

EFL Education Journal

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Address:

The English Education Department, the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, the University of Jember

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Jl Kalimantan Jember

Telpon/Fax: 0331-330738 / Contact phone: 08155930172

Email Address: mrsugengariyanto@yahoo.com

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An Evaluation of Reading Materials in the English Textbook “Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students” Published by Erlangga Based on the 2013 Curriculum

Ima Ismala, **Zakiyah Tasnim, I Putu Sukmaantara**
FKIP, The University of Jember

Abstract: This research was intended to evaluate the reading materials stated in the English textbook “Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students” published by Erlangga based on the 2013 Curriculum. The design of this research was evaluative research. The research objects were chosen by using purposive sampling. The data of this research were collected by using document analysis. The research result showed that there were seven reading materials stated in the textbook that were categorized “very relevant” with the basic competences of the 2013 Curriculum with the relevance percentage ranging between 83% - 96%.

Key Words: Textbook Evaluation, Reading Materials, the 2013 Curriculum

1. Introduction

In teaching learning process, textbook has an important role to help students' learning progress. It will be less effective without the support of textbook. Deuri (2012) states that if a language is taught without a textbook there may be significant failure also. Without a textbook, it will be more difficult for English teachers to conduct language teaching learning process especially in Indonesia since English is used as a foreign language. A good textbook contains detailed sequence of teaching procedures that tell teachers what to do and when to do it. If a text book is properly planned and utilized then it will be a useful tool for both the teachers and students.

Therefore, it is important to consider the materials contained in the textbook itself. Littlejohn (2011:180) says that materials may have an impact beyond simply the

learning of the language they present. In Indonesia most students only use textbook for their learning source. So, they might think that everything on textbook is worthy to be learnt, although there might be some inappropriate materials on the textbook. The textbook should be up-to-date and contain materials based on the current curriculum used. Teachers cannot give the proper knowledge of English to students without proper textbooks. Teachers also need to select the most suitable textbook with their needs and teaching style. As Bruner (2001) says that the newer books however often have excellent supplements, including outstanding transparencies.

At this time, Indonesian government has developed the 2013 Curriculum as the improvement of the previous curriculum, the Institutional Level Curriculum or KTSP. As the ministry of education stated, the curriculum is changed because the curriculum used must be up-to-date. It is expected to make the students ready to face the rivalry worldwide. As time goes by, the problems and future challenges will be more complex. The various challenges are related with globalization, progression of technology or investment and education transformation.

The 2013 Curriculum consists of four core competences that are integrated each other. Those four competences are developed into a number of Basic Competences in the domain of cognitive, psychomotor and affective. To achieve the core competencies and the basic competencies of the 2013 Curriculum, it needs appropriate materials which can be taken from textbook. Therefore, an English teacher should be selective in using English textbook. In order to know whether the textbook is appropriate with the curriculum or not, a textbook evaluation should be conducted.

There are so many English textbooks with different publisher that can be used at school, such as Yudhistira, Intan Pariwara, Erlangga, Ganesha, Tiga Serangkai, etc. Each publisher certainly has its own characteristic dealing with of the materials used. McDonough et al. (2013:52) state that no textbook or set of materials is likely to be perfect, and there does not seem as yet an agreed set of criteria or procedures for evaluation. That is why, an in depth analysis on textbooks is needed to know whether the materials of the textbook are appropriate or not with the 2013 Curriculum. *Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students* published by Erlangga is one of the English textbooks used for Junior High School students in Indonesia. The researcher chose to analyze this textbook because of some reasons. The first is based on a small investigation about this textbook and it is found that it is one of the most used textbook by junior high school students in Jember.

Based on the description above, it is reasonable to analyze English textbook *Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students* published by Erlangga for the seventh grade of Junior High School based on the Basic Competences of the 2013 Curriculum.

2. Literature review

2.1. Textbooks in ELT: the theoretical framework

Textbooks play a role of structuring and organizing learning, and this means textbooks suggest progression in the learning process organized in sequenced teaching units. Textbooks as a role of guiding learning mean textbooks that guide the students in their perception and comprehension of the outside world, in putting together knowledge acquired from sources, in mastering what they have learned. In

addition, Richards (2001) states that textbook may provide the basis for the content of the lessons, the balance of skill taught and the kinds of language practice the students take part in.

