

# An EFL Textbook Evaluation for Grade Ten Used in Takhassus Alquran Vocational School Wonosobo

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## Abstract

Textbooks of EFL have an essential role in language learning input for students in classroom activities. Unfortunately, the selection and evaluation of EFL textbooks sometimes get a little attention and consideration in language teaching contexts. This study aims to evaluate an EFL selected textbook for grade ten students in Takhassus Alquran Vocational School Wonosobo based on Cunningsworth's book criteria (1995). The book is Kurikulum 2013 Bahasa Inggris revised edition 2017. This is a qualitative method proposing content analysis. Hence, the results are descriptive qualitative forms. The study uncovers that Bahasa Inggris Kurikulum 2013 textbook fulfills the book criteria proposed by Cunningswoth. Particularly in terms of aims and approaches, design and organization, language contents, topics, methodology, practical consideration. Furthermore, the book needs to be developed in one main aspect, namely skills, particularly listening comprehension. Additionally, the book needs to improved vocabulary materials to facilitate vocational school students' needs.

**Keywords:** Evaluation, Curriculum 2013 EFL textbooks, EFL coursebooks, Cunningsworth's book criteria, Textbook evaluation

## A. Introduction

There have been many scholars concerning textbook criteria and evaluations that are reflected in their works, such as Rubdy (2014); Patel and Jain (2008); Cunningsworth (1995); Ur (2009). Patel and Jain (2008) believed that to make language teaching runs effectively, the teachers should select learning materials carefully. Furthermore, they stated that a good textbook should involve some elements, namely individual difference of learners, objective of teaching goals, the subject matter based on grade, exercise and practical works placed at the end of chapters, moral quality consideration, no material printing mistake, cheap or reachable, good paper quality, attractive and qualitative book cover.

Similar to Patel and Jain, Cunningsworth (1995) proposed some initial ways to approach the selection of textbooks. Those are identifying the aims and objectives of the

teaching process and analyzing the situation of teaching and learning contexts. Furthermore, he believed that a checklist for coursebook evaluation can be used to meet a high standard book. The use of checklists to evaluate an EFL book is also perceived as important by Rubdy.

In addition, Rubdy (2014) proposed some essential evaluation stages of worthy books that are involved in views of students, EFL teachers, and book writers. Specifically, Rubdy stated that the evaluation of the textbooks should consider (1) students' needs, aims, and pedagogical requirements, (2) EFL teachers' skills, beliefs, abilities, and theory understanding, and (3) coursebook presentation of approaches and contents to teaching and learning effectively.

Furthermore, Ur (2009) as one of amount number of experts who considered the worth of textbooks explicitly mentioned some significant criteria of good course books. Those are objectives, approaches, attractive layout, interesting and varied topics and tasks, clear instruction, systematic syllabus, contents, periodic review and test, the use of authentic languages, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar presentation, and practices, involving four language skills, encouraging students to develop and to become independent learners, clear guidance for teachers, audio cassette availability, and available locally.

Following a textbook evaluation in EFL teaching contexts, many researchers have declared their findings, such as Hanifa (2018); Akbar (2016); Ahmadi & Derakhshan (2016); Litz (2005). They used various approaches to evaluate EFL books in different areas. Furthermore, Litz (2005) studied the use of the ELT book, namely EF2, in Korean contexts. Litz found that with regard to grammatical functions and structures, this book utilizes a contestable PPP approach that still looks appropriate and acceptable in some circumstances. But some weaknesses occur in EF2, i.e; EFL repetitive activities, failure to perform truly meaningful practices, realistic discourse promotion, and failure to promote internalization of the language.

In Indonesian contexts, Hanifa (2018) employed Harmer's theory in her study. Furthermore, she analyzed two books, namely KTSP and Curriculum 2013 coursebooks. The study uncovered that those EFL books are quite satisfactory with obvious findings, such as affordable, interesting layout, attractive design, presenting clear instructions, accommodating current EFL methodology, covering all skills of language, and related to topics, the book comprises a wide range of topics. However, her study stated that the

KTSP book does not cover extra materials; meanwhile the Curriculum 2013 textbook provides weak authentic listening materials. Similar to Hanifa, Akbar (2016) who adapted BNSP (2014) checklist framework to evaluate English selected textbooks for eleventh grade revealed that the English textbooks were appropriate in terms of content aspects based on the framework of BNSP.

Meanwhile, in Iranian contexts, Ahmadi & Derakhshan (2016) reviewed the English teachers' perception toward EFL textbook evaluation. They, furthermore, revealed the benefits and deficiencies of the used teaching materials. Then, they recommended the evaluation of newly-published teaching materials given to the students to improve the quality of the materials through insightful revision.

