

A Textbook Analysis of “English in Context SMP/MTs Grade VIII” Based on Its Content and Technical Qualities

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Abstract

The aims of this article were to uncover the detailed content of an English textbook entitled “English in Context SMP/MTs Grade VIII” for Junior high school students as well as to investigate the technical quality of the book. The design of the research was a descriptive qualitative through which the English textbook entitled “English in Context SMP/MTs Grade VIII” written by Kasihani K.E. Suyanto and Sri Andreani was assessed. The book was read, identified, classified, and analyzed in terms of its content and technical quality. The findings were: 1) the book was sufficient in terms of the content because total score of the alignment between its content and curriculum was thirty-three (33), 2) in terms of technical quality, this book is sufficient within evidence of a total score which was thirty (30). Based on the data analysis above the writers concluded that an English textbook entitled “English in Context for Grade VIII” is good and appropriate for teaching English to the second grade students of Junior high school.

Keywords: *textbook, content analysis, English instruction*

1. Introduction

Under Decree No. 2 Year 2008 concerning on textbooks, textbook is defined as a reference book mandatory to use in units of primary and secondary education or higher education that includes learning materials in order to increase faith, piety, noble character, and personality, mastery science and technology, increased sensitivity and aesthetic ability, kinesthetic abilities and health improvement which is based on national education standards. As such, the presence of textbook in classroom instruction is truly significant. Specifically, a textbook has an essential role in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The use of English textbooks has a prominent merit for both teachers and students. Harmer (2007) states that the most important aspect of textbook use is for teachers to try to engage students with the content they are dealing with.

Tomlinson (1998) and Cunningsworth (1995) asserted that the role of the textbook in language teaching as resources for presentation material (spoken and written); resources of activities for learner practice and communicative interactions; references source for learner in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc; resources of simulation and ideas for classroom activities, and as a syllabus. An English teacher will be able to give material

appropriately if he is supported by a good textbook with which the students will be more facilitated to understand and to practice the English materials. In language teaching, the teacher needs to identify whether that textbook is qualified or not due to the facts that not all published textbooks are qualified in terms of its content, relevance with students' needs, and coverage of all requirements from the current implemented curriculum (Firdiati and Purwati, 2013, p.6).

In practice, there is no single textbook which can perfectly suit to the learning needs of all students (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). Tomlinson (1998) elaborated that in choosing a textbook, the teacher needs to take into account the abilities, needs and interests of their students, as well as the quality of the book. He added, teachers should note the extent to which textbooks need to be adapted and combined with the additional material. Thus, Harmer (2007b) proposes several criteria in choosing a suitable textbook for the students, such as price and availability, add-ons and extra, layout and design, instructions, methodology, syllabus, language skills, topics, cultural appropriateness, and teachers guide. moreover, Ur (2006) also suggest some points that should be considered in using textbook, namely framework, syllabus, ready-made texts and tasks, economy, convenience, guidance, and autonomy.

To refer the principles of writing textbook from the center of curriculum and books of Indonesia

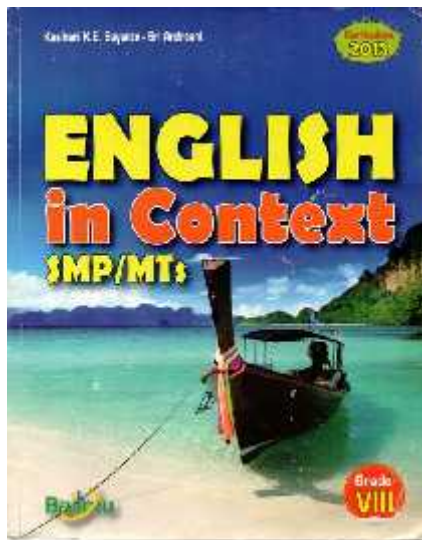
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Government (Puskurbuk, 2005, p. 12), main elements that must exist in the books are:

- 1) introduction in the form of instructional objectives, and so on,
- 2) a description of the use of the term / concept, characteristics, classification, details, formula, example, assessment and benefits,
- 3) visual shape in the form of tables, formatting, charts, maps, portraits, and pictures,
- 4) practice guidance,
- 5) exercises, questions and tasks, as well as
- 6) a summary.