Cunningsworth (1995) suggested multiple roles of textbook in ELT as 1) a resource for presentation materials (spoken and written); 2) a source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction; 3) a reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and so on; 4) a source of stimulation and ideas for classroom language activities; 5) a syllabus (where they reflect learning objectives which have already been determined); 6) a resource for self-directed learning or self-access work; and 7) a support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence.

Therefore, textbook might be just a supporting tool, but it can make the teaching learning process easier for both teachers and students. Without using much effort, teachers can provide learning materials through textbook, and students do not need to write down the learning materials because all the materials are provided in textbook. The most important thing teachers need to do is to decide textbook that will be used in classroom carefully. Decisions to choose in this matter will determine the nature of the textbook as a tool for communication (Richards: 2001).

Littlejohn (2011:180) states, “it is important to examine the implications that use of a set of materials may have for classroom work and come to grounded opinions about whether or not the methodology and content of the materials is appropriate for particular teaching/learning context”. If teachers carry out a predictive evaluation, it means that they determine which materials are best suited to their purposes. On the other hand, a retrospective evaluation designed to examine

materials that have actually been used. It is a further evaluation that is conducted to find out whether the materials have worked out for the teachers or not.

The first way is by relying on evaluations that have been conducted by ‘expert’ reviewers who identify specific criteria for evaluating materials. However, in review of individual textbook, the criteria often remain inexact and implicit. The other way is teachers can conduct their own predictive evaluation by using the numerous checklist and guidelines that are available to help them. It is expected to help teachers carry out a predictive evaluation systematically. A retrospective evaluation can be used by teachers to determine whether it is worthwhile using the materials again and which activities ‘work’ and which do not.

Cunningsworth (1995) proposes that evaluation can be done before the textbook is used, during its used and after its use. Pre-use evaluation is the most difficult evaluation to be conducted because there is no experience in using the textbook. So, this evaluation is used to know future or potential performance of the textbook. In-use evaluation is an evaluation conducted while the material is in use to see whether it is good or not. Post-use evaluation is same as retrospective evaluation that Ellis (1997) mentioned before. Post-use evaluation is used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook. It is also used to decide whether to use the same textbook in the future or not.

There are some experts who propose models for evaluation of teaching materials. Macro evaluation models calls for an overall assessment of whether the material has worked. In contrary, micro evaluation models only selects one particular teaching tasks and submits that to a detailed empirical evaluation. A series of micro evaluation can provide a sequence of macro evaluation. Ellis also states that a micro evaluation of teaching materials is perhaps best carried out in relation to ‘tasks’.

McDonough et al. (2013) propose an evaluation model consisting of three stages. They are external, internal and overall evaluation. External evaluation examines the organization of the materials as stated explicitly by the author/publisher. It consists of the cover of the teacher's/student's book, the introduction and table of content. If the result of external evaluation shows that the teaching materials are potentially appropriate, then the evaluation continues with a more detailed evaluation that is internal evaluation. If the result shows the opposite, then it will be better to start evaluating other materials.

Internal evaluation is the next stage of evaluation procedure by conducting in-depth investigation of materials. In order to make an effective internal evaluation, it needs at least two units of a textbook to be examined. Internal evaluation investigate the following actors, such as; the treatment and presentation of the skills; the sequencing and grading of the materials; the type of reading, listening, speaking and writing materials contained in the textbook; test and exercises; self-study provision; and teacher-learner 'balance' in use of materials. Overall evaluation is expected to make an overall assessment as to the suitability of the materials for specified group or individuals

This research used micro evaluation based on Ellis (1997) because it only selected one material that was reading materials that consist of the reading texts and the reading tasks. The evaluation object was evaluated deeply based on the Basic Competence of the Curriculum 2013. This model of evaluation has one purpose that is to know to what extent the reading materials in the English textbook *Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students* published by Erlangga relevant to the Basic Competence of the 2013 Curriculum.

