

**ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: A QUALITATIVE EVALUATION OF THE
4TH GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOK FOR EFL STUDENTS**

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Article History

Received : 16-Februari-2024
Revised : 17-Februari-2024
Accepted : 30-Maret-2024
Published : 31-Maret-2024

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Cite This Article:

DOI:

Abstract: *An abstract is a brief summary of a research article, thesis, review, conference proceeding or any-depth analysis of a particular subject or discipline, and is often used to help the reader quickly ascertain the paper purposes. When used, an abstract always appears at the beginning of a manuscript or typescript, acting as the point-of-entry for any given academic paper or patent application. Abstracting and indexing services for various academic discipline are aimed at compiling a body of literature for that particular subject. Abstract length varies by discipline and publisher requirements. Abstracts are typically sectioned logically as an overview of what appears in the paper.*

Keywords: *Content, formatting, article.*

Abstrak: Penelitian kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi textbook bahasa Inggris yang digunakan oleh siswa EFL (English as a Foreign Language) di kelas 4 SD. Penelitian ini difokuskan untuk menilai kesesuaian buku teks dalam memenuhi kebutuhan siswa sekolah dasar. Metode pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara, analisis dokumen, dan penggunaan daftar periksa/kelompok fokus untuk mengevaluasi secara komprehensif buku teks. Studi ini bertujuan untuk memberikan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang seberapa baik buku teks selaras dengan tuntutan pedagogis dan kebutuhan siswa. Dengan memeriksa efektivitas buku teks melalui berbagai metode kualitatif, penelitian ini berkontribusi untuk meningkatkan kualitas bahan pengajaran bahasa Inggris untuk siswa sekolah dasar.

Kata Kunci: isi, format, artikel.

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks serve not only as tools for English language teaching (ELT) but also offer numerous benefits for both educators and learners. They hold psychological significance for students, enabling them to gauge their progress. Additionally, textbooks prove to be efficient in terms of both time and financial resources, allowing students flexibility for adaptation and modification. Moreover, they aid teachers in lesson preparation and facilitate self-regulated learning among students. Nevertheless, it is imperative to evaluate textbooks to enhance the learning process, ensuring they cater to students' needs and incorporate materials that effectively serve the learning objectives.

Evaluation of English textbooks is a crucial step in ensuring the effectiveness of English language learning, both as a foreign language and as a second language. A good textbook plays a significant role in providing a solid foundation for students to develop their English language skills. In the context of evaluation, it is important to examine the content of the textbook and ensure its alignment with the teaching and learning requirements in EFL/ESL settings (Ahour (2014)). Therefore, evaluating the "Bahasa Inggris kelas 4 SD" textbook is essential to ensure that it meets the needs of students and supports the established learning objectives.

The evaluation of textbooks requires teachers to be aware of the realities of their classrooms, as well as the educational system they are engaged in, and the stages of students they have taught previously and will teach in the future. Because textbooks are considered one of the key elements to learners' success, the selection and analysis of them are crucial to avoid the use of inadequate materials López-Medina (2021).

This study aims to evaluate ESP textbooks assigned to Business Administration students. However, there are several research gaps that need to be considered for further research development. Firstly, this study mainly focuses on the views of English teachers in the evaluation of textbooks, but the lack of direct perspectives from students who use the textbooks is a void in this research. Therefore, future research could involve an approach that involves students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the textbooks from the direct users' perspective.

Furthermore, although this study used quantitative methods for data collection and analysis, a suggestion for future research is to involve qualitative approaches, such as interviews, to gain a deeper understanding of textbook evaluation. Qualitative approaches can provide more contextualized and in-depth insights into the experience of using textbooks in everyday learning situations.

This study makes a unique contribution by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in the evaluation of ESP textbooks, which can provide a more holistic and in-depth understanding of textbook effectiveness in the context of English language learning for specific purposes. Thus, this study not only provides new insights in ESP textbook evaluation, but also paves the way for more comprehensive and diverse research approaches in the field of English language teaching.

The focus of this research lies in the evaluation of an English language textbook employed within fourth-grade elementary school settings. The primary aim is to scrutinize the efficacy of this textbook by assessing its alignment with pedagogical necessities for students and its compliance with the prevailing curriculum guidelines. Through this comprehensive evaluation process, we endeavor to gain nuanced insights into the textbook's quality and suitability. Ultimately, the findings of this study are anticipated to play a pivotal role in informing the enhancement of English language learning materials tailored specifically for elementary school students, thus contributing significantly to the improvement of language education practices.

