

THE EVALUATION OF BSE BAHASA INGGRIS FOR GRADE VII: WHEN ENGLISH RINGS A BELL

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Abstract

Coursebooks are core parts of any curriculum as the unique contributors to content learning (Demir & Ertas, 2014). Currently, in Indonesian curriculum, K13, the government develops coursebooks that can be used by students nationally. The developed coursebooks, Buku Sekolah Elektronik (BSE), vary for different level of education, starting from elementary schools up to senior and vocational high schools. In developing the coursebooks, the government needs to implement the coursebooks to the real life situation and also evaluate them. In this paper, the researchers try to evaluate a coursebook used in English class for Junior High School students grade VII. The evaluation is done through two ways, the theory-based analysis and checklist-based analysis. The used evaluative theories are made by Cunningsworth and the Checklist is made by Mukundan, Nimehchisalem, and Hajimohammadi. The findings show that the coursebook has met the requirements of learners' needs stated in the K13; however, there are still some aspects that can use some further improvement, such as the design, materials' authenticity, and so on. Ergo, in corresponding to the findings, the suggestions can be given to two parties, the developers and the teachers. The developers are hoped to take the evaluation results into account as the crucial points for future improvement and the teachers are hoped to not solely depend on the coursebook itself, but creatively look for extra materials.

Keywords: coursebook evaluation; BSE Grade VII; coursebook

Introduction

Demir & Ertas (2014) opined that coursebooks are core parts of any curriculum as the unique contributors to content learning. Tomlinson (2003) believes that "a coursebook helps provide a route map for both teachers and learners, making it possible for them to look ahead to what will be done in a lesson as well as to look back on what has been done." Another extreme definition about a coursebook comes from Swales. Swales (1980) believed that coursebooks represent a problem and some education failures that the government tries to solve by requiring the teachers to be able to master and go beyond the coursebooks themselves. Based on those three theories, it would be safe for us to say that coursebooks are the crux of the curriculum which provides a helpful assistance for teachers and learners in their teaching and learning activities, and are based on a certain problem and some education failures.

Each coursebook surely has its own shortcomings. Accordingly, developing a coursebook is a lifelong experience and makes teachers to develop professionally (Masuhara in Zohrabi, 2011). In order to develop a coursebook and revise what is needed to be revised, we have to evaluate the coursebook first through the use of some theories, practices, checklists, and so on. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) simplified the definition of coursebook evaluation as a straightforward process that matches the needs to any available solutions. Littlejohn in Gutierrez Bermudez (2014) said that evaluating a coursebook can be done by establishing two dimensions or levels of the evaluation process: a theoretical level and a practical level. Accordingly, the evaluation itself, the post-use evaluation, can be done through several techniques, two of them are by using theories and checklists.

On this paper we are going to do an evaluation on BSE Bahasa Inggris kelas VII. The main reason

why we do an evaluation on this book is because it is the very first English coursebook used by students that is given by the government. By conducting an evaluation we can determine the flaw of the book and we can give some suggestion to government on how to improve the BSE book.

Methodology

This research utilises analytical research in which we evaluate BSE Bahasa Inggris for grade VII: *When English Rings a Bell*. The evaluation is done through 2 ways, theoretical evaluation and checklist-based evaluation. In doing the theoretical evaluation, we would like to utilise a 4-point guideline suggested by Cunningsworth, which are (1) aims, objective, and goals; (2) the use of materials and its practicality; (3) learners' needs; and (4) the role of coursebook. As for the checklist-based evaluation, we utilise Mukundan, Nimehchisalem, and Hajimohammadi's checklist.

Finding and Discussion

In doing the theoretical evaluation, we would like to utilise a 4-point guideline suggested by Cunningsworth. The guideline made by Cunningsworth is actually based on two strong reasons, which are evaluation for potential, the potencies a coursebook has to offer and to explore, and evaluation for suitability, the relationship of a coursebook with certain specific requirements.

Guideline 1: Aims, Objectives, and Goals

Each coursebook has its own aims and objectives. Cunningsworth (1995) said that coursebooks should correspond to the learners' needs and match the aims and objectives of the language-learning programme. Likewise, in Indonesian coursebooks, the aims and objectives are based on the current curriculum's basic competences. Noddings in Noddings (2007) implied that aims, objectives, and goals, also called as standards, are the final purposes of the education itself. Based on Kemdikbud's statement on its website, it is stated that the competences in K13 are derived from the needs of the learners themselves in order to obtain that final purposes. Those purposes are mentioned in the form of several points of basic competence.