According to Alwasilah (1997, p.135-136) "There are four aspects that are important and must be given attention in textbook evaluation; 1) content, 2) technical Quality; 3) proponent Aspects, 4) visual aids". To limit the study, the researchers focused only on the content and technical quality. Therefore, the writers meant to investigate the content and technical quality of an English textbook written by Kasihani K.E. Suyanto and Sri Andreani entitled "*English in Context SMP/MTs Grade VIII*" published by PT. Bumi Aksara, Jakarta Indonesia in 2005. This textbook was chosen due to its common usage by some junior high school teachers in Jambi Province, Indonesia.



Picture 1: the cover of the book

2. Method

To answer the two formulated questions, the researchers applied a descriptive qualitative method by employing a single instrument for textbook evaluation of Alwasilah's (1997, p.135). To do so, the writer used three score categories for each items; namely 3 for sufficient, 2 for fair, 1 for insufficient.

To assess the content quality, the researchers scored the textbook based on the following questions adapted from Alwasilah;

- (1) Do the materials cover all knowledge and skills as mentioned by the curriculum applied for junior high school students?
- (2) Does every single topic completely cover all material related before continuing to other topics?
- (3) Are the materials presented by following logical teaching theories and the principles of learning?
- (4) Are the materials presented logically and clearly for the students?
- (5) Is the presentation of the materials match with the approach of teaching used?
- (6) Does each title and subtitle of all chapters represent the content?
- (7) Are the contents clearly described in the table of contents?
- (8) Is the book completed with words list and teaching aids needed?
- (9) Do the vocabulary choices (diction) match with the level of students' language competence?
- (10) Are the tasks or exercises given suitable for the students' age?
- (11) Are the materials free from any kind of taboos or unnecessary English words?
- (12) Can the presentation of the materials motivate students to learn and enjoy English lesson?

On the other hand, these following modified questions were addressed to assess the technical quality of book;

- (1) Is the dimension of the book suitable for the student's age (handgrip)?
- (2) Is the cover attractive (eye-catching) for the students?
- (3) Is the cover printed in durable and highly qualified material?
- (4) Is the textbook printed in a good quality paper?
- (5) Is the font and its size eyes-friendly?
- (6) Is the space (distance between the lines) sufficient?
- (7) Are the pages formed and arranged well?
- (8) Are the pictures, figures, and tables presented relevant with the material?
- (9) Do the pictures, figures, and table support the learning objectives?
- (10) Is the quantity of pictures, figures, and tables presented balance with the quantity of the words?
- (11) Is the lay-out and setting handed well, readable and suitable for the students' age?

3. Finding and Discussion

After answering the questions mentioned in the instruments, the researchers found that the final calculation of content quality of the textbook by Kasihani K.E. Suyanto and Sri Andreani, published by PT Bumi Aksara is thirty-three. It means the content the textbook entitled "*English in Context SMP/MTs Grade VIII*" is sufficient. The final scores

of the technical quality is 30. So, based on the technical quality the textbook entitled “*English in Context for Grade VIII*” is sufficient, because the sufficient categories have the scores scale 30-39. It means that the quality of content and technical quality are between B and C standard.

In the following paragraphs, the researchers meant to elaborate in detail the content and technical qualities of a textbook “*English in Context for Grade VIII*”.



Picture 2: a part of the table of contents

First, the material contained in the unit 1 of this book is accurate and authentic according to the Standard competence (SK) and the Basic competence (KD) of the curriculum 2013 (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pembelajaran*). The materials presented cover all knowledge and skills as requested by the curriculum (Firdiati and Purwati, 2013). As evidence, the first topic is about flora with which the writer mentioned the description of the tree, part of tree, and functions of the part of tree. The selection of the topic, for sure, covers the statement from the curriculum in which the students can describe things such flora and fauna. The technical quality in unit 1 is sufficient in measure of book accordance with user importance. For the second graders, the material about tree is suitable with their age. The pictures and their notes (indexes) under picture appropriate with the purpose of learning. However, a balance between good artistic technique and educational value is unable to be achieved.

Second, the material contained in unit 2 of the book according to the standard competence (SK) and the basic competence (KD), is accurate and authentic. In this unit, the vocabulary and the technique of presenting materials are enough for the students. For junior high school students talking about animal is still suitable for them. In terms of technical quality in second unit; an illustration, the map, the graph of art or photography quality is fair. Nevertheless, to researchers' point of view, the presentation technique in unit 2 has shortcomings in terms of its systematic concept. The type of tasks presented to the students is unable to inspire students to think critically, creatively, and innovative.