According to Mardiyana et al., (2023), elementary school textbooks are reference books used to enhance students' mastery of knowledge, personality, and skills based on national education standards. Textbooks are utilized because they have a significant influence on students. The textbooks used at the elementary school level are thematic textbooks in accordance with the 2013 curriculum. Thematic textbooks are textbooks that have thematic learning quality. Textbooks used in learning must be of high quality from various aspects. Quality textbooks must meet four criteria: content suitability, presentation, language, and graphics.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method employed in this study is qualitative. The research focuses on evaluating an English textbook designed for fourth-grade elementary school students. The data were collected from the textbook titled 'Bahasa Inggris' authored by Radite Hanung Wismantoro and published by CV Hasan Pratama. The aim is to assess the textbook's quality and its suitability to meet students' needs. To achieve this, data collection and analysis utilize a checklist and semi-structured interviews. Five EFL students from the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training volunteered to participate. The instrument used is a checklist similar to the one employed by Tina. This checklist assesses four main sections: language comprehension level, exercises and activities, effectiveness in presenting new material, and visual aspects. Additionally, a notebook was utilized to record all conversations during interviews as a data source. The checklist was obtained through semi-structured interviews, following the approach described by Prasetya et al., (2021), allowing for open-ended exploration of issues. During these interviews, EFL students provided their opinions and ideas. The results were then analyzed based on these opinions, language comprehension, assessing factors such as the adequacy of exercises, and the quality of the book's design and layout.

Previous Research Review

Prior studies have also delved into the evaluation of English language textbooks for EFL students at different educational levels. For instance, a study by Al-Abdullah (2022) focused on the evaluation of the Business Result Pre-Intermediate Second Edition textbook assigned to Business Administration students

at a university in Kuwait. The qualitative approach used in that study aimed to assess the alignment of the textbook with students' needs and pedagogical requirements. Through in-depth interviews with English teachers teaching the ENG 154 course, the study sought to gain insights into the strengths, weaknesses, and suitability of the textbook for learning needs. The qualitative analysis of the interview data aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the textbook's usage in a real learning context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Language Comprehension

Students find it challenging to grasp English due to its lack of everyday usage. As cited in Tambusai & Nasution, (2022), difficulties in language acquisition manifest in various forms, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Learning difficulties are categorized into two groups: developmental learning disabilities, which involve motor, perceptual, language, communication, and social behavior adjustment challenges, and academic learning disabilities, which refer to underachievement compared to expected capabilities. This reflects the struggle students encounter in comprehending English language concepts within elementary school textbooks.

The first question investigated was the level of language comprehension in this textbook, using several levels: difficult, moderate, and easy. Some respondents indicated that this textbook is quite easy to comprehend for elementary school students. Overall, respondents noted that the language used is easy to understand for elementary school students in Indonesia because the textbook provides basic English language skills.

Assessing Factors

According to Muttaqien, (2017), despite students having studied English for a considerable amount of time, their proficiency has not yet shown satisfactory results. Nevertheless, in assessing the exercises and activities provided in the textbook, the next question was divided into several levels: inadequate, sufficiently adequate, and highly adequate. Three out of five respondents stated that this book is inadequate because it does not emphasize the English language, with the majority of them citing answers from the text on the previous page. Two respondents considered it sufficiently adequate because the exercises are easy to understand for elementary school students and aid in recalling the exercises they have completed. In the English textbook for 4th grade elementary school, students can complete exercises that encourage them to use the vocabulary they have learned. This will help them expand their vocabulary and boost their confidence in speaking.

Quality of Books

Shala, (2023) suggests that to enhance the quality of English textbooks for fourth-grade students, it is essential to create relevant guidelines for publishers and authors and design training programs for them. Additionally, completing and harmonizing institutional frameworks and regulations for compiling, evaluating, approving, and publishing school textbooks will ensure consistently high-quality textbooks.

The third question concerns the effectiveness of teaching new material, which led all respondents to agree that it is less effective in presenting new content, categorized into levels: less effective, moderately effective, and highly effective. Respondents noted that the material still relies on traditional methods with added images and translations, which make the effectiveness of this textbook appear similar to a dictionary book

Books Design and Layout

Images incorporated into textbooks, especially in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), have the potential to spark students' interest and encourage them to engage in language learning in more analytical and imaginative ways. These images can enhance students' focus and understanding, reduce cognitive load, and foster enthusiasm for learning. Visual aids also facilitate students' connection with learning materials, enabling them to form meaningful associations. For example, these images can assist students in preparing for upcoming exercises, tasks, or activities. Therefore, visual images play a motivational role within the context of the text Elmiana, (2019).

