REVISITING THE BASIC READING TEXTBOOK SYLLABUS BY INSERTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS THEMES

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Abstract

The Basic Reading Syllabus has an important role in teaching reading. It contains the text types that should be taught for the students. Text is one of the prominent tools in teaching reading since the purpose of reading activity is to get information from the text. By the changing of global situation, the basic reading syllabus should adapt the theme of the text that appropriate with the recent world. One of the issues which spread out all over the world is about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is a universal call to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people to have a better life. Through the syllabus, teachers can measure how far the effectiveness and renewal of a teaching material are. Therefore, the objective of this research was to analyze whether the Basic Reading textbook needed some revisiting in order to be relevant to SDGs criteria in its texts. Engaged by 55 students of the third semester and 8 lecturers who taught Basic Reading, the data were collected by giving questionnaires and were analyzed qualitatively. The research has found that the text in the Basic Reading textbook had 10% for the Suitable Environment dimension, which could be classified as poor. Suitable environment is considered as the Sustainable Development Goals content. By considering this finding, the text in the Basic Reading textbook needs to be improved by inserting of Sustainable Development Goals theme. In other words, the Basic Reading text syllabus needs to be revisited.

Keywords: *basic reading textbook, sustainable development goals, revisiting syllabus*

INTRODUCTION

Reading as one of the language skills that has to be mastered by students in order to get information. Reading takes an important role for some reasons. First, by reading texts students can get many experiences to support their careers, to promote their study, or even just to get pleasure. Reading English texts can also help students in writing development such as vocabulary, grammar or punctuation. It can encourage them to generate sentences, paragraphs and whole texts. Lastly, good reading texts can meet interesting topics, encourage discussion, and stimulate the imaginative ideas for creating good lesson (Harmer, 2007).

Textbook makes the students be able to study what is presented in it and it enables them to review and to be ready with their lesson. Textbooks contribute much to the success of teaching learning programs, and give positive role for the teachers and students in learning strategies (Crawford,

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2011). Textbooks provide the structure and syllabus for programs, preserve the quality of teaching, offer of variety resources of teaching, and provide effective language design for the students (Miranda & Del Campo, 2016). Through the texts, textbooks can encourage students' interest or discourage students' willingness in reading. Furthermore, people will be more interested to read about the recent situation they know and deal with what they need to know. In addition, readers who are familiar with the topic of the text can count on what they know to perceive important ideas. By using the appropriate text, the reading will be interesting for the students, and the success of what reading goals will be achieved in the teaching learning process. The appropriateness of the texts is dealing with the recent issues in the world.

In facing global challenges and industrial revolution 4.0, in September 2015 the global community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which included a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs consists of 3 systems with 17 Economic system goals such as: (1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well Being, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Good Jobs and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; Environmental System, such as: (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action. (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life on Land; Social System, such as: (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (10) Reduced Inequalities, (16) Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnership for the Goals (United Nations, 2015). The 17 goals of the sustainable development are the outlines to achieve a better life in the world encompassing economic, social and environmental dimensions. This is the agenda of United Nation that should be attained in 2030.

Figure 1. Sustainable Development Goals (sdgs-labs.eu)

According to those goals, to deal with the global situation, the learning of reading skills should adopt the criteria of SDGs in the syllabus. A study of SDGs was conducted by Muff et al., (2017: …) noted that "building on the SDG Compass, this paper shows how the Gap Frame translate the SDGs into relevant actions for different nations, and how it can be used as a strategies business tool and as an educational tool for business school". It shows that SDGs theme can be a means in education system. Moreover, the issues of SDGs should be conveyed in language teaching. The use of the SDGs as a focus of the activities allows us to relate prominent issues with topics that students will learn at school. A cross-curricular approach to learning gives a purpose to the language being learned, over and above the structures, functions, and vocabulary (Maley & Peachey, 2017).

Based on those studies, the reading text should also be enhanced with Sustainable Development Goals. Consequently, to insert the SDGs theme in the reading text, the reading textbooks should also be revisited. Revisiting the textbooks means dealing with the syllabus. In designing or revisiting the course material, the syllabus should be considered.

