ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOK “LOOK AHEAD AN ENGLISH COURSE BOOK FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ACADEMIC YEAR X” AT BABUNNAJAH BOARDING SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

There is a necessary practice to evaluate the textbook used by English teachers in the classroom as an attempt to enhance good achievement and progress in the language learning process. The textbook scrutinized was “Look Ahead an English Course Book for Senior High School Students Year X” written by Th. M. Sudarwati and Eudia Grace and published by Erlangga in 2007. This study aims at investigating how well the content of the textbook is appropriate for fulfilling students’ contexts, needs and interests in the language learning. The processes of data collection consisted of three stages; (1) the quantitative content analysis with checklist technique, (2) the qualitative content analysis checklist and (3) the documentary study for supporting the data of content analysis. The sources data for the document was the syllabus. The results reveal that there are some problematical areas, namely regarding unequal emphasis of four language skills, small portions of the target culture representation, and unavailability of some supporting tools for language learning of the textbook which then it is highly suggested that the authors need to reconsider, revisit and revise the content of the textbook and its supports which would contribute to the improvement of the English textbook at this level. Nevertheless, the textbook is recommended especially for teachers and students at Babunnajah boarding school to be utilized as a guidance in the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: Textbook analysis, content analysis, checklist technique, documentary study.
INTRODUCTION

Textbook, as one of many resources used by teachers in teaching in the classroom, should be evaluated in order to boost students’ progress in the language learning. Textbook is defined as materials particularly designed in order to assist students in enhancing their linguistic and communicative skills in the language learning (Sheldon, 1987). Textbook is regarded as an essential component in supporting the language learning in the classroom. It can be used by teachers as a teaching instrument, and also by students in assisting them in learning language since it is specially designed by authors to improve their language skills. The content of a textbook should be persuasive and interesting enough in fulfilling students’ needs, interests, and contexts in language learning. It should cover all language skills and language elements appropriately and sufficiently. The term ‘analysis’ refers to the study of something by examining its parts and relationship (Hornby, 1995). Similarly, Merriam Webster defines that analysis is “a careful study of something to learn about its parts, what they do, and how they are related to each other”. Evaluating and analyzing a textbook basically need hard work and requires some considerations and criteria to be taken into accounts. Some considerations and criteria perhaps deal with learners’ needs and interests, efficiency, teachers, programs planning, contents and practicality.

In essence, many English teachers follow the syllabus provided by the textbook whereas not all textbooks provide it inside. Syllabus is a part of the communicative curriculum which must be taken into account in the pedagogical process. The teachers often do not put much attention on the content of syllabus which has been already systematically developed based on the curriculum designed by the government. Hence, learners do not obtain meaningful and appropriate input from teachers during the teaching-learning process. Therefore, analysis of textbook is considered necessary as the basis for educational instructions in the classroom and curriculum policy decisions.

There were some studies related to this research. Fatima, Shah & Sultan (2015) conducted a textbook analysis and evaluation of 7th and 8th grades in Pakistani context in which the findings that there were insufficient emphasis on cultural awareness and unequal emphasis towards four language skills. The research applied both quantitative and qualitative
methods. Another study was Hatoss (2004) which released a model used for evaluating language textbooks using cultural theories and language learning theories. Her model applies three components in evaluating language textbooks; input, methods, and aims. However, principally there are some different methods applied in carrying out evaluation. McGrath (2002) proposed checklist method, impressionistic and in-depth method, interview, and so forth that may be applied for analyzing textbooks. His methods has been applied by some other researchers.

The textbook scrutinized was “Look Ahead an English Course Book for Senior High School Students Year X” written by Th. M. Sudarwati and Eudia Grace and published by Erlangga in 2007. It only has the textbook without a series of workbook and teacher’s book. It is claimed that it has audio CD for listening activities. The textbook has been edited by Indonesian educational experts and also has been examined by a native proofreader. The authors are both Indonesian in which it will lead the assumption that the textbook is organized, influenced and conceptualized based on the context where it is used. Furthermore, the authors claim that the textbook encourages students to develop their competence in phonological and lexicogrammatical levels, as well as discourse and cultural aspect. They also state that the materials were developed and adapted from teaching learning cycle method in which genres as the main tool in language learning. Besides, they claim that students can achieve communication skills in spoken and written at the end of lessons. For the verification of their claim, checklists have been developed for quantitative and qualitative content analysis as proposed by McGrath (2002).

