

WRITING MATERIAL ANALYSIS OF OFFICE ADMINISTRATION ENGLISH TEXTBOOK Strengths and Weaknesses

Iga Yolanda

English Education Department, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta
Indonesia
iga.yolanda21@gmail.com

Abstract

Textbook is seen as language input for language learners to achieve the learning objectives. However, not all of the materials in the textbook are suitable with the learners' need. Thus, textbook analysis is needed to evaluate the quality of the textbook to be able to fulfill the learners' need. The aim of this study is to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the writing materials which are used by office administration students in SMK. This study used descriptive qualitative design with book analysis and interview method to collect the data. The data sources of this study were English Textbook entitled "Get Along with English for Vocational School Grade XI Elementary Level" and the English teachers. The findings show that the textbook has several strengths and weaknesses. The textbook contains the explanation about grammar with a wide range of activities. It also provides the glossary at the end of every chapter. Unfortunately, the contents are too general and not specialized for office administration study program. It also does not focus on writing activities and has no explanation about the use of punctuation.

Keywords: textbook analysis, writing materials, vocational high school, strengths and weaknesses

Introduction

Learning English means learning four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills have to be learned and mastered by the students so they can communicate effectively.

Brown (2001) defines writing as a product of thinking, drafting, and revising that require specialized skills on how to generate ideas, how to organize them, how to use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions coherently into a written text, how to revise text for clearer meaning and how to edit text for appropriate grammar and how to produce a final product. Related to mastering writing skill, there are many Office Administration students who face difficulties to write. They usually make mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and vocabularies. Office administration is one of the study programs in vocational high school. Based on Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (2014), office administration students have to be able to

manage and write letters, documents, and reports. In other word, they need to master writing competence.

This problem is inseparable in relation to the provision of learning materials during teaching and learning process. As cited by Brown (2005), instructional material promotes effective learning. It means that the effectiveness of students learning the language also depends on the materials used by teacher in teaching and learning process.

Textbook is one of the learning materials in the school. Tarigan and Tarigan (1993) define that textbook is a learning book of certain subject that is compiled by experts in that subject for the meanings and instructional purpose. Textbook has an important role in teaching and learning process, especially for both teacher and students to gain the knowledge. As mentioned by Ghufron and Saleh (2016), textbooks play a prominent role in the teaching and learning process and they are the primary agents of conveying the

knowledge to the learners. In addition, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) mention that textbooks provide the necessary input into classroom lessons through different activities, readings and explanations. Therefore, the textbook is seen as important source of input and a great opportunity for EFL learners to communicate in the target language.

It is common for English teachers teach their students by using available textbooks. However, such textbooks which are really suitable with the needs of the students are not always available. A book may be ideal in one situation because it matches the needs of that situation perfectly, the same book in a different situation, however, may turn out to be quite unsuitable. Thus, it depends on the learning context and objectives. One book is impossible suitable for all context and situation.

Therefore, an analysis of the textbook is needed. As mentioned by Ghufroon and Saleh (2016), textbook analysis plays a key role in education and it is important for the teacher since it can provide valuable information for the future going of classroom practice, the planning of courses and management of learning tasks by students. Thus, by conducting textbook analysis, the teacher can make decisions on selecting appropriate materials to fulfill the learners' need in teaching and learning process.

To analyze the textbook/learning materials, there are some procedures which have to be followed. The procedures are called as material evaluation. As stated by Tomlinson (2003) material evaluation is the procedure that involves the examination of learning materials to establish their value. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) propose several criteria to evaluate the materials. They are in terms of audience, aims, content, methodology, and other criteria. In term of audience, the materials should be appropriate for the needs of intended audiences. In term of aims, the materials should have clear aims and objectives. The aims should keep in track with the content of the materials. In

term of content, the materials should cover the linguistic descriptions, language points, the proportion of work on each skill, micro-skills, indicators of the skills, text types, types of topics, the organized content within the units and materials, and the sequenced content within the units and materials. In term of methodology, the tasks and teaching and learning techniques should be based on the learning theories. The materials also should provide the guidance for the learners to learn. In term of other criteria aspect, it includes the price and the accessibility of the materials.

This study aims to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the writing materials in the textbook entitled "Get Along with English for Vocational School Grade XI Elementary Level" for office administration study program. Therefore, textbook analysis is needed to find the quality of the textbook, so that the teacher can select appropriate materials to fulfill the students' need.

The problem statement of this study is what are the strengths and weaknesses of writing materials in the textbook entitled "Get Along with English for Vocational School Grade XI Elementary Level" for Office Administration Study program?

Methodology

This study used Descriptive Qualitative Research Design. The aim of this study was to find out the quality of the writing materials in the textbook in term of strengths and weaknesses for Vocational High School students. The main data source of this study is English textbook entitled "Get Along with English for Vocational School Grade XI Elementary Level" written by Entin Sutinah, et al. published by Erlangga in 2010. The data of the study are writing materials from the textbook.

The method of collecting the data was content analysis. The writer read the textbook and then analyzed the writing materials contained in the textbook. The procedures of analyzing the data were as follow: (1) finding out the writing materials

provided in the textbook entitled “Get Along with English for Vocational School Grade XI Elementary Level”, (2) comparing writing materials in the textbook with criteria of material evaluation by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), (3) describing the strengths and weaknesses the writing materials in the textbook, (4) drawing conclusion based on the result of analysis.

