

TEACHER'S CONSIDERATIONS IN SELECTING TEXTBOOK

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Abstract

Textbook selection process takes a crucial part in teaching and learning process. The textbook affects the teaching and learning process, in turn will influence the students' competencies. Moreover English subject is the only way for the students to learn English, since English is a foreign language which means, students do not use it fluently and intensively. So, textbook determines the result of the teaching and learning process itself. This study presents the textbook selection process and the teacher's considerations when selecting the textbook. This is a case study research. The participant in this study was an English teacher of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Swasta (MTs) Aswaja Pontianak, one of private Islamic junior high school in Pontianak. The data of this study were collected through observation method and interviews. The research findings revealed that one aspect, besides the teacher, actually took a part and influenced the textbook selection process. This aspect is the involvement of the higher authority of the school. Also, there were some considerations that the teacher has in selecting the textbook. These considerations are the content of the textbook must follow the most recent curriculum, and the textbook design.

Keywords: English Textbook, Textbook Selection, Teacher's Consideration

INTRODUCTION

Since English in Indonesia is as a foreign language, it becomes more important for teacher to provide a good input for students, especially in providing English textbook. Textbook belongs to teaching materials of which teachers are mostly interested in until now. According to Garinger (2002) "however, even with the development of new technologies that allow for higher quality teacher-generated material, demand for textbooks continues to grow, and the publishing industry responds with new series and textbooks each year". Skierso (1991: 432) states that "textbooks evoke a variety of emotions in their users. No teacher is entirely satisfied with the text used, yet very few manage to teach without one." and further adds that the importance of the textbook in an English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) class makes the selection process become more crucial.

In Indonesia, a textbook is an obligate reference that is used in every level of education and teachers have a responsibility to select a textbook sold at bookstores by

considering the quality and the appropriateness of the textbook (Depdiknas, 2008: article 1 (3) and article 5 (2)). This is because teachers have a duty of care to ensure that the teaching and learning materials with which children and students are presented, or towards which they are directed, are appropriate to their developmental growth and relevant to the achievement of appropriate learning outcomes.

Regarding English as a foreign language, there is a possibility that English class is the only way for students to learn English. Students rarely talk in English outside the class, moreover in their daily activities. Students also rarely get knowledge about English from both electronic and printed media. It makes textbook as the only source and the only window for students to learn English. Besides, time for them to learn and study English is might be only four until six hours per week with so many different materials and activities in each meeting at schools.

The English teacher in MTs Aswaja Pontianak has shown that the textbook and

also the course book that are used by the students are the only way for them to learn English. Moreover, learning English is a new experience for some of them. Many students have not had English subject in their elementary school. By analyzing this fact, it is certain that teacher has to be careful in choosing English textbook in order to make her students understand and master the materials. A textbook, as mentioned before has a crucial part in teaching. Textbook has influences in determining the students' competences. The students' competence then determine their character which has an important part in determining their future. By considering these facts, the textbook selection process and the teacher's consideration in selecting one become an important case to be analyzed.

She selected the "When English Rings a Bell" textbook. The textbook was chosen at the beginning of the academic year 2017/2018, which is June 2017. She uses the textbook to teach the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades. According to the researcher, this is an important case since the textbook selection process takes a very crucial part in teaching and learning process. The researcher is interested to analyze this case, so this study is to analyze the teacher's considerations in selecting textbook for junior high school.

METHOD

This study uses case study method. According to Bloor and Wood (2006, p.27) case study is "a strategy of research that aims to understand social phenomena within a single or small number of naturally occurring settings. The purpose may be to provide description through a detailed example or to generate or test particular theories".

According to Given (2008, p. 597-598), "Participants are also referred to as subjects, respondents, interviewees, focus group members, informants, and so on. Participants are usually considered to be individuals or groups who agree to take part in a research process." Hence, the participants of this research are ten graduates of English Education Study Program of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Tanjungpura University.

In order to get the data, the researcher has listed the information that was expected to gain. The data of this research were role of

English textbook in general, education policy about textbook's regulation in Indonesia, school and class condition, teacher's references, and teacher's considerations when deciding a textbook for the students. To get the data about the role of English textbook in general, education policy about textbook's regulation in Indonesia, and teachers' references, the researcher did the library and online research. For the data of school and class condition, the researcher took the data from the students, the finance, the school headmaster, and the teacher herself through interview and observation. For the data of teacher's references and considerations, the researcher took the data from the teacher through interview and observation. The sources mentioned were expected to give the information needed to figure out what the teacher's considerations in selecting textbook are.

Interview belongs to a technique usually used in case studies as Bloor and Wood (2006, p. 28) stated, "case studies often use multiple methods of data collection. These can include techniques such as interviews, observations, documentary methods and audio or video recording." Besides that, interview is a simple, inexpensive, and efficient way but it can produce a wealth of information.

The researcher firstly took one participant of the research. She took the participant because the participant agreed to give as many as possible of information the researcher needed. Also the participant was cooperated well to work with. The researcher then did the planning and the preparation to do the observation and conduct the interview to get all the information and all the data needed regarding to the topic of this research. After the planning and the preparation were done, the researcher contacted the participant. Since the participant already agreed and wanted to involve in this research, it was easy for the researcher and the participant to made an appointment to meet. The first meeting was in the participant office at the school she works at. The first meeting was held to discuss about the research purposes and the technical thing to do next.