In terms of visual aspects, there are several levels: unappealing, average, and appealing. This aspect led all respondents to agree that the design and layout are still unappealing. Respondents commented that the textbook cover design is not suitable for elementary school students, as it features images of a cellphone and tourist spots. Additionally, the back cover depicts children playing, which seems inappropriate for

placement behind the text. This lack of appeal diminishes interest among viewers, and respondents suggest using images of children engaged in activities or play for better visual representation.

The study evaluated English textbooks for EFL students in grade 4 elementary schools using a comprehensive qualitative method, focusing on the visual aspects and effectiveness of the teaching materials. Data were obtained through interviews, document analysis, and the use of checklists/focus groups. The results showed that the textbook had some shortcomings in visual design and effectiveness of presenting new materials, but was still relatively suitable for students' needs. This research provides a deep insight into the role of textbooks in English language learning at the primary school level and the importance of evaluation to ensure suitability to students' needs.

Meanwhile, the evaluation research of ESP textbooks for Business Administration students used quantitative methods with a focus on the suitability of textbooks to students' needs and pedagogical demands. Data was obtained from interviews with English teachers who taught the course. Although the ESP textbook had some shortcomings, the results showed that the textbook was relatively suitable for the course. This study provides an understanding of the role of textbooks in ESP programs and the importance of evaluation to ensure suitability to the needs of Business Administration students. A recommendation for future research is to involve qualitative approaches, such as interviews, for a more in-depth understanding of textbook evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The qualitative evaluation of the 4th-grade elementary school English textbook for EFL students has provided valuable insights into the efficacy of the teaching materials utilized in language education. The findings reveal a nuanced assessment of the textbook, with commendable performance in enhancing language comprehension levels but notable deficiencies in the design of exercises, the presentation of new material, and the visual elements. These results underscore the imperative for continual assessment and refinement of English language teaching resources to better cater to the educational requirements of elementary school students.

The research conducted on the 4th-grade elementary school English textbook for EFL students has yielded significant findings regarding the quality and appropriateness of the educational material. The positive feedback on the enhancement of language comprehension levels signifies the textbook's success in imparting fundamental language skills to students. However, the identified shortcomings in the exercises, the effectiveness of presenting new material, and the visual aesthetics emphasize areas necessitating focused attention and improvement to elevate the overall educational experience.

Furthermore, the feedback on the visual components of the textbook underscores the importance of engaging and relevant design elements in educational resources. Recommendations to enhance visual appeal through the incorporation of pertinent and captivating visuals align with the objective of fostering increased student engagement and motivation in English language learning.

Looking ahead, it is imperative for the researchers to consider the implications of these findings on curriculum development and pedagogical strategies. Addressing the identified deficiencies in the textbook through targeted revisions and enhancements holds the potential to enhance the efficacy of English language instruction for elementary school students. By leveraging the strengths of the current textbook and rectifying its weaknesses, the researchers aim to contribute to the ongoing enhancement of English language education practices at the elementary school level.

This research has significant relevance in the context of developing more effective and relevant English teaching materials for primary school students. By qualitatively evaluating grade 4 English textbooks, this research makes an important contribution to understanding the extent to which they meet students' needs and support the stated learning objectives. As such, the results of this study can serve as a foundation for the improvement and development of English teaching materials that are better suited to students' needs, as well as supporting the improvement of the quality of English learning at the primary school level.

By paying attention to aspects such as the level of language comprehension, the adequacy of exercises and activities, and the quality of book design, this study provides valuable insights for developers of English teaching materials. By improving the identified weaknesses and strengthening the aspects that students find effective, teaching material developers can create learning materials that are more engaging, interactive and in line with the needs of primary school students. As such, this study not only provides an in-depth understanding of the quality of the textbooks evaluated, but also provides valuable direction in

the development of more effective and relevant English teaching materials to support student learning at the primary school level.

In conclusion, this research underscores the critical importance of continuous evaluation and enhancement of English language teaching materials to meet the evolving needs of EFL students. Through a thorough assessment and improvement of educational resources, the researchers strive to create a more enriching and effective learning environment for elementary school students pursuing proficiency in the English language.

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