Cunningsworth (1995) as mentioned by Richards (2001:4) proposes the following criteria of course book evaluation: 1) they should correspond to learner's needs. They match the aims and objectives of language learning program: 2) they should reflect the uses (present or future) which learners will make of the language. Textbook should be chosen that will help equip students to use language effectively for their own purposes; 3) they should take account of students' needs as learners and should facilitate their learning processes, without dogmatically imposing a rigid "method"; 4) they should have a clear role as a support for learning. Like teachers, they mediate between the target language and the learner.; 5) the individual evaluators take these criteria in their own ways keeping in view the constraints they have to work with it.

In this research, the reading materials of the English textbook *Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students* published by Erlangga covering the reading texts and the reading tasks are evaluated based on Basic Competence of the 2013 Curriculum for grade seven. More specifically, the aspects of reading consisting of theme/topic used for the reading text, organization, length of text, grammar, vocabulary and exercise items were the concern of the evaluation. There were some empirical studies carried out on the evaluation of textbook and materials evaluation.

The result showed that the checklist has done a good job in materializing abstract curriculum concept for ease of reference. The checklist also had proven the evaluation framework which is an effective evaluation device capable of eliciting systematically the strengths and weaknesses of the target textbook.

The 2013 Curriculum is the current curriculum that is used in Indonesia. It is the replacement of the previous curriculum, the Institutional Level Curriculum that had been used for six years. The 2013 Curriculum improves the materials and adjusts it

with the international standard. The 2013 Curriculum is intended to be a students centered learning or inquiry-based learning. According to Ontario (2013), teachers have responsibility of engaging students in learning so that they develop the skills and knowledge they need to function in today's world.

Majid (2014: 46) states that core competence is the primary competence that must be achieved by students which consist of three domain; affective, cognitive and psychomotor. Affective domain deals with the students' attitude; cognitive domain deals with the students' knowledge and psychomotor domain deals with the students' skill. In achieving the good quality of learning, the balance between hard skill and soft skill must be considered.

In the 2013 Curriculum, there are four core competences that are integrated each other. Core Competence 1 is about spiritual aspect, core competence 2 is about social aspect, Core Competence 3 is about knowledge aspect and Core Competence 4 is about implementation of knowledge or psychomotor. The Core Competence 1, 2, 3 and 4 (spiritual, social, cognitive and psychomotor domain) are taught at the same time in classroom.

2.2. Textbook evaluation based on the 2013 curriculum: the conceptual review

Evaluation in this research is important because it provide valuable information for the future requirement for both teachers and students. Reading materials refer to reading texts and their exercises available in English textbook "Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students" published by Erlangga. The English textbook used in this research is "Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students" for seventh grade of junior high school published by Erlangga in 2014. Basic Competences is competence for every subject in every grade which is

developed from Core Competence. Basic competences is the competence that must be learned and mastered by students to achieve the passing grade.

2.3. Review of previous studies

Some researchers have previously conducted a research on textbook/materials analysis. For example, Darrin (2014) in his research findings notes that all of the Basic Competences in the textbook were relevant with the Basic Competences in the syllabus of the 2013 Curriculum; and most of the materials in the textbook were relevant with the Basic Competences in the syllabus of the 2013 Curriculum.

Another research was conducted by Tivany (2014) and her research findings showed that the reading materials in the textbook were not fully relevant to the 2013 English Curriculum in terms of cognitive domain. In contrast, the reading materials are quite relevant to the 2013 English Curriculum in terms of psychomotor domain.

3. The Study

3.1. Research Context

The research was conducted in the context of EFL (English as a foreign language) rather than EAL (English as an additional language). Besides, English was used as the material of teaching and learning in the formal setting, the classroom setting where the teachers and students were non native speakers of English as the TL (target language).

3.2. Research Design

Based on the research objective, this research used evaluative research as the research design. Evaluative research is an analytical tool, involving the

investigation of a policy program to obtain all information pertinent to the assessment of its performance, both process and result. Evaluative research is usually used for decision-making or a tool for problem solving (Childers, 1989).

3.3. *Research Object*

The objects of this research are all the reading materials and tasks in the English textbook “Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students” published by Erlangga for the seventh grade of junior high school. The objects of this research were chosen by using purposive method. There were two kinds of documents in this research; the English textbook “Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students” published by Erlangga and the 2013 Curriculum. By using the first document, the researcher analyzed the reading materials and the tasks contained in the English textbook “Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students”. Then, the researcher checks whether the reading materials and the tasks are relevant with the Basic Competences of the 2013 Curriculum by using the second document.