METHOD

The processes of data collection consisted of three stages. First, the quantitative content analysis with checklist technique was conducted to collect the data of the English textbook as a written document obtained from the English teacher of Senior high school of Babunnajah Boarding School which is also available in the school library. Second, this study also appraised the textbook based on the following considerations under the qualitative content analysis checklist; the focus of the textbook and its language learning components, its structure and other components, and its practicality. Finally, documentary study was also conducted to support the data of content analysis. The sources data for the document was the
sylabus. The researcher copied the syllabus from one of the English teachers of senior high school of Babunnajah boarding school to review it.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

For the analysis, the quantitative of content analysis checklist method and qualitative content analysis using checklist technique have been applied in this study. The textbook, which has 198 pages, consists of 7 units using thematic lessons. The total activities covered in this course book is 245. The formal representation of the division and percentage is given as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIEW OF ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>TOTAL ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities for Speaking skills</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for Listening skills</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10,6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for Writing skills</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16,7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for Reading skills</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13,4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for Grammar</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21,6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for Vocabulary</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6,12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for Pronunciation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5,30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for Culture study</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4,08 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.** Graph Shows of Percentage & Types of Activities

Tabel 1. Quantitative of Content Analysis Checklist
In term of language skills, it reveals that the authors has given more emphasis to develop speaking skills towards students that is 22%, whereas reading and listening are only 13,40% and 10,60% respectively. The writing skill is in the middle position meaning it is not the main emphasis to be developed. Meanwhile, regarding with language elements, grammar has been also emphasized highly by the authors, whereas vocabulary and pronunciation are placed at the lowest emphasis by 6,12% and 5,30% respectively. Culture study, a combination of local culture and foreign or target culture, has been also taken into account to be developed by the authors towards students even though with less emphasis that is only 4,08%.

**Qualitative Content Analysis Checklist**

The qualitative analysis also used checklist as the technique in collecting data which covers the focus of the textbook and its language learning components, its structure and other components, and its practicality (see appendix I).

**The Focus & Its Language Learning Components**

In communicative curriculum, there is communicative syllabus which establishes various communicative abilities whereby the students are required to be able to reveal those abilities at the end of an arranged course...
(McCarthy & Carter, 2001). Hence, aims and approaches of this textbook meet the Indonesian’s School Based Competence curriculum year 2006 which is called KTSP which prioritizes the communicative competency towards learners. The syllabus of this course book implicitly focuses upon the broader communicative knowledge and the four integrated skills in which it can be proved that the materials covered inside are dominated by challenging and autonomous tasks and communicative activities to be performed by the students. Moreover, in this textbook, it is assumed that the authors choose the formal syllabus as the language-focused and learning-focused since it covers some grammatical features combined with other communicative aspects such as speech acts like offering, accepting, declining, and so forth. Furthermore, it develops students’ capability in decision-making, negotiation of meanings, cooperation like ‘Hand in Hand’ and problem solving in the tasks and activities in which they engage in the classroom.

Besides, regarding with the language learning components, the methodology of teaching used in this textbook is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which integrates some strands of syllabuses: genre-based syllabus, skill-based syllabus, and task-based syllabus. According to Breen (2001), there are four types of syllabus currently applied in language teaching; formal, functional, task-based, and process. On the other hand, Wilkis (as cited in Graves, 2008) proposes that there are two types of syllabuses; synthetic and analytic syllabuses. Synthetic syllabus is kind of syllabus which focuses on the product of language which deals with forms and rules or it is also called as formal syllabus. Formal syllabus is kind of syllabus which focuses much on forms and grammatical features and rules which is taught sequently from simple to complex or from most useful to less useful as well as the four skills are taught from receptive to productive. Meanwhile, analytic syllabus is a syllabus that focuses on the process of language learning and learner autonomy Wilkins (as cited in Graves, 2008). Under the umbrella of synthetic syllabus, there are structural syllabus and notional-functional syllabus. Furthermore, under the umbrella of analytical syllabus there are situational, skill-based, task-based and content-based syllabuses. Hence, it is assumed as genre-based syllabus since the textbook is organized based on the genre per each of the units, such as telling stories under the basis of narrative text following instructions under the basis of procedure text, etc. Yet, the content of the textbook has a repetition, namely
the repetition of learning text-type or genre such as two parts of telling stories in narrative genre, even though the topics and exercises used are dissimilar. The texts applied in the textbook are various and authentic. It is in accordance with Byram (2004) defining a genre as the activity which has purpose, stage, and goal-oriented whereby the learners or speakers involve parts of their cultures such as writing a diary, telling a story and so forth. Then, it also employs skill-based syllabus Brown (as cited in Graves, 2008) as it covers and integrates all four language skills; reading, listening, speaking and writing in each unit even though the emphasis on these skills were unequal. Moreover, it also applies a task-based syllabus Breen and Prabhu (as cited in Graves, 2008) since it covers some tasks of performance, such as role-plays, simulations, group projects, etc. Task-based syllabus is kind of syllabus that focuses much on task performances and interpretation and negotiation of meanings in tasks as well as the four skills are integrated within tasks which is taught in the cyclical way from familiar to less familiar. Meanwhile, the textbook uses structural or grammatical syllabus Breen (as cited in Graves, 2008) because the textbook incorporates grammatical features, pronunciation and vocabulary as well.