> "The syllabus is a bid to shape and set the parameters of the curriculum, usually prepared a school system level. It is a defensible map of what it is valued as core skills, knowledge, competencies, capacities, and strategies to be covered within a particular time, usually with affiliated statements of standard which are used for accountability" (Woods et al., 2010:….).

Certain criteria must be considered in the revisiting syllabus. Syllabus is a tool or device to meet the learners' needs toward teaching learning process. It is in line to Palmer et al., (2016:…) who stated:

> "Essentially, the syllabus is a physical artifact outlining key structural elements of a course. It often serves contractual, record keeping, and/ or communication functions. It is the place where faculty describes what content they will cover, what books and articles their students will read, the assignments they will complete, dates when things are due, and all the policies and rules that are supposed to keep everyone happy and out of trouble".

There are some criteria that should be fulfilled in revisiting syllabus. One of the them is teachers' perspective as well as the syllabus should be taken into account in the revisiting (Mohamed, 2013). It is important to consider teachers' perspective because other criteria in revisiting textbook syllabus include that the textbook should: (1) be appropriate to the environment, (2) meet the learner's need, (3) apply sensible principles of teaching and learning, (4) suit the proficiency level of the learners and reflect sensible selection and sequencing principles, (5) be interesting and use effective techniques, (6) include tests and ways of monitoring progress (Nation & Macalister, 2010)

In addition, a study conducted by Ali (2012) has concluded that the unsuitability between the philosophy of the curriculum and its practice will potentially create a mismatch between the expected outcome and the actual learning outcome from the program. Moreover, Mohamed (2013) has recommended the textbook revision which involves: (1) textbook should be revisited gradually to avoid the mistakes in spelling, grammatical and lexical (2) the textbook should be clearly stated in organizing the

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reasonable plan by considering the role of students, teachers, textbook developers, and education managers in learning and teaching, (3) in revisiting the textbook, the good quality should be maintained and the weakness should be eliminated or at least minimized (4) in selecting the books material, teachers and supervisors should consult and they should have a participation in modifying or improving the textbooks, and (5) textbook writers are necessitated to appreciate and use principles of materials in the process of revisiting textbooks. He also reveals the final version of evaluative checklist, and included some checklists for reading textbook including: (1) the reading material should be fulfilled of varied and interesting reading text that can involve student both cognitively and affectively (2) the content of reading text helps the student in improving reading comprehension skills, (3) furthermore, the reading passages must be up-to-date, interesting, and meaningful (4) it is also easy for most students to carry out, and the length of reading text should appropriate the students level, and (5) textbook uses the real life reading material at a suitable level (Mohamed, 2013).

In a way that it is based on those literatures and previous studies, the textbook is important in learning process, and its revisiting should be done by considering many aspects. According to those circumstances, the objective of this research was to analyze whether the "Basic Reading Textbook" was considered relevant to SDGs themes.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, a qualitative descriptive method was used to gain the description of the participants' responses about the content of the book considering the Sustainable Development Goals. The participants were recruited by purposive sampling. By using this technique, a researcher deliberately selects participants to learn or understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Thus, the students who learned Basic Reading and the lecturers who have taught Basic Reading were chosen to be the participants. The instruments used in this research were questionnaires both from student's perspective and lecturer's perspective.

Student's questionnaire consists of 20 questions, and lecturer's questionnaire consists of 12 questions. The student's questionnaire covers 5 dimensions: (1) factual truth (2) prominent to be learnt (3) useful in life skills (4) suitable to be learnt (5) interesting in content. There are four questions for each dimension. Meanwhile, the lecturer's questionnaire covers six dimensions with two questions for each dimension. The dimensions include: (1) suit the environment (2) meet the need of the learners (3) apply sensible to the principle teaching and learning (4) match the goal of learning (5) suit the proficiency (6) interesting.

