

ESP COURSEBOOK EVALUATION: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

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Abstract

This research is conducted to evaluate a coursebook in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) subject. It investigates students' responses towards ESP coursebook written by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) entitled *English for Specific Purposes*. The evaluation format used in this research is adopted from Al-Sowat (2012). The participants involved in this research were university students. The data were collected by distributing questionnaire to the participants using google form. Descriptive qualitative was used to analyze and present the data. The results showed that the coursebook has strength. Students do not feel bored, also those activities can make students more creative and active in the classroom. This research suggests further research to develop an appropriate coursebook for English for Specific Purposes subject.

Keywords: *ESP; Coursebook Evaluation; Students' Perception; Activities; Tasks*

INTRODUCTION

In teaching and learning process, teacher and students need some materials as media to deliver the lessons to the students. The materials can be 'realia' (real objects such as a pencil, a chair, or a bag) and representations (such as a drawing or photograph of a person, house or scene). Such materials which can be found in teaching and learning process specifically designed for language learning and teaching, namely textbooks, worksheets, computer software and authentic materials (McGrath, 2008).

Some teachers tend to follow all chapters and copy the materials in the textbook to the lesson plan rather than create or combine the materials with supplementary materials from other

sources (Gebhard, 2006). He also states that sometimes teachers feel helpless in being creative with materials and media. Unfortunately, some teachers give in under the pressure and simply follow the prescribed lessons for the institution or government. In Indonesia, teachers thought that textbook or students' worksheets as only one source to teach English to the students without looking at other sources, in this case using commercial or authentic materials.

Considering the issues above, teachers should prepare the well organized activity and materials which will be delivered to the students, because the lesson has a far greater chance of success than a chaotic one (Harmer, 2007). It means that teachers do not adapt all of the materials or chapters in the book. They have to synchronize the material with

lesson plan and syllabus that were created by the teachers. Sometimes in making lesson plan and syllabus, teachers adapt the materials in the textbook. On the point of that, textbook evaluation is needed by teacher to choose suitable material applied in the classroom.

As the above statements, it can be sum up that textbook is one of important things which accommodate students' success in the teaching-learning process at class activity. Therefore, particular attention must be paid to evaluate the textbook based on reliable instrument. According to Suherdi (2013), there are four criteria of a good textbook expediency which should be assessed before it is used. Those criteria are content, presentation, language, and visualization.

To enhance the focus of present study, similar studies have been conducted. Chu Ying and Young (2011) report that in using textbook in professional development has been associated with the potential for teachers to develop creative materials and curriculum autonomy. While there has been a long tradition of using textbooks in Hong Kong government schools, that study had found teachers' perception towards using textbook. In Indonesian setting, Aminuddin (2009) found that the students acknowledged their teacher's competency in using materials which they considered that the learning materials have met students' needs. The statement supports the use of appropriate coursebook in the classroom.

Based on the previous explanation, an instrument to evaluate textbook is decided to be chosen by considering the main criteria involved. The instrument used to evaluate the textbook is based on the research conducted by Dr. Hamad Al-Sowat (2012) from Education Umm Al-Qura University Saudi Arabia. The instrument evaluates English Specific

Purposes textbook written by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). There are nine criteria include layout and design, objectives, activities and tasks, balance or skills, language type, subject and content, vocabulary, social and cultural values, and teachers' needs. Nevertheless, this research only focuses on activities and tasks.

This instrument is used for some reasons. Firstly, language can be a tool of thinking, imagination, and creativity. Secondly, language is a tool for communication. Then, based on Government Regulation No. 65, it fulfills 21st century demand. There are some points in that regulation, such as the textbook must focus to the students' centered or students find the knowledge by themselves and be active learners. Textbook should provide multiple sources of learning, balance of hard skill and soft skill, increase students' competence, multidimensional answer, and aware with the use of ICT.

The aforementioned explanation is taken as the starting point to provide an evaluation of English for Specific Purposes textbook entitled "English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centred approach" written by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). This textbook is created for University Students and published by Cambridge University Press.

METHOD

Research Design

This present study employed a qualitative design with descriptive research method. This method is used to examine questions that can best be answered by verbally describing how participants in a study perceive and interpret various aspect of their environment (Crowl, 1996).

Qualitative research provides opportunities for researchers to study

social phenomena in relation to people's everyday lives. Through a process of data interpretation, qualitative research provides information about what, why and how a phenomenon in a society happens. This is in line with what Denzin and Lincoln (2005) say that qualitative research also involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. Yin (1994) also elaborates that employing qualitative method provides researchers with opportunities to represent the views and perspectives of the people/participants in a study.

Participants

The participants in this research were university students in Cimahi which consisted of 30 students. They already took an English for Specific Purposes class using Hutchinson and Waters (1987) as their coursebook. They joined for 16 meetings in the classroom. Then, the duration of each week, they obtained the session once in a week.

Instruments

Upon the chosen step of an observation classroom, this research conducted the preliminary observation to the classroom. The questionnaires were distributed virtually using google form. Due to the limitation during pandemic era.

The instrument which is used to evaluate the textbook is based on the research conducted by Dr. Hamad Al-Sowat from Education Umm Al-Qura University Saudi Arabia. As mentioned earlier, this instrument is chosen as it is considered to cover some components which should be owned by a good textbook as well as the language teaching learning process. The consideration of components in choosing this instrument involve some criteria of book's consideration stated by Government regulation No. 65, such as students'

affective factors, culture based, and the use of ICT.