In English BSE for 7th graders, there are 9 basic competences for competences 3 and 4. For the first semester, students have to learn basic

competences 3.1 – 3.4 and 4.1 – 4.4. Accordingly, each basic competence in K13 is shown in each chapter of the book as the aims and objectives. Even though the aims and objectives in K13 are fixed, but the implementation of the materials and the selection of titles for each chapter vary. This indicates that the materials presented in the books can be considered as authentic materials and according to the face validity itself, this coursebook does not violate that validity.

Guideline 2: The Use of Materials and its Practicality

In this book, the learners are given materials that reflect the uses (present or future) which learners will make use of the language. This can be seen from the focus of each chapter. In example, chapter 1 teaches students how to greet someone, take a leave, say thank you, and say sorry. It can be used outside of classroom and are used daily. This approach is in line with CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) based approach which is in line with what Richards and Rodgers (1986) say, "the primary function of language is for interaction and communication".

Unfortunately, the book has limited amounts of interaction between students to students. Most of the learning still relies on teacher. According to Nunan (2004), this does not belong to experiential learning in which students' immediate personal experience becomes the point of departure because the materials and tasks are somehow less authentic. Another point is the lack of authentic materials in the book. Wallace in Berardo (2006) defined authentic materials as a real-life texts which has context, not written for pedagogical purpose. The materials in the book is already contextual and situational, but the representation is still too formal. That barely represents any conversation in real-life situation.

In accordance with the core and basic competences, the social function of the book is clearly stated. The texts given in the book fulfill the requirements. There are interpersonal communications, transactional communications. Every type of text comes with explanation on the situation where the materials are used.

Text structure in the book is also clearly explained, in the interpersonal and transactional

text the material covers interactive activities, consisting of communication initiation, and asking for and giving information/ things/ services. Furthermore, the linguistic content of the book fulfills the criteria stated on the core and basic competences. The book materials are accurate according to the context of its use. The materials inside is in line with the objectives written at the start of the chapter.

Guideline 3: Learners' Needs

According to Minderhout (2016), "the needs of a learner represent the gap between what the learner wants to get out of the learning experience and his or her current state of knowledge, skill, and enthusiasm." The reason why we should identify the learner needs is because each learner has a specific way of learning, knowledge, past experiences, and the motivation from the students itself. Cunningsworth (1995) said that there are five needs that should be experienced by students, which are:

- The need to communicate effectively
- The need to be familiar with the language systems
- The need for challenge
- The need to take on more responsibility for their own learning
- The need for cross-cultural awareness

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), "the primary function of language is for interaction and communication". That is why, in this book learners will be given some example of the topic. Unfortunately many of the example are not an authentic communication. The amount of interaction between students are quite limited and teacher still have to do a lot of dictation in front of the class. According to Izadpanah (2010), some of the differences between the traditional form-focused pedagogy and task-based learning technique are that the traditional only provides little negotiate meaning, the teacher already knows the answer of every conversational materials, and the responding role between the students and the teacher is limited in small range of language functions. However, the message and the function of the language are quite on point by using a lot of example. By using that example, students can associate what they have been learned and make their own understanding of the language.

In this book, students are given a lot of example and activities so they can get familiar with the language system. There are specific box that contains the words that will be specifically use on each topic.

Challenges are used to make students live up to their potential. Challenges can help shaping learners' understanding and also allowing them to solve their own problems. In this book, the challenge are gradually, insignificantly, increasing, but it doesn't give the impact of challenge towards the students. In our group opinion it's better if the book also give a variety of activity so the students will not get bored. Hegelsen (2003) opined that repeating the same type of tasks over and over will surely make students bored unless if the tasks always encourage students to share their personal ideas, experiences, and dreams. However, the tasks in BSE for Grade VII does not do so, so based on Hegelsen's theory, we think that this book does not provide enough challenge. Moreover, the dominant type of task in this book is controlled task. Controlled task is the lowest level of task which barely increases students' critical thinking ability. This strengthens our beliefs that the book does not provide enough challenge for the students.

According to The Higher Education Academy (2014) "independent study is a process, a method and a philosophy of education in which a student acquires knowledge by his or her own efforts and develops the ability for inquiry and critical evaluation." In this book, after each sub-topic there will be some tasks that will develop students' independent learning aspects. For example, using dictionary in class to list the things that are in the students' room. By this method, students will acquire their knowledge and understanding unconsciously.

According to Pokhilko (2016), "cross-cultural awareness is the foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs and perceptions." In this book, mostly the cross-cultural awareness is not explicitly presented in the book by using text. However, in some pages, the cultural tolerance is presented through visuals by inserting the

illustrations of people from different races and beliefs.

Guideline 4: The Role of Coursebook

Cunningsworth (1995) stated in his book that course books should have a clear role as a support for learning. The support provided in the course book should facilitate learning. The support can be in the form of ready-made presentation material, ideas for teaching different topics, reading texts, listening passages, dialogues, etc. The example of the course book used to facilitate the learning and teaching activity is BSE. The BSE consist of 2 books, the teacher's book and student's book. The teacher's book works as a guide for teacher to teach materials and assess students' performances while the students' book works as handbook for the students.