The data collections were taken from 55 students and 8 lecturers that were given the questionnaire. The participants were given the questionnaires, and after they answered the questions, at once the data were counted using Likert scale pattern. After the value of each respondent was calculated, the percentage value of each question was calculated based on the participants' answers using the following formula:

P $\quad = \frac{F}{N}$ **x100%**

P $\quad$ = percentage
F $\quad$ = the frequency of each
$\qquad$ questionnaire answer

N   = number of respondents
100%   = fixed value

Afterwards, the data were analyzed descriptively. The data described some dimensions that had been measured. In order to know the score for the content of the Basic Reading textbook, the writer classified the result of the research based on the following scores.

Table 1. Score for the Content of the Basic Reading Textbooks

Score	Category
91 -100	excellent
81-90	very good
71-80	Good
61-70	Fair
51-60	Poor
0 -50	very poor

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research were then analyzed descriptively. There were two kinds of data in this research: (1) the students' perspective, and (2) the lecturers' perspective about the Basic Reading textbook.

The data of the student's perspective are presented as follow.

Table 2. The Student's Questionnaire

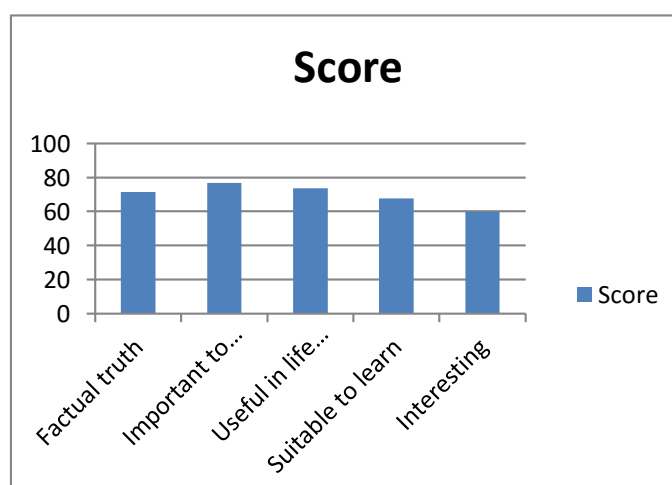| Dimension	Score
Factual Truth	71.54
Prominent to learn	76.72
Useful in life skills	73.72
Suitable to learn	67.63
Interesting	59.72

Figure 2. Bar Graphic of Student's Questionnaire

Based on Table 2 and Figure 2, the data of the student's questionnaire show that each dimension of the text book has different score.

1) The dimension of the factual truth of the textbook obtained 71.54%. It means that according to student's perception, the text in the Basic Reading textbook has a good score for the factual information. It embodies that the text provides the veritable information.

2) The dimension of the importance to be learnt gained 76.72%. It means that the text of the Basic Reading book is good and prominent to be learned. The basic reading textbook provides necessary knowledge that needs to be acquired.

3) The dimension of usefulness in life skills got 73.72%. It has been classified as fairly good. It means that the text in the Basic Reading book can be quite beneficial in life, especially for reading skills.

4) The dimension of suitability to learn got 67.63% which can be classified into fair category. This means that the materials in the Basic Reading textbook is nearly suitable for the student's need.

5) The last dimension of interest obtained 59.72% and classified as poor. It means this Basic Reading book is less interesting. It happened because the topic of the texts is outdated and unfamiliar for the students.

Besides analyzing the student's questionnaire data, the writer also analyzed the lecturer's questionnaire.