The instruments which are used to evaluate the textbook divided into nine parts, namely layout and physical appearance, content, objectives, language type, skills, activities and tasks, structure and vocabulary, culture values, and teacher's needs. Each part consists of several aspects to be evaluated which are described into several detail descriptions.

The activities and tasks in the textbook consist of nine aspects. The score of each item starts from one until four points. The subtotal of this part is 36 points. The detail description of evaluation is shown in the Table 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part delineates the depiction of research discussion dealing with the data investigated and collected from questionnaire. Whereas, data of this subchapter were obtained from thirty students of university level.

The result from the questionnaire shows that the students give positive response toward the coursebook. 95,8 % of the students respond positively towards the activities contained in the textbook. The activities are varied so that the students do not feel bored, also those activities can make students more creative and active in the classroom. Another response from the student shows that the activities contained in the coursebook also interesting and engaging, so the students are able to understand the lesson easily. Furthermore, the instructions used in the coursebook are sufficient enough for the students to do the activities independently. The instructions also can be easily understood by the students so they can learn the coursebook by themselves. It can be seen from the result of the questionnaire which shows that more than 90% of the students agree that the instructions in the coursebook are efficient and clear for the students.

Table 1. *Perception on the activities and tasks in the textbook*

No.	Items	Ratings				Score
		Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	
1	There are a variety of activities in the textbook.					
2	The instructions in the material are sufficient.					
3	The instructions in the material are clear.					
4	There are instructions to explain how the exercise should be done.					
5	There are interactive activities that require students to use new vocabulary to communicate.					
6	The activities facilitate students' use of grammatical rules by creating situations in which these rules are needed.					
7	The textbook provides communicative exercises that enable learners to carry out their communicative tasks in real-life situations.					
8	There is a balance between the activities for language and activities for skills.					
9	An adequate set of evaluation quizzes or testing suggestions is included.					
Total score						

The students also give their opinion toward the vocabulary that they gained from the activities. All of the students agree that the activities in the coursebook are interactive. Then, they requires the students to build their knowledge towards new vocabulary to communicate. By doing the activities in the coursebook, the students were given the opportunity to interact with their friends and allow them to gain new vocabulary related to the topic in the coursebook. Furthermore, the students also agree that the activities in the coursebook facilitate them to use grammatical rules by creating situations which the rules are needed.

Based on the questionnaire result, the coursebook facilitates the students with the situation where they need to apply the

grammatical rules they have learned. The grammar is not only given in theory, but also applicable in the right situation. In that way, the students are able to gain the function of communicating. This can be seen from the questionnaire result which shows that more than 90% of the students are agree with the statement that the coursebook provides communicative exercises which enable them to carry out the communicative tasks in real-life situation. In other point of view, there are students who think that the material given in the coursebook is too much, so that the portion of the activities are not balanced. However, most of the students give positive responses toward the activities contained in the coursebook.

The coursebook also provided a set of evaluation which assessed students understanding towards the material discussed in each chapter. The result from the questionnaire shows that 86% of the students give positive responses toward the quiz contained in the coursebook, while 14% of the students respond negatively toward this issue. Some of them argue that the quiz contained in the coursebook are not good enough to be called as quiz, it's just an exercise. However, the rest of the students feel facilitated by the quizzes contained in the coursebook. The quizzes help them to remember what they have learned, also support them with better understanding related with the topic.

Based on the evaluation instruments by Dr. Hamad Al-Sowat, the instrument evaluates the textbook according to nine parts, namely layout and physical appearance, content, objectives, language type, skills, activities and tasks, structure and vocabulary, culture values, and teacher's needs.

Based on the English for Specific Purposes textbook written by Hutchinson and Waters which is published in 1987, it is obtained some description and reasons from each item of the instruments, whether it is suitable or not for the students. The analysis of the textbook is explained below based on the activities and task of the textbook.

This textbook provides sufficient variety in the subject and content. It can be seen in each chapter of the textbook, which provides the variation of activities not only through text or passage but also they provide narrative activities.

The content of textbook promotes students' autonomy. Students' autonomy in this context means the learner can use the textbook to learn the new material, review and monitor progress with some degree of autonomy. A learner without a textbook is more teacher's dependent (Ur,

2006 cited in Al-Sowat, 2012). This textbook provides some explanation to guide the students understand the materials, like ways to say it and the additional information about the tasks.

CONCLUSION

Based on data of questionnaire, the gained data indicated that students give positive response toward the coursebook which students respond positively towards the activities contained in the text book. The activities are varied so that the students do not feel bored, also those activities can make students more creative and active in the classroom. Another response from students that the activities were contained in the coursebook also interesting and engaging, so the students are able to understand the lesson easily. Furthermore, the instructions used in the coursebook are sufficient enough for the students to do the activities independently. The instructions also can be easily understood by the students so they can learn the coursebook by themselves.

Then, all of the students agree that the activities in the coursebook are interactive. They requires students to build their knowledge towards new vocabulary to communicate. By doing the activities in the coursebook, the students were given the opportunity to interact with their friends and allow them to gain new vocabulary related to the topic in the coursebook. Furthermore, the students also agree that the activities in the coursebook facilitate them to use grammatical rules by creating situations which the rules are needed. Besides that, grammar is not only given in theory, but also applicable in the right situation. In that way, the students are able to gain the function of communicating.

The coursebook also provided a set of evaluation which assessed students understanding towards the material discussed in each chapter. Regarding that

point, the students give positive responses toward the quiz contained in the coursebook. The quizzes help them to remember what they have learned, also support them with better understanding related with the topic. Regarding to the finding and discussion of the research, it is suggested that further research to develop an appropriate coursebook for English for Specific Purposes subject.

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