Furthermore, the textbook also focuses on the learners as the center of learning in which they are encouraged to be active and creative as well as critical thinking is boosted in the language learning. The materials provided are designed to make students actively engage in the classroom in their own learning processes (Nunan & Lamb, 2001), for instance in pairs or group activities on various and challenging tasks and projects, since learner-centered classroom respect their needs, strategies and styles in learning. The teachers conduct as the organizer of the resources and also as a resource for himself as well as the guide and supervisor who guide and monitor the classroom procedures and activities (Breen and Candlin, 2001) and assist learners whenever they need help.

### 3.1.2 The Course Book Structure & Other Components

The design of this textbook is appealing enough and the layout is attractive and colourful enough with a boy and its guitar illustration representing the spirit of young man in doing activity, even though the papers are only covered by the three colors; black, white, and green. The textbook is organized in a cyclic way in which the prior knowledge and competence are revisited and proceeded at later points rather than in a linear way (Breen, 2001). Moreover, the content in all the units of it is managed
well and subdivided or broken down into parts for the sake of easiness in teaching and learning as well as it is presented interestingly with some authentic pictures using comic strips which attract students’ interest to learn English language. It is also easy to be understood and performed by the students with varied materials based on the context. Besides, it utilizes some authentic materials from magazines, internet and other sources which then adapt them to meet students’ needs and interests.

In terms of selection of appropriate contents, the authors emphasize communicative skills such as the use of transactional functions or speech acts like offering, accepting, refusing, etc. and interpersonal functions as well by giving list of useful gambits ‘Ways to Say It’ to help students express their own ideas. Also, it takes into account the linguistics skills, such as the use of action verbs and vocabulary building by giving a space box of ‘Say It Right’ and matching exercises for vocabulary and pronunciation with phonetic transcription of certain words in the corner page of the textbook. In addition, it is a good point that the textbook includes ‘Checking Your Progress’ for their reflection of their own learning and ‘Checklist’ for their self evaluation of their own performance and peer assessment for assessing their friends’ performances. By doing these, students are motivated to be responsible for the progress and further learning. Furthermore, it also inserts ‘Did You Know’ as important information related to the subject discussed to widen students knowledge and ‘Hint’ as a piece of advice or guidelines to help students complete their assignments.

Similarly, it is valuable since the materials of the textbook incorporate appropriately social values aspects of how to interact and behave with the nearby environment as well as the cultural awareness such as Tea Time, Arranging Time, Giving Compliments, and Newspaper Headlines combined with Indonesian cultures as local cultures like The Borobudur Temple, Jakarta City, etc. As the result, the students will aware of cross-culture understanding and know of how to appreciate other cultures well. Yet, it needs more other cultural awarenesses to make students’ language competence as close as native’s.

3.1.3 The Practicality of the Course Book

The practicality of the textbook is another important point to be considered especially by the learners. It may deal with the price which is expensive, namely 80,000 IDR or 64,000 IDR (20% OFF) and being a
financial burden for students who live in rural and isolated areas and for them coming from low income family whereas they are required to buy the textbook since only a few are available in the library. Nevertheless, it will be affordable for students coming from urban areas which live with high income family. Hence, it is expensive since it is a commercial book which then makes this textbook unpractical as it cannot be used by all the learners in different areas and contexts. Richards (n.d.) argues that the publishers tend to release the book to meet global market demands and they are also motivated by the financial profit, while the authors generally concern to fulfill the relevance both teachers’ and students’ needs in producing the textbook.

CONCLUSION

The findings suggested that the overall organization and content of the textbook are satisfied so that the textbook is recommended for teachers and students to be used as a guidance in teaching-learning process, especially at senior high school of Babunnajah boarding school. This study also reveals that all language skills and language elements are covered in the textbook and mostly it meets the KTSP curriculum. However, there are some problematical areas detected in the textbook, namely, four language skills are not equally emphasized; the cultural awareness aspects which are the combination of local culture and target culture are still inadequate; the textbook is not equipped by the audiocompact CD for listening activities; it is also not equipped by the answer keys which sometimes cause the teachers difficult to check the correct answers; and similarly it does not incorporate the content of syllabus at the beginning page of the textbook as the depiction for teachers of what to be taught for the whole courses of study as well as it has a repetition of learning text-type or genre in the content.Therefore, it is highly suggested that the authors should reconsider and revise the content of the textbook and its supports to be meaningfully and appropriately used either by the teachers or the learners, so that it will meet students’ needs, expectations, and interests in the language learning. This brief and limited study may be of some value for those who are interested in developing ESL textbooks for learners especially in Indonesia. It is suggested that future researches with in-depth analysis method or other methods on other grades or other English textbooks are needed.
REFERENCES