Some previous pieces of evidence reveal that the evaluation of EFL textbooks looks relevant to raise the EFL teaching-learning quality. By conducting this research, English learners are encouraged to have good learning material input. Therefore, they have an opportunity to achieve success in learning the English language in their schools. Course books under quality standards can impact the teaching-learning process in an English classroom. Such a phenomenon is because English teachers can be confused to decide teaching methods that should be practiced in their classes. The view is as reflected in Hidayah's & Rofik's (2017) study that revealed that grammar-translation methods still dominated the language teaching process in Al Adzkiya elementary school. In fact, this evidence can be avoided with EFL books that provide rich language teaching methods.

The importance of evaluation was also pronounced by Stufflebeam (1972) stating that by conducting the evaluation, some obtained and provided meaningful information could be taken for alternative decisions. In addition, often the students of EFL face difficulty in learning English in every stage of formal education. The findings as presented in Rofik's study (2018) covering that in writing skills, talented EFL secondary students in Wonosobo still get difficulty in terms of interlingual and intralingual language aspects. Furthermore, Rofik and Sahid (2019) uncovered that EFL students in higher education also committed errors in structuring the tenses, i, e; in aspects of misordering, misformation, addition, and omission.

Additionally, in this context the evaluation of the book is important to do because the book is one of the most used books in the EFL teaching process in Takhassus Alquran vocational school Wonosobo. Therefore, some aspects of book criteria that are proposed by

Cuningsworth is applied. With the aims, the study uncovers the standard levels of the book. Furthermore, the study also reveals the weaknesses and strengths of the EFL used book.

## **B. Literature Review**

### **1. Evaluation**

Evaluation in education takes a pivotal role. Again, the results of the evaluation are believed providing benefit for better educational outcomes. This is because the evaluation in education enables one to give a piece of initial evidence for an implemented program. The view is based on Dickins' and Pauline's statement (1993) pronouncing that formative evaluation can be employed for an ongoing program to find the weakness and strengths of all teaching and learning aspects. In line with Dickins, Mertens (2010) defined the evaluation as collecting and synthesizing evidence process that summarizes the significance or quality of the program. Mertens, furthermore, declared that the evaluative conclusion involves aspects of empiric and normative. In addition, Patton (2015) stated that formative evaluation can be conducted to improve the object being evaluated.

In terms of evaluation (particularly material evaluation), Ellis (1997) proposed two primary terms, namely predictive and retrospective evaluation. Furthermore, he added that predictive evaluation was usually used in language teaching. Following the first mentioned evaluation, there are many experts that provide instruments for the evaluation of materials, such as Cunningsworth (1995), Ur (2009), Harmer (2007).

### **2. Textbooks**

In ELT, coursebooks serve several roles. Cunningsworth (1995) particularly shared seven roles of textbooks, namely (1) a material presentation source (e. g. for spoken and written objectives), (2) communicative interaction and learners' practice activity sources, (3) learners' sources of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, (4) language classroom stimulation and ideas, (5) sources of language learning objectives (syllabus), (6) independent-directed learning sources, and (7) guidance for inexperienced teachers to run the English class. Some mentioned roles reflect that textbooks are very essential. Hence, EFL teachers should be aware to select the books for them and their students

carefully. Patel & Jain (2008) stated that a teacher should select teaching materials and instructional that corresponds to the objectives of ELT learning.

In line with Cunningsworth (1995) and Patel & Jain (2008), Ur (2009) suggested having a good book in ELT contexts. Ur argued that a good coursebook should cover texts and tasks appropriately. Furthermore, texts cover some important points, such as appropriate level usage, varied and interesting texts. Meanwhile, the tasks involve provided activities and exercises in books.

In other words from the above experts in terms of textbook criteria, Harmer (2007) proposed ten significant items of coursebooks. Furthermore, the structured textbook instrument including add-ons & extra, availability & price, layout & design, the methodology used, syllabus appropriateness, provided language skills, given topics, cultural materials, and guidance for teachers.

### **C. Research Methodology**

The research belongs to a qualitative study. The qualitative study involves making sense of massive data that covers reducing the volume of unstructured information, selecting the significant from trivial, identifying a significant pattern, and constructing a framework (Patton, 2015). Qualitative data (as stated by Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012) are collected in the forms of words. Furthermore, the data collected in this qualitative research are textbook passages. Therefore, this study involves content analysis. Content analysis, as Anderson (2007) stated, is appropriate for language study research that can be conducted in many ways, for example classification or evaluation. As qualitative research procedures, the data in this study are analyzed inductively. It means the researcher does not make any hypothesis formulation beforehand.