3.4. *Research data and analysis*

Data analysis method is a way to analyze the collected data. In this research, descriptive statistics with percentage formula is used to analyze the data. According to Trochim (2006), descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measurement. By using descriptive statistics, the researcher simply describes what is or what the data shows.

The procedure of analyzing the data using descriptive statistics is 1). *classifying* the reading materials in the English textbook “Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students” and the materials suggested based on Basic Competences in the 2013; 2) *finding* the relevant reading materials in the English textbook “Bright:

An English Course for Junior High School Students” with Basic Competences in the 2013 Curriculum; 3) Scoring the data collected by using Likert Scale. According to Masyhud (2014:225), Likert Scale is used to measure attitude, opinion or someone’s perception about social phenomenon including education phenomenon. In this research, the Likert Scale is in the form of table instrument adapted from Masyhud (2014:226).

4. Research results and Discussion

4.1. Research results

From the previous discussion, it showed that there are only six Basic Competences that suitable with reading materials. They are Basic Competence 3.4, Basic Competence 3.9, Basic Competence 3.10, Basic Competence 4.4, Basic Competence 4.10 and Basic Competence 4.12. From those Basic Competences, an evaluation had been conducted to know whether the reading materials are relevant in the English textbook “Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students” Published by Erlangga. From these six Basic Competences, there are five reading materials that must be available in the English textbook. They are Self-Introduction, Instruction, Short notice, Warning/Caution and Descriptive text.

There are seven reading materials in the English textbook that are relevant based on Basic Competence of the 2013 Curriculum. The five reading materials are about descriptive text, one reading material is about self- introduction and one reading material is about short notices. The result of the evaluation showed that all of reading materials are relevant based on the aspects of reading materials. It showed that all reading materials were categorized as “very relevant” based on the classification of percentage level.

The score of each aspect from each reading materials were different. The aspect that had the highest score was “Theme/Topic” aspect. All of the themes used in reading materials in the English textbook were relevant with the themes suggested in the basic competence of the 2013 Curriculum. In the other hand, the aspects that had lowest score were “Organization” and “Exercise items”. The result showed that some paragraphs are not placed in the right place and mostly the exercises are literal questions when inferential questions are important to know the students comprehension in reading text.

According to Garinger (2002) and Berardo (2006), the topic of a reading article is an important factor to be considered and the variety of topics in the reading texts attracts students' attention and motivates them to read more. In other words, the theme/topic used in reading text must be interesting yet still relevant with the Basic Competences of the 2013 Curriculum.

According to Lunzer and Gardner (1979), there are many factors which can affect the legibility of a reading text. Among those are: font type, font size, the size of spaces between words, lines, or paragraphs, the width of margins, the nature of ink used for printing and the texture, color and reflective qualities of the paper. The most important is the place of each paragraph. If the paragraph is not placed the right place, the students will find difficulties in analyzing the structure of the text.

From the explanation above, it is clear that the writer misunderstand something. Not all the Basic Competence in the 2013 Curriculum can be used for reading materials. In the English textbook, there are some materials that should not be reading materials. The writer should sort the Basic Competences of the 2013 Curriculum first before writing the materials. The writer is supposed to know which Basic

Competences which belong to which skill. A misunderstanding like this will make the materials irrelevant with the Basic Competence of the 2013 Curriculum.

5. Conclusion

Based on the result of the data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that in the English textbook “Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students” published by Erlangga, there are lots of reading materials provided. Among those reading materials, there are some that do not have the exercises along with them. Only seven reading materials are relevant with the Basic Competence of the 2013 Curriculum. Among these seven reading materials, five reading materials are about descriptive texts, one reading material is about self-introduction, and one reading materials is about short notices.

The evaluation of relevant reading materials shows that the reading materials are relevant with the aspects of reading material or not. There are six aspects that are used to measure the relevancy. The result shows that all reading materials are relevant with the aspects. The percentage of the relevancy is in the range between 83% - 96%. In detail, all the seven reading materials can be categorized as “very relevant”.

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