

“WHEN ENGLISH RINGS THE BELL”: An English Textbook Analysis

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Abstract

Textbook analysis has become a crucial need, it is important to help teacher to be more selective in choosing suitable textbook for students. This article intends to describe whether the English textbook “When English Rings the Bell” published by Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia met the criteria of textbook evaluation. It considered four criteria, objective, language skills, content, and design. The criteria were developed based on the adaptation of material evaluation criteria proposed by Cunningsworth, Byrd, and BSNP. The design of this research was descriptive qualitative research. The collection of the data was done through evaluation checklist and rating scale. Findings show that the textbook toward the four criteria of consideration reached 74%. It means that the textbook was categorized as good. It can be used in the teaching and learning process but it needed a lot of improvements.

Key words: English textbook, textbook evaluation criteria

A. INTRODUCTION

Textbook is an important component in teaching and learning process. It can be used commonly as a resource for teachers to teach and students to learn. Teachers often use a textbook as the main teaching materials in order to teach well. It also helps the students to understand the materials given by teacher. In some situations, it serves basis of language input students and language practice that occur in the classroom. In other situations, it provides a clear framework which the teacher and the students know where they are going and what is coming next. It also provides readymade texts and tasks with possible appropriate students’ level, which save time for the teacher. For that reasons, it is not surprising that most teachers use a textbook in their class.

There are many publishers provide textbooks in various style and setting which are compiled based on the curriculum implementation in Indonesia. Even Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia also provides English textbook entitled “*When English Rings the Bell*”. Since the various textbooks provided, it is important for teachers to choose a textbook which is appropriate to the students. Although many

textbooks are published, teachers should select which one is the most suitable textbook to be used. According to Cunningsworth (1995, p.5), “no course book designed for a general market will be absolutely ideal for particular group of students”. Therefore, analyzing textbook is needed to select an appropriate textbook to the students.

In addition, to make students are able to achieve the materials, they need textbook which has good quality. In order to choose a good textbook, there are some considerations that should be taken by the teacher. Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP) also decided the qualification for textbook evaluation. First, the language use is natural, attractive, and appropriate to the students. Then, the textbook should provide vocabulary, sentences, paragraphs, and discourse which appropriate for students' level. While Byrd (2001) states that a textbook must fit to curriculum, teacher, and students. In other words, the textbook should reflects the curriculum, teacher, and students to ensure that the objectives of the learning process can be achieved. Thus, it is necessary to ensure that the textbook fit to curriculum, teacher, and students.

There are many criteria proposed by several experts that can be used for analyzing textbook. Those criteria are introduced by many experts of EFL textbook evaluation, for instance, Sheldon, Grant, Cunningsworth, and Harmer. Each expert has their own belief about the criteria for textbook evaluation. Cunningsworth (1995) explains that it is best for a textbook evaluator to identify her or his own priorities and draw up her or his own checklist by using some criteria mentioned in one book and adding others based on personal priorities. Concerning the statement of Cunningsworth, the textbook criteria from some experts was adapted, that is, Cunningsworth, Byrd and BSNP in order to analyze “*When English Rings the Bell*”. Thus, the criteria for textbook evaluation adapted Cunningsworth, Byrd, and BSNP that consider four criteria, namely: (1) Objective, (2) Content, (3) Language skills, and (4) Design.

B. RELATED LITERATURES

1. The Role of Textbook

Richards (2011) states that textbooks are essential component in most language programs. Sometimes, they serve as the basis of language input that students receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. They provide content of lesson, the skills to be taught and the kind of language practice. They may act as a fundamental supplement to the teacher's instruction, but for students, textbooks are a main source of language practice input that have been provided by the teacher. Also, they provide some

idea of how to teach in classroom and give a format of learning process. Nowadays, most classes cannot carry on without using textbooks, thus no one can ignore the vital role of textbook in the classroom.

Even though textbooks are important in teaching and learning process, Richards (2011) states that textbooks also have advantages and limitations depending on how they are used and the contexts for their use. The main advantages are that textbooks provide structure and a syllabus for learning process. A class may not have a clear direction in what to teach and learn without textbooks which has been planned and developed systematically based on syllabus. They also help standardize instruction. By using textbooks, teachers can be sure that students in the class receive the same content and get the same type of evaluation. They provide a variety of learning resources, because they are accompanied by workbooks, cassette tapes, or CD-ROMs, and a teacher's guide which provide various resource for teachers and students. They can help students and teachers take part in activities such as, role play, language games, and pair conversation practice, because teachers do not waste time to produce any materials. Moreover, most well developed textbooks are often tried and tested by students and teachers. Then, publishers will improve their contents to maintain quality of textbook. They can provide effective language models and input. For teachers who are not native English speakers, textbooks can help them generate accurate language input on their own. For inexperienced teachers, using textbooks and teacher's guide can help them get through the teaching task and serve as a medium of initial teacher training.