The second meeting between the researcher and the participant was to do the next step of the research which is the interview. The interview took place in the teachers room when the teaching process was

over. The next day, the researcher did the observation on the 8th A class and did the interview with six students in that class. The interview with the school's finance also held on that day. The data of the role of English textbook in general, and education policy about textbook's regulation in Indonesia were collected through the library and online research. The process of collecting the data was running for about two weeks, along with the observations and interview. After getting enough data, the researcher moved on to the data analysis process. To enable the researcher to conduct the research systematically, the procedures of analyzing data were; 1) generating the data, 2) analyzing the results of interviews such as generating a transcript of interview, using thematic analysis, structuring narratives to describe the interview contents, interpreting the interview data, 3) concluding all the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In order to elucidate the findings based on the interview, the researcher outline them into three main points which are the beginning condition, the textbook selection, and the teacher's consideration in selecting textbook.

1. The Beginning of The Condition

At every semester the school already has choices on course books that have to be used by both teachers and students. These course books are chosen by the headmaster for every subject taught in the school. The researcher had conducted an interview with the students and the finance as well to confirm. Based on the interview with the students, it was true that they were obligated by the school, to have more than ten-course books as the main source of material and task for every subject. They said that they do not even know the price of the course book since it is included in the total cost of every semester.

The finance said that this school's policy has been implementing for the last 4 years. The school decides which course books that must be used by the teachers and the students. The process of the selection was the school headmaster right. Based on the finance argument, the researcher concludes that the process was held at the end of the semester. It means at

December 2017, the selection of the course book had been done. The payment included in the school's semester cost. This policy also made the financial management become easier to control. It also made the students easy. They used to hand the money over to the teachers which they have bought and got the course book from. But now, the students feel easy to do the payment since they have business with the finance only, not with all of the teachers.

The students did not have to pay the semester cost all at once. If they do not have enough to pay it all at once, they are allowed to pay the semester cost in installments. The students then used the English course book almost in every meeting. They implied that the course book itself was easy to use and understandable. They also said that they enjoy using the textbook, but sometimes they need to get a copy of another material given by their teacher. This fact then in line with what the teacher said. The teacher used another source which is a textbook to teach her students. She did not obligate the students to have the textbook. She asked the students to get a copy of a certain materials instead. The teacher's explanation will be discussed on the next topic.

2. The Textbook Selection Process

The school has already decided a course books for every subject for the students, including English. As a teacher, the respondent thought that she still had to make sure that the course book was appropriate for her students in terms of the suitability of the course book with the curriculum, and the contents (see appendix 2). Based on her investigation toward the course book, she found out that the course book was a bit disappointed. The course book does not contain enough explanation, and the materials are not arranged so well if we look up to the basic competencies.

The respondent decided to choose a textbook, which she always does, as another source of materials (see appendix 2). When the *KTSP* was still implemented, she used "English in Focus" for its availability. The textbooks were provided also by the school's library and students could borrow and use it. Then, the *K13*

came to change the *KTSP*. She had to change the textbook she used because the *K13* will be implemented in her school. She had some textbook choices in mind, but then decided to use “When English Rings a Bell”. This text book has been her choice since 2016. She bought the textbook in the market and she also complimented her choice by buying another book such as Vocabulary book, and Understanding and Using English Grammar by Betty S. Azar.

3. Teacher’s Consideration in Selecting Textbook

Based on the interviews, the respondent has one consideration in selecting the textbook. She only considers the content of the textbook when selecting one. In order to fulfill the national goals of studying English as a foreign language, as determined by the government, it is very important for the respondent to get a textbook that has good content following the most recent curriculum. She would get the textbooks that reflect the new syllabus.

A textbook is developed from the most recent curriculum implemented by the government. On a main framework of *K13*, some of the standard competencies and basic competencies that have to be written in the textbooks, have been set by the government. The interpretation, explanation, details, development, and integration of the standard competences and the basic competencies that have to be mastered by the students, are already mentioned in the textbooks.

By this, the presentation of the topics and the arrangement of the materials on the textbooks are in line with the students’ process in understanding and mastering the standard competencies based on their scope in mastering the basic competencies that have been developed on the learning aspects that relevant to the students’ condition. That is why teachers thought that the content of the textbook following the most recent curriculum is important.

Teachers have to be creative and innovative in providing the materials for the students. Many teachers have more than one textbook for themselves as a support material to enrich the students’ knowledge. This is because one textbook has excess over the other textbook. By this

condition, they combine both or even three to four textbooks. For instance, the respondent used the course book that is already chosen by the school as a source of materials and gave the students some tasks from another textbook by her own choice. She did that because she thought the tasks that are provided by her chosen textbooks were somehow better. She also suggested her students to get the textbook by copying or buying it by themselves since it was also available in the book market.

Besides the textbook content in general, the respondent also gives attention to the design and the materials display on the textbook. It could interest the students and get their attention better.