Table 3. Lecturer's Questionnaire

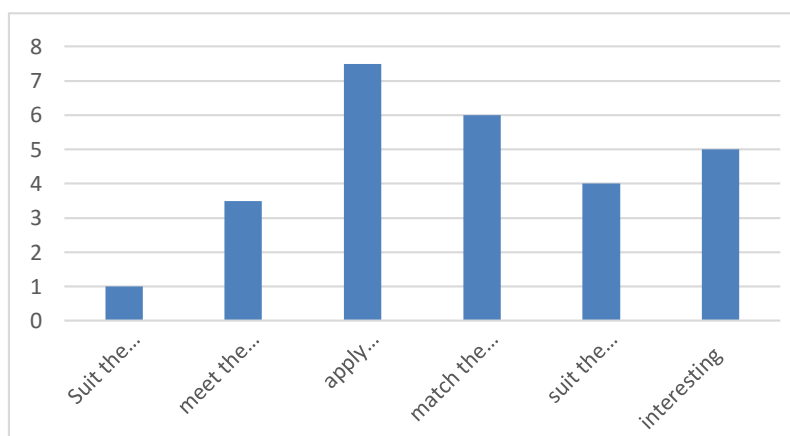| Indicator	Score
Suit the environment	10
meet the need of the learner	35
apply sensible	75
match the goal	60
suit the proficiency	40
interest	50

Figure 3. Bar Graphic of Lecturer's Questionnaire

Based on Table 3 and the Figure 3, the data of lecturer's questionnaire can be analyzed as follow:

1) The dimension of suiting to environment got 10%, and it is categorized as very poor. It means that according to the lecturer's perception, the suitable environment that covers sustainable development goals is very poor. "Suit environment" itself considers that the material in the basic reading textbook has relevance to the recent global situation and topic of the texts is dealing with SDGs themes (education, social, and economic).

2) The dimension of meeting the needs of the learner obtained 35%, and it still is categorized as very poor. The student's needs in reading skills still cannot be achieved from the provided texts. The needs are still related to the SDGs themes which should have been known by the students, and they are also related to students' reading skills improvement.

3) The dimension of applying sensible principles in teaching and learning is dealing with whether the texts can encourage the students' cognitive competence and can improve the students' affective competence in responding the values in the reading texts. This dimension got a score of 75%, which means that the texts can encourage the cognitive and affective competence of students.

4) The dimension of matching the goal achieved 60% with the poor classification. It means that the Basic Reading book is still not enough to improve the reading skills. The goals of the reading skills are mostly about determining the topic, the main idea, supporting details and conclusion of the text, and also applying the skimming and scanning strategies in order to get information from the texts.

5) The dimension of suiting to the proficiency level of the students gained 40%, and it has very poor classification. It shows that the text in Basic Reading book is not suitable with the student's background knowledge. The texts in this book have words and terms that many students are not familiar with.

6) In the dimension of interest, this book got 50% with the very poor classification. Mostly the themes of these texts are not interesting and less familiar for the students, and the organization of the texts is hard enough to be understood by the students. So it can be said that the texts in the book are less interesting.

Based on the results, from both perspectives, the dimension of "suit the environment" has the lowest score. In line with the research's objective, the texts in the basic reading textbook need revisiting syllabus to insert the topics that are appropriate with the SDGs issues. This result is quite similar to a study that was conducted in 2009, engaged by 56 postgraduate students, 10 graduates, four heads of departments, four ESP instructors and one executive manager at Ministry of Health (MOH) in Iran which reveals that there is a distinction between the students' needs and what is actually prescribed in the syllabus by the MOH (Dehnad et al., 2010).

CONCLUSION

The text has an important role in the teaching and learning process of reading skills, and it has been designed in a syllabus. Based on the result and discussion, it shows that dimension of "suit environment" from

the lecturer's perception revealing that the text in Basic Reading book is no longer suitable for this global era. Considering the Sustainable Development Goals, the Basic Reading textbook syllabus needs a revisiting to insert the SDGs themes in its reading texts that are related with the 17 goals, such as: quality education, no poverty, zero hunger, gender equality, climate action, and many more. Since syllabus is a guidance in achieving the learning objectives, it gradually needs revisiting to pursue the developing situation. The revisiting syllabus should consider both student and teacher as the practitioners of teaching and learning process. Hopefully by inserting the SDGs theme in the basic reading syllabus, the student and teacher can be engaged together in creating a better life in the community. Last but not least, based on the results of this preliminary research, the writer can conduct the next research to design the revised basic reading textbook syllabus.

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