this research is also aimed to find out whether the textbook is relevant or not to 2013 curriculum. Some conclusions are drawn based on the result obtained from the textbook evaluation.

Based on the summary presented in the findings, the analysis shows that *Interactive English for Junior High School* for Grade VII has achieved the standard of good textbook. Interactive English is considered as a good textbook because the achievement score is 61 %. The result of the analysis shows that *Interactive English* fulfilled most of the criteria in the sub-aspects, namely the relevance of the materials towards the curriculum, material accuracy, language appropriateness, presentation technique, teaching and learning technique, and presentation coverage. However, it is found that the book does not fulfill most of the criteria in the sub-aspect of supporting learning materials.

In terms of content, *Interactive English* has more lacks compared to the other two aspects. In the category of interpersonal texts, it is lacking because the book has very few lessons on interpersonal texts among all twelve units. It is also lacking in the category of the production stage which provides guidance to produce written and oral texts. The activities mostly help students to produce a particular text type in a written form, but pay very little attention in relation to the spoken forms. *Interactive English* contains too many out-dated pictures and texts. Moreover, most of the pictures and texts are not accompanied by the sources where they are taken. There is also no self-reflection section in each unit which cannot help developing students' personal skills.

It is also lacking in promoting local potential and equity because there are only a few topics about Indonesian cultures. However, the content is relevant to 2013 Curriculum as it has presentational texts and activities for character building. In term of language, *Interactive English* is lacking in relevance of the language used in explanation and instructions towards students' cognitive development. There are too many long instructions which will make it unclear and difficult to comprehend. Furthermore, there is no pronunciation explanation or practice, such as words stress, intonation, etc.

In terms of presentation, *Interactive English* is lacking in terms of balance among units, development of autonomous learning, evaluation in scientific approach, and presentation coverage. There is no self-reflection section which can help students monitor their learning progress. It is also lack in terms of evaluation as there is no section where students can have peers' evaluation among students. In terms of presentation coverage, reference, summary, glossary and indeed are missing.

Based on the results of this research, some recommendations are directed to English teachers who have been using or will use materials in the textbook. They should overcome its weaknesses by applying modifications. Teachers should add more interpersonal texts along with exercises in order to help students produce the related text type, not only in written but in oral forms as well. They can also provide self-reflecting activity so that students can monitor their learning progress and reflect of their lacks and strength. Adding more materials related cultural aspects, such as local and global tourism, ceremony, habit, and so on will help increase students' awareness and appreciation towards cultural diversity. Pronunciation practice should also be added in order to improve students speaking skills.

For the authors and publishers of the textbook, as there are many criteria that should be fulfilled in order to design a good textbook, they should pay more attention to these aspects, realizing that not all teachers can identify the lacks of textbooks they used nor they can understand how to adapt and modify some aspects in the book. Based on the findings presented earlier, they need to pay more attention in the materials accuracy of the textbook, including adding materials that should promote students' development in their life skills and students' awareness in cultural aspects. The presentation aspect should also be evaluated as some criteria, such as summary, reflection section, glossary, and index of important vocabulary are absent in the textbook.

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