Findings and Discussion

1. The Brief Description of Textbook

The book title is Get Along with English for Vocational School Grade XI Elementary Level. The writers of this book are Entin Sutinah, Iis Nurhayani, N. Euis Kartini, Heri Mulyana, Nur Asyiah, Rachma F. Kesuma, and Eka Mulya Astuti. The size of book is 175 x 250 mm. It has 145 pages. The cover color is blue and white while the pages are green, grey, and white. It is published by Erlangga. This book is arranged based on Curriculum KTSP 2006. The book contains six units with listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities in each unit. The book also provides grammar review and text structure to support the mastery of language skills.

2. Textbook analysis

The analysis is taken from the criteria proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). They are audience, aims, content, methodology, and other criteria such as price and practical consideration. The detail of explanation will be discussed as follows:

a. Audience

The audience of this book is the students of all study programs in Vocational High School. Related to Office Administration study program, the students need specific writing materials which can be used directly after graduate, such as the materials about how to write any kinds of letters. Meanwhile, the book consists of general learning materials for all study programs in Vocational High School. Some writing materials are appropriate for the

needs of Office administration student such as how to write short messages, invitation letter, and resume. Some writing materials are not appropriate for the needs of Office administration students such as how to write daily activity, future plan, and process how to make something. Therefore, this book is less appropriate for Office Administration students.

b. Aims

The aims of the book are to describe jobs and a background of studies both written and orally, describe past events and future working plan, and write short messages, instructions, and directions using correct words and punctuation. However, they do not correspond closely with the aims of the teaching program namely Office Administration. As mentioned by Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (2014), the objectives of Office Administration study program in Vocational High School are able to manage and write letters, documents, and reports.

Related to linearity between aims and the content of the textbook, the materials are linear with the aims of the book. The book provides the activity to achieve all of the objectives.

c. Content

The activities in the book are varied but they have almost the same pattern so they look boring. The order of activities is started from listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The book consists of activities for four skills. Most of learning materials are contextual and only few of them which are not contextual. The book contains some irrelevant learning materials and activities that are not suitable for the students' fields. The book covers the explanation about grammar and punctuation to support the students to learn. It also provides glossary to increase the students' vocabulary.

The book does not focus on writing activities since it covers all of the skills in one book. The writing activities are not

suitable in term of amount of guidance/control, degree of accuracy, organization of longer pieces of writing and use of appropriate style.

d. Methodology

The approach to language learning taken by the book is communicative learning. The students are expected to develop the communicative competence both in written and spoken. Yet the approach is less appropriate with the teaching situation because it is not supported by the materials which are too general. The students of Office administration need specific materials which can support them in work field.

The techniques used for writing activities are varied such as completing the incomplete dialog, filling in the blank form or incomplete form, and writing a dialog or a paragraph.

e. Other criteria

The price of the book is quite expensive. It is Rp. 79000. It can be found in any book store so it is easy to find. If it is looked at the students' economic background, they may have objection to buy that book.

The book is strong because it is bound well. It also has good quality paper material. However, it is not long-lasting since the curriculum can change anytime and it may be not appropriate anymore. In addition, the layout of the book is not attractive. It is very simple with green, grey, and white color for all pages.

Conclusion

After analyzing the writing materials in the textbook published by Erlangga in 2010 entitled *Get Along with English for Vocational School Grade XI Elementary Level* which is written by Entin Sutinah, et al., the writer concludes that the writing materials have several strengths and weaknesses based on the criteria of materials evaluation by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) in term of audience, aims, content,

methodology, and other criteria. The strengths of the textbook are as follows:

1. The textbook contains linear aims and learning materials.
2. The textbook covers four language skills with various activities.
3. Most of the materials are contextual.
4. The textbook provides the glossary and the explanation about grammar and punctuation.
5. The techniques used for writing activities are varied.
6. The book is strong and has good quality paper materials.

Meanwhile, the weaknesses of the textbook are as follows:

1. The textbook is less appropriate with Office Administration students' specific need.
2. The textbook objectives do not correspond closely with the aims of the teaching program namely Office Administration.
3. The activities look boring because have same pattern in each unit.
4. The textbook contains some irrelevant learning materials and activities that are not suitable for the students' fields.
5. The textbook does not focus on writing activities.
6. The communicative approach in the textbook is less appropriate with the teaching situation.
7. The price of textbook is quite expensive.
8. The layout of the textbook is not attractive.
9. The textbook is not long-lasting since the curriculum may change any time.

References

- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New York: A Pearson Education Company.
- Brown, R. (2005). *Management in themedia: decision makers. 4th ed.* Harlow: FT Prentice Hall.

- Ghufron, M. Ali & Saleh Mursid. 2016. Students' Differences and Students' Outcomes in English Learning. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, X/2.
- Hutchinson, T. and Torres E. (1994). The textbook as agent of change. *ELT Journal*, 48(4), 315-328.
- Hutchinson, T., and Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centered Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (2014). *Standar Kompetensi Lulusan (SKL) Kursus dan Pelatihan Sekretaris Level II Berbasis Kerangka Nasional Indonesia*. Kemdikbud.
- Tarigan, Henry Guntur and Djaego Tarigan. (1993). *Telaah Buku Teks Bahasa Indonesia*. Bandung: Angkasa.
- Tomlinson, Brian. (2003). *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*. London: Continuum Press.