Selecting textbooks involves matching the material with the context in which it will be taught. It is common and we can usually find that some English textbooks contain foreign cultures, stories or phenomena. Whereas, learning would be more enjoyable if students could connect what they have learned to their real life. So the participant thought that it is important for her to find textbooks that contain more modern and relatable materials, local cultures, stories, and phenomena. It makes them understand more about the materials since they experience it in reality.

She also likes a textbook that has more tasks and exercises because she likes to give her students task and homework to enrich the students’ knowledge and understanding. She also has to make sure that the students find the task interesting to encourage them to finish it well.

Discussion

Here are some findings that had been found by the researcher through the research and interview toward teacher and students that had been done to the school.

1. The Beginning of The Situation

As the first semester begins, the researcher did some class observation and interviews toward the teacher as well as the students. It was found that the teacher used several books to teach. She used one course book and one textbook. The course book one was the one that obligated by the school for the students to have and the

course book selection was done by the headmaster.

The researcher confirmed the teacher's argument by interviewing the students. The result is it was true that the students learn and get the materials from two books, the course book that they must buy from school, and the textbook that is used by the teacher. The involvement of the headmaster in this case will be fine if he or she only gives some suggestions or different perspectives to the textbook or course book selection process. Moreover, teachers might need other opinion in selecting textbook and other sources of materials. Yet, the decision is on the teachers' hands to determine which textbook they will be using. This is because teachers are the one who knows what suits their students best. The students' ability, needs, weakness and also strength.

However, since the selection was done by the headmaster, this phenomenon has led them to the inconvenient situation. Teacher then had to think and do something to cover this situation by choosing the right textbook for her students.

2. The Textbook Selection Process

In order to create a good teaching and learning process as needed, teacher had to select a textbook as a source of material to teach. Teacher already has one course book that was given by the school. According to the interview (appendix 2, page 38, line 17), the teacher thought that the course book was not too clear in terms of the material display. She found that the materials of the course book were not arranged very well according to the Core Competence and Basic Competence.

On the other side, the other book which was *When English Rings a Bell* textbook, that has been selected by the teacher, was the one she thought the best to be used as a material source in teaching. The arrangement of the textbook content were following the Core Competence and Basic Competence. She also said that the most important thing is the textbook *When English Rings a Bell* is following the most recent curriculum very well (Appendix 2, page 39, line 7).

Based on the observation the researcher did on both course book and textbook, it was clear that the content and the material display on the *When English Rings a Bell* chosen by the teacher indeed were more clear and arranged well than the course book chosen by the headmaster.

3. The Teacher's Consideration

Textbooks and teaching and learning process are two things that can not be separated. The teaching and learning process will run effectively if the schools or teachers provide good textbooks for the students. In teaching English as a foreign language, a textbook could be the only way for students to get the knowledge since they do not speak English fluently except in the English class. This is why the preparation and the completeness in providing materials for students are important. By this, using textbook also becomes the need for students and make them realize how important the textbooks are.

The good quality of textbooks is determined by the ability of the textbooks to fulfill the needs of the students. How the textbook covers and displays the materials are one of the indicators, and all of this has determined by the curriculum applied. The goals of teaching and learning process are changing following the technological and scientific advance. So does English subject. In teaching English as a foreign language, there are many aspects needs to be considered. The government then adjust the curriculum based on those considerations. Furthermore, in this global era, the challenge is getting bigger. By the implementation of *MEA*, and other national and international policies that demand us to be intellectually and practically ready. These realities cannot be unseen. So it is very crucial for the teacher to use the newest textbooks following the most recent curriculum.

The content of textbooks is not only the materials that need to be memorized and understood but also the topics that can stimulate the students to think widely, more creative and reflective. In the research findings, the researcher has shown the teacher's consideration in

selecting textbook. She considered the content of the textbook. The textbook's content must follow the most recent curriculum which is *K13*. As mentioned before, the curriculum arrangement must have been adjusted by the recent condition and what condition that the government wanted to achieve not only by the students, but also by every education practitioner

The *pendidikan karakter* for example, it was one of the government step to create a better output of schools. It has to be implemented through the teaching and learning process for every subject. The aspect of *pendidikan karakter* itself, was included and adjusted with the materials taught in the class. It was written also in the end of the materials explanation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, This research was conducted to analyze the teacher's considerations in selecting textbooks. According to the research problem, the conclusions that can be taken by the researcher are the textbook selection process should have been done only by the teacher. The involvement of other side could affect the process in a negative way and result some difficulties for both teacher and students, and the textbook that follows the most recent curriculum becomes the main consideration for teacher. In fact, all teachers consider this aspect as the most important thing.

Suggestion

After observing to the result of this study, there are some suggestions researcher would like to provide. First, There should be a tight procedure in selecting a source materials in teaching and learning process and supervised by the authorities. Second, this research focused only on one teacher in one junior high school. The same research can be done on other teachers of other schools in order to find wider facts. This research is far from perfection. Further research related to "teachers' consideration in selecting textbooks" can be done by another researcher in the future in order to analyse it deeper.

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