Richards (2011) points out that there are also some negative effects in using textbooks; for example, they may not reflect students' needs. Each textbook is often published to sell in global markets, so authors create the content without reflecting students' interest and needs which need to be adapted to suit with their environment. Sometimes, textbooks may contain inauthentic language, because it can present the old fashioned or inauthentic language such as words, dialogs or text which are especially written to suit the teaching method, but they are not representing the real use of language in daily life. However, teachers still prefer to use textbook as a guidance to teach students, and students are also satisfied to use textbook as a source for learning. So, the role of the textbook in the classroom is undeniable.

2. Textbook Evaluation Criteria

Cunningsworth (1995) states that adopting new textbooks and finding strengths and weaknesses are the main reasons for textbook evaluation. If textbooks have any weak points, they will be strengthened after the evaluation by using the supplementary materials to fulfill the weak points. The evaluation relates to a set of criteria which can be applied with different textbooks. It is useful for teachers in developing materials and understanding the nature of textbooks.

Also, Cunningsworth (1995) proposes the criteria for textbook evaluation. First, they should correspond with students' needs and match the aims and objectives of the language-learning program. It is essential that textbooks should help students in developing and taking them to their goals efficiently. Therefore, textbook content should correspond to students' needs in terms of language items, skills and communicative strategies.

Second, they should reflect the uses (present or future) which students will make of the language. The textbooks should help students to use language effectively for their own purposes. They should have a clear view of what students need to learn and practice for the use of language in personal, professional, academic and other relevant situations. The most proper textbooks for students will reflect the language content, language skills and language components that students need.

Third, they should take into account of students' needs and should facilitate their learning processes, without imposing a rigid method. They assist students to select items to be learned, for example, grammar, functions, and skills. Then, they order the items from familiar to unfamiliar and easy to more difficult. They also gather some learning styles and strategies which allow students to choose suitable learning style. Interesting textbooks with varied topics and well-presented can motivate teachers and students.

Finally, they should have a clear role as a support for learning. Like teachers, they mediate between the target language and the student. Textbooks should support students in many ways, especially the models of English which suit students' competence by providing exercises and activities to promote the use of English. They also support teachers by giving a ready-made presentation material for a variety of topics, reading texts, listening passages, or dialogues accompanied with exercises and activities.

Byrd (2001) also proposes criteria that can be used in evaluating and choosing a good textbook. First, the fit between the material and the curriculum. Curriculum is a

guidance of teaching and learning process, including the purposes of the program and the teaching procedures. Therefore, the fit between the material and the curriculum will help the students to achieve the goal of the program. Second, the fit between the material and the students. Textbook is used by the students. Therefore, the materials should be fit with the students' needs, so that they can learn the materials effectively. Third, the fit between the material and the teacher because it is used by the teacher as a guidance to teach students. Therefore, the materials in the textbook should help the teacher in organizing the process of teaching and learning effectively.

Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP) also defines several criteria for quality textbooks. First, eligibility of the contents. It includes suitability of the material with a standard competency (SK) and basic competence (KD), suitability of the material to the curriculum, accuracy of content, encourage curiosity, scientific substance and skills, enrichment, and diversity value. Second, the appropriateness of language, it includes straightforward, communicative, dialogic and interactive, conformity with the development of the students, compliance with the rules of English, and the use of terms, symbols, and icons. Third, feasibility presentation. It includes presentation techniques, presentation of learning, and coherence. Last, the graph, includes several components, namely: size book format, design skin, design contents, quality of paper, quality prints, and quality of the chapters.

So, the criteria to be used for the evaluation of textbook may differ concerning the particular needs identified. The focus can be considered mainly on the effectiveness of materials to the aims, students' need, students' level and learning style, appropriate exercise and content, language skills, and physical appearance. Cunningsworth (1995) states that it is best for a textbook evaluator to identify her or his own priorities by using some criteria mentioned in one book and adding others based on personal priorities. So, this study focuses on the textbook evaluation criteria which suggested by experts above and it is general material evaluation criteria, the four criteria of consideration namely: (1) objective, (2) language skills, (3) content, and (4) design.

C. RESEARCH METHODS

Dealing with analysis of textbook, this study was categorized as documentary analysis. Since it was categorized as documentary analysis, it was on umbrella of qualitative research design. As Ary et al. (2010, p.424) states that "qualitative researcher deals with descriptive data that are in the form of words or pictures rather

than numbers and statistics”. Moreover, as the data was in the form of words and documents, so the data were analyzed qualitatively. In analyzing qualitative data content analysis was used as method. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) defines content analysis as a method to analyze human communication in indirect way. It means that it analyze human written contents of a communication such as textbook, essay, newspaper, novels, magazine, article, songs, and many others. Hence, this study was categorized as descriptive qualitative content analysis.