#### **1. Sources of Data**

The study selected the ELT textbook grade used in Senior High School of 'Takhassus Alqur' an Wonosobo. The textbook is often learned by the students in the academic year 2019/2020. This ELT textbook was chosen because it is considered appropriate (i. e; the book is written as curriculum 2013 standards).

The focus of the analysis in this study is the points that are relevant to Cunningsworth's textbook criteria (1995). Hence based on the criteria, the aspects analyzed in this content analysis research are divided into (1) aims and approaches, (2) design and organization, (3) language content, (4) skills, (5) topics, (6) methodology, (7) teachers' book, and (8) practical considerations.

## **2. Collecting Data**

The data of the study are collected from the document analysis. The document taken as the main data is from the ELT textbook. The ELT coursebook contents then are analyzed for the book evaluation purpose. Furthermore, the data are collected in accordance with the Cunningsworth book criteria instrument (1995). Therefore, there are eight items of book contents that are presented as the data analysis.

In addition, the researcher is the main tool in the qualitative study. He is an integral actor in the process of research. Hence, he is viewed as an instrument during collecting data and conducting the analysis.

## **D. Findings**

### **1. EFL Textbook Used**

In the teaching-learning process, the EFL teacher in Tahkassus Alquran Wonosobo uses Bahasa Inggris curriculum 2013 to revise the edition year 2017. The book is published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Republic of Indonesia. There 242 pages that cover 15 chapters. The contents involve chapters, basic competence, social function, text structure, language features, topic-related activities, and skill focus.

### **2. Bahasa Inggris Curriculum 2013 Textbook Appropriateness Based on Theory of Cunningsworth**

Research findings in this study are presented based on Cunningsworth's theory. The findings are displayed respectively as follows; aims and approaches EFL teaching, design and organization of the book, presented language contents,

thought language skills, topics, the methodology of language teaching, teacher's book, and practical considerations.

### **3. Aims and Approaches**

In the aim and approach context, the Bahasa Inggris textbook grade ten is appropriate to books' criteria proposed by Cunningswoth. The English coursebook corresponds tidily with the aims of teaching programmers. Furthermore, the book also corresponds to the needs of high school EFL learner levels. For example, the topic in chapter one of the textbook is talking about self. Then, the topic is displayed well in the aims of learning aims namely (1) identifying the essence of communication, communication aims, text structures, and language features that are involved in spoken and written transactional interaction. All of the materials are related to talking about self and family relationship that is displayed in the appropriate context, (2) asking and giving information related to self-identity and family relationship using text structures appropriately based on its context, and (3) asking and giving self-identity and family relationship information using language features (such as, pronoun subject, object, and possessive adjective/pronoun) appropriately.

### **4. Design and Organization**

In design and organization, the coursebook package covers up some components, such as students' books, workbooks, and audio digital linked to online listening materials (such as in the fourteenth chapter). Furthermore, the content is organized systematically with a particular consideration. There is a miss organization procedure in Bahasa Inggris grade ten, particularly as a chapter written in content lists (page iv) and content mapping (page vi). On page iv, it is written that the topic of the seventh chapter is the Wright brothers, but it is displayed on page vi that the topic of chapter seven is my idol. Meanwhile the wright brother topic is placed in chapter thirteen. In fact, misplaced materials could raise a confusing understanding.

Furthermore, the study covers that the content is organized well. The coursebook provides an appropriate structure, topics, functions, and skills for learners. However, most of the chapters are dominated by reading, speaking, and writing skills. The positive aspect of the book is that this Bahasa Inggris book confirms various activities that are integrated with taught skills. The grammar

references can also be found in each chapter event ought some are explained implicitly. Besides, as reflected in an understandable instruction and an appropriate picture display indicates that layout is clearly presented.

## **5. Language Contents**

Following language content, the Bahasa Inggris textbook is less appropriate to the criteria. Based on the syllabus, the content of all chapters provides two features, i. e; vocabulary and grammar. Most chapters provide appropriate language content materials taught explicitly therefore the materials can be understood easily by the learners. Unfortunately, grammar focus is not presented explicitly in some chapters, such as the case that is found in chapter two. It is written in chapter two that the syllabus involves simple past, present perfect, present perfect continuous and singular-plural for grammar review, but the book does not refer to its syllabus clearly. The grammar is taught implicitly in the texts. Therefore, EFL teachers should pay attention to this matter. Other chapters also need particular consideration since the chapters indicate unclear materials in grammar review. Those are chapter five, chapter fourteen, and chapter five teen. In the fifth chapter, the book does not explain adjectives and adverbs (such as very, quite, or extremely) clearly as syllabus learning aims because the chapter looks to emphasize the explanation of passive voice. In the fourteenth chapter, the coursebook explicitly explains the past perfect tense. Meanwhile, the syllabus proposes simple past, past continuous, and adverb usage as the teaching goals. In the fifteenth chapter, the grammar review is implicitly taught. Therefore, learners cannot find an explanation of grammar materials.