Third, in terms on content quality, the material in unit 3 is aligned with the standard competence (SK) and the basic competence (KD). In this unit there is a discourse that can build students' positive attitude towards English. Also, the type of texts presented invites learners to love and care each other, e.g. the material is about asking for and giving suggestion to friends. In terms of technical quality, this font type and size presented in this unit is suitable and appropriate with the users' age. It is described in how giving suggestion to friend and make a letter to confirm their trouble. The presentation technique in this book has shortcomings in terms of concept. In addition, the presentation of learning are less able to inspire students to think critically, creatively, and innovative and less material presented can be associated with other subjects.

Fourth, the material in unit 4 is accurate and authentic according to the standard competence (SK) and the basic competence (KD). In this unit the material was suitable to the age of the students. A topic about holiday or vacation can trigger the students explore their limited plans when spending leisure time during holidays. Technical quality in this unit is insufficient due to the displays of pictures which are not suitable with the local or national culture of Indonesia. The good things are the presentation of text is good.

Fifth, the material contained in unit 5 of the book is accurate and authentic in accordance with the standard competence (SK) and the basic competence (KD). In this unit, there is an interesting topic which is about movies. Materials are presented logically and clearly with which the students are facilitated to explore their knowledge about movies in Indonesia. Differently, the technical quality in this book has shortcomings due to its lacking of figures or pictures which actually might attract students' attention towards Indonesian movies.

Seventh, the material existed in unit 7 of this book is aligned with the standard competence (SK) and the basic competence (KD). The materials presented meet the need of curriculum. It showed by working through material about drugs free. This topic is about drugs abuse and the information about it. For Junior high school students, discussing this serious topic is factual as in their puberty ages; the tendency for misusing the drugs is high. Therefore, having correct information about drugs abuse is beneficial. Technical quality in unit 7 is sufficient in measure of book accordance with user importance. An illustration and written under picture appropriate with the purpose of learning is enough. An illustration and written under picture appropriate with the purpose of learning. A balance that good between artistic technique and educational value is insufficient.



Picture 3: list of material in unit 7

Eighth, the materials written in unit 8 of this book is in accordance with the standard competence (SK) and the basic competence (KD) of the school based curriculum implemented for junior high school students in Indonesia. The materials are presented entirely and continuously. It is showed by working through material about the beach. This topic is about vocation at the beach. Technical quality in unit 8 is sufficient in measure of book accordance with user importance. For second grade students of junior high school, discussion about beach is suitable with their age. An illustration and written under picture appropriate with the purpose of learning is sufficient. A balance that good between artistic technique and educational value is insufficient.

Ninth, the material contained in unit 9 of this book according to the standard competence (SK) and the basic competence (KD) is accurate and authentic. The materials are presented entirely and continuously. The topic in this unit is about camping day. He students are engaged with activities talking about activity before camping, whilst, and post camping. Technical quality in unit 9 is sufficient in measure of book accordance with user importance. for second grade discussion about tree is suitable with their age. An illustration and written under picture appropriate with the purpose of learning is sufficient. An illustration and written under picture appropriate with the purpose of learning. A balance that good between artistic technique and educational value is insufficient.



Picture 4: table of content of last two units

The last unit, the material contained in unit 10 of this book is aligned with the standard competence (SK) and the basic competence (KD). The materials are presented entirely and continuously where the topic about seasons in the world is presented. The writers introduced the students with terms such cloudy, dry, rainy, spring, summer, and so forth. Technical quality in unit is sufficient in measure of book accordance with user importance. For the second grade students' discussion about weather is suitable with their age despite the facts that those students do not experience some of those weathers in Indonesia. An illustration and written under picture appropriate with the purpose of learning is enough. An illustration and written under picture appropriate with the purpose of learning. A balance that good between artistic technique and educational value is enough.

4. Conclusion

After gathering and analyzing the data, the writers could draw some conclusions as follows:

- In terms of content quality, the book entitled "*English in Context SMP/MTs Grade VIII*" by Kasihani K.E. Suyanto and Sri Andreani is considered as having sufficient score within a total score of the evaluation 33,
- In terms of technical quality, this book is also considered as sufficient within a total score of the evaluation 30.

In a nutshell, the book entitled "*English in Context SMP/MTs Grade VIII*" by Kasihani K.E. Suyanto and Sri Andreani published by PT. Bumi Aksara is worth-using to teach English for second grade students of Junior high school considering the facts that its content and technical qualities. It is suggested that English teachers can use this book as a main material or supplementary material to support the acquisition of English language by the students who are foreign language learners.

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