The object of this study was English textbook for seventh grade of junior high school student entitle “*When English Rings a Bell*”. This book was a new English textbook published by Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia in line with the implementation of new designed curriculum, 2013 curriculum. In conducting this study, documentation was used as instrument. Document is an official paper or book that gives information about something, or that can be used as evidence or proof of something. Creswell (2002, p.223) stated that “documents consist of public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participants in a study, and they can include newspapers, minutes of meetings, personal journals, and letters”. Therefore, documentation defines as a systematic study which is conducted over paper or book by which the information to answer research questions can be obtained.

In collecting data, I acted as the key instrument for collecting the data, I used the checklist that was designed based on Cunningsworth, Byrd and BSNP theory, and rating scale which was able to measure the quality of textbook based on several criteria by rating it into ordinal level. Each ordinal level has specific position and scoring number indication. Then, I followed some steps to analysis data: (1) I got to know the data which was the textbook itself and tried to familiarize herself with whole content of the textbook; (2) I analysed the data based on material evaluation criteria (objective, language skills, content, and design) to find out how much each item of the checklist met the requirement of textbook evaluation criteria that was done by dividing the total checklish with the maximum checklish and multiplied by 100. The formula for score of each item is showed on figure below:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{Total checklish}}{\text{Maximal checklish}} \times 100 =$$

Figure 3.1 The formula for score of each item

Then, (3) I matched the result of findings with the information obtained from and find out how much each item of the checklist met the textbook evaluation criteria; (4) I drew an interpretation whether the textbook met the criteria of textbook evaluation. The interpretation is made by giving a score toward each factor of consideration and categorizing it based on the score obtained by each criteria. It is shown on table 3.1 scoring number indication:

Categories	Range of score
10-40	Poor
41-60	Fair
61-80	Good
81-100	Excellent

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The level of fulfilment of textbook toward the four criteria of consideration as showed on table below:

No	Criteria	Level of Fulfillment
1.	Objective	82%
2.	Language skills	63%
3.	Content	80%
4.	Design	72%
Total Score		74%

As presented the preceding table, it show that the textbook gained 74% toward the level of fulfilment of textbook toward the four criteria (objective, language skills, content, and design). It means that the textbook was categorized as good.

The textbook gained 82% toward the criteria of objective. It means that it was categorized as excellent in terms of objective. The objective of the textbook generally is closely related to the objective of the teaching program in 2013 Curriculum. However, some activities is not suitable to the 2013 curriculum. Byrd (2001) states that textbook evaluation should be viewed in terms of the relevance between the textbook and the curriculum. In order to analyze the relevance of textbook, syllabus was used as its standard. Syllabus is a learning plan in a group of subject which consist of core competences, standard competences, learning indicators, material, and evaluation. There are two indicators which are used, standard competence and learning indicator.

Standard competences are some competences that are formulated to achieve the core competence of curriculum. While learning indicator consist of some activities that will be done during learning process. There are eleven standard competences which must be achieved by students and every single of standard competence consist of five learning indicators. Findings show that there are some materials which are not relevant to the 2013 curriculum. The materials cannot fulfill curriculum objective that are stated in syllabus. Briefly, whether the textbook is relevant with 2013 curriculum based on the standard competences yet it is also irrelevant with 2013 curriculum based on learning indicators.

In terms of language skills, the textbook gained 63%. It means that it was categorized as good. Significantly, the four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) are important to be mastered without ignoring each other. Hinkel (2006) in Harmer (2009, p. 265) states that “in meaningful communication, people employ incremental language skills not in isolation but in tandem”. One skill such as reading skill will reinforce another skill. Findings show that there are four skills which are developed in each unit. The four skills are designed integrated with other language skills and other language components depending on the activity. However, the four skills are not really designed equal and balance.

In some units, speaking section is given more portion than the other skills. Writing and speaking seem to be given more importance throughout the textbook with 61 activities of the textbook focusing on writing. Furthermore, by comparing the number of speaking sections to the number of listening sections and the number of writing sections to reading sections, it can be concluded that productive skills received greater attention than receptive skills in the textbook. Generally, the activity of listening that is presented in this textbook is good and suitable to the students, yet it is not accompanied with the recorded cassettes. It contains different kinds of speaking activity which encourage students to be active in speaking. There are various reading texts in the textbook which relevant to students’ real life. The writing activities are not various enough. Findings show that the textbook do not really provide the subs skills for supporting language skills.