With regard to vocabulary, the materials cover general vocabulary. There is no specific vocabulary for vocational high school students. Therefore, EFL teachers need English sporting books that can develop students' vocabulary mastery. It is important to give the students of vocational schools an authentic learning vocabulary material that relates to their study focus.

## **6. Skills**

Four language skills are displayed well in the coursebook even though some chapters do not cover language skills completely. Clearly, five chapters involve complete skills and ten chapters do not provide skills completely. The chapters that



do not correspond language skills completely are (1) congratulating and complimenting others (chapter two), (2) expressing intentions (chapter three), which one is your best getaway (chapter four), let's visit Niagara Fall (chapter five), my idol (chapter seven), the battle of Surabaya (chapter eight), B.J. Habibie (chapter nine), Cut Nyak Dien (chapter ten), the Wright brothers (chapter thirteen), and you've got a friend (chapter fifteen). The previous chapters cover reading, speaking, and writing without listening skills.

## **7. Topics**

The Bahasa Inggris textbook provides various topics in the ELT learning process. The topics in each chapter are unrepeated and unlike. There are enough materials related to the learners' interest in this book. A range of topics is also displayed even though some particular chapters explain a similar language feature in grammar focus, for example chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14. Those chapters guide the students to learn simple past tense (recount text discussion), but the provided topic-related activities are not the same. The different topics of course help the students to develop their awareness and learning experiences. Furthermore, language difficulty is appropriate for learners' ages. Besides, the chapters try to provide the equality of women and men (such as picture presented in chapter 2; page 35, and 36). With regard to groups/social class, the book presents original ethnic, history, and culture of Indonesia, such as Malin Kundang, Cut Nyak Dien, congratulating and complimenting others). Furthermore, the book also represents low, middle, and high-class occupation in its chapters.

## **E. Discussions**

Some findings indicate that the methodology used in the Bahasa Inggris book is mixed methods (inductive and deductive approaches). The book, in some chapters, gives a clear grammatical rule that can be imitated by the learners to produce their language performances in EFL learning (such as in chapter 5; passive voice). In another chapter, the book provides a dialog text that involves grammar learning objectives without giving an obvious rule of grammar. Such kind of case can be found in the second chapter.

Furthermore, the findings uncover three skills that are emphasized in the book. Those skills are mostly involved in all learning activities in every chapter. They are speaking, reading, and writing. Additionally, the communicative skill is developed with integrated taught skills. Furthermore, listening that is not the most expected goal of learning activities is not provided in each chapter. Following the used techniques to present new items of language, the book facilitates the students with a good presentation. The language items that are being taught are related, supported, and develop each other as the indication that can be seen in chapter 4, the language feature learning target of this chapter is would like and be going to. Then the book provides speaking, reading, and writing materials that develop students' skills to this language feature usage contextually. To sport the learning goal achievement, the book presents related pictures, dialogues, application use of "would like and be going to" material samples and related tasks.

### **1. Teachers' Books**

To support the teaching process, the book is supported by ELT teachers' books. The teachers' book has adequate guidance that explains the techniques in using Bahasa Inggris Kurikulum 2013 book. Furthermore, the teachers' book provides supportive and comprehensive items that cover ELT techniques and approaches, lesson plans and answer keys of given exercises.

### **2. Practical Consideration**

With regard to the book price as a practical consideration criterion, the book is available with four price variances. This is because each zone is categorized with different costs. Those are 16.100 rupiah for zone 1, 16.800 for zone 2, 17.400 for zone 3, 18.800 for zone 4, and 24.100 for zone 5. Based on the respectively available prices, the package cost represents good value for Indonesian students. Furthermore, the book is handled with the good paper quality. Again, the paper and contents are attractive. The book supplies are good. Additionally, some parts of learning materials that need a sporting item are provided well by the book (such as, listening materials that are linked to online site).

## F. Conclusion

With regard to research findings, Bahasa Inggris Kurikulum 2013 is considered appropriate for the ELT context for vocational school students based on Cunningsworth's book criteria. Most of the criteria of framework and textbook evaluation are fulfilled by this ELT book. There is one two-aspect from eight book criteria that need to be improved, namely skill. Listening comprehension is considered important in the ELT context. Moreover, national examination in English lessons still evaluates vocational school students. Additionally, language features are well presented, but this aspect needs a particular consideration for vocational school students.

Furthermore, as vocational students' need in ELT contexts, in terms of language features, specifically a vocabulary material. It needs to be developed in order to facilitate vocational high school students to have authentic vocabulary experiences based on their study focus.

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