The textbook gained 80% in terms of content. It means that the textbook was categorized as excellent in term of content. The textbook is divided into eleven chapters. Each chapter has each theme. Therefore, the subdivision of the students’

materials is divided with a clear chapter based on themes and standardized amount of time for classroom work. Every subsection in the chapter is specified by the topics and followed by the activities. At the end of each chapter, all chapters contain the project task or games. The topics are based on the theme of the chapter so that these creates storylines with the materials. The activities are ended with the review of what students have learnt and project or games about the material. This provides students the opportunities for revision. Students can look back at the subsection of “*I know now*” if they forgot what they have learnt in a chapter.

The textbook contains what Indonesian students would normally found in their life. There are no “out of context” material in the textbook. The contents strongly represent the culture of Indonesia. However, there is no grammar rules explained in the textbook. Students are forced to learn the grammar automatically from the limited context given in the textbook. This method is not quite effective. The textbook do not provide sufficient literary texts. There are very limited texts in the textbook. Various kinds of texts should to be given to enrich students’ vocabulary and practice their reading and writing skills. Although the students are early learner, the various kinds of simple reading texts supposed to be given.

Most exercises in the textbook is constructed in form of mini research which allow them to interrelate to the sources without any interference from the teacher or others (it indicating the level of anxiety they may have). In addition, those exercises are set for the children to find the sources which are familiar to them. Familiar situation and location of sources makes the students feel more comfortable in doing exercises. At the end of every chapter, the students do mini projects in group. This kind of activity encourage the students’ ability to work with others. It strongly encourage students’ involvement in the learning process, it might be not very good for a low motivated students. Every subsection in the chapter is specified by the topics and followed by the activity based on the theme of the chapter. In the last part of the chapter, the subsection named “*I know now*” contains the summary of the material or what have students learn and this is same for all chapters. The 2013 curriculum emphasizes on group work rather than individual work. However, this textbook provides less of group tasks. Only 2 activities out of 167 activities provide group tasks. Therefore, teachers should include more activities requiring students to work in group or pair since it helps students to build their collaborative learning. Students will feel more confident if they

accomplish the tasks together. It will engage them to be more active in learning rather than work alone.

In terms of design, the textbook gained 72%. It means that the textbook was categorized as good in terms of design. Findings show that the textbook had been fulfilled the criteria of BSNP. In the term of book size, the textbook is fulfilled the standard of ISO (A4/B5) and characters size (12-14 pts for Times New Roman). The cover design of textbook also fulfilled the good criteria because it has attractive, simple, and colorful cover design. From content design, it was categorized as the good one. It was completed by variety pictures. The quality of paper and print is good, besides it also has some error in its print.

Findings also show that there is no the balance between black-and-white and color visuals, and between drawings and photographs within each of the units of textbook under consideration. The analysis reveals that the textbook contains 92 pictures. Moreover, all the visuals of English textbook were categorized as color drawings. Then, the most pictures in textbooks were color drawings. The textbook is good in physical qualities like paper quality, binding, and printing. The cover of the textbook contained interesting pictures and it is an eye-catching colorful cover with interesting pictures because it is good for the first impression. The layout of the textbook was designed with two color, blue and white. It would be better if it is designed more colorful, because young learners really like colorful things. The textbook was organized systematically. It was arrange systematically based on the complexity activities in every chapters. It was arranged from simple one to complex one. The beginning of the unit until the end of the chapter used the same format. The instruction of every activities are clear even some of the activities contain unclear instruction. 17 out of 167 activities contain unclear and ambiguous instructions. The textbook is not completed by other supporting materials, such as workbook, cassettes, and CD. There is no audio or CD for listening section and there is no vocabulary list for supporting the learning activity.

E. CONCLUSION

The English textbook entitled "*When English Rings the Bell*" fulfilled 79.86% criteria of the textbook evaluation adapted from some experts. The percentage of fulfilment concludes that the textbook was categorized as good in fulfilling the requirements of textbook evaluation criteria covering objective, language skills,

content, and design. However, there are still 26% criteria that is unfulfilled by the textbook especially in term of language skills and design. It can be concluded that the textbook is suitable for seventh graders of junior high school as either a supplementary or primary textbook in learning process.

Teachers should facilitate their students by providing good materials. As learning materials, the textbook has weaknesses. Considering the elaboration of weaknesses found in the textbook, teacher should bridge the gap by providing unavailable materials that should be taught. Therefore, teachers need to be more critical and creative in overcoming the limitation of textbook by making teacher-made hand-out contained additional materials and exercises. Teachers also should comprehend the criteria of good textbooks. Therefore, they could be more careful in selecting an appropriate textbook for students.

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