Teacher's book is a book that is used to assist teachers. As Nazari(2011) stated its not only serve as a source of pedagogical advice and instructions for teachers but true to syllabus since they include statements about the course objectives, the course content, implementation, methodology, and sometimes even assessment procedures. The teacher's book of BSE offers pedagogical advice and instruction on each chapter. The advice and the instruction are helpful as it especially designed to assist the teacher to teach each chapter. The book also completed with course objective, the course content, implementation, methodology, and assessment procedure. It also completed with answer keys and other possible answer for the student's book assessment. The teacher's book

provided designed to be practical and easy to access. The teacher's book provides the basic knowledge for the students such as KI KD to enhance teacher's understanding and teaching skills in the class. The flexible instructions make it possible for teacher to use other method to teach. It also provide rubric for scoring.

Student's book works as media and facility for the students to learn. Different from the teacher's book, student's book are directed to assist the students in their learning process. The content of the book consist of pre-teaching material, assessment, exercises, independent study, group activities, etc. Those points are important part of the coursebook that functioning as facilitation that helps the students to learn.

McGrath (2002) pointed out that using a checklist in evaluating a coursebook is very economic and systematic to ensure all relevant aspects are considered for evaluation, not to mention that it will not be costly at all. Furthermore, a checklist can be freely modified by the users, depending on one's needs so as to provide flexibility during the evaluation (Mukundan & Ahour, 2010). However, selecting a checklist should not be done carelessly. Besides evaluating all the aspects, a checklist should also be well-designed, containing evaluation criteria that are clear and concise (Lawrence, 2011). There are many famed researchers who develop different kinds of checklists in evaluating a coursebook, but in this paper, we will use a checklist made by Mukundan, Nimehchisalem, and Hajimohammadi.

Table 1. Checklist-based Evaluation

I. General attributes					
A. The book in relation to syllabus and curriculum					
1.	It matches to the specifications of the syllabus.	0	2	3	4
B. Methodology					
2.	The activities can be exploited fully and can embrace the various methodologies in ELT.	0	2	3	4
3.	Activities can work well with methodologies in ELT.	0	2	3	4
C. Suitability to learners					
4.	It is compatible to background knowledge and level of students.	0	2	3	4
5.	It is compatible to the socio-economic context.	0	2	3	4
6.	It is culturally accessible to the learners.	0	2	3	4
7.	It is compatible to the needs of the learners.	0	2	3	4
8.	It is compatible to the interests of the learners.	0	2	3	4
D. Physical and utilitarian attributes					
9.	Its layout is attractive.	0	2	3	4
10.	It indicates efficient use of text and visuals.	0	2	3	4
11.	It is durable.	0	2	3	4
12.	It is cost-effective.	0	2	3	4
13.	Its size is appropriate.	0	2	3	4
14.	The printing quality is high.	0	2	3	4
E. Efficient outlay of supplementary materials					
15.	The book is supported efficiently by essentials like audio-materials.	0	2	3	4
16.	There is a teacher's guide to aid the teacher.	0	2	3	4

II. Learning-teaching content					
A. General					
1.	Most of the tasks in the book are interesting.	0	2	3	4
2.	Tasks move from simple to complex.	0	2	3	4
3.	Task objectives are achievable.	0	2	3	4
4.	Cultural sensitivities have been considered.	0	2	3	4
5.	The language in the textbook is natural and real.	0	2	3	4
6.	The situations created in the dialogues sound natural and real.	0	2	3	4
7.	The material is up-to-date.	0	2	3	4
8.	It covers a variety of topics from different fields.	0	2	3	4
9.	The book contains fun elements.	0	2	3	4
B. Listening					
10.	The book has appropriate listening tasks with well-defined goals.	0	2	3	4
11.	Instructions are clear.	0	2	3	4
12.	Tasks are efficiently graded according to complexity.	0	2	3	4
13.	Tasks are authentic or close to real language situations.	0	2	3	4
C. Speaking					
14.	Activities are developed to initiate meaningful communication.	0	2	3	4
15.	Activities are balanced between individual response, pair work and group work.	0	2	3	4
16.	Activities motivate students to talk.	0	2	3	4
D. Reading					
17.	Texts are graded.	0	2	3	4
18.	Length is appropriate.	0	2	3	4

Overall score = 162 out of 208 (good)

Conclusions

According to the two evaluations from Cunningsworth's theory and Sheldon's checklist, BSE for Grade VII is considered as a mid-to-high coursebook. Though the coursebooks have some strengths like in the existence of students and teacher's books and the rapid revision for the book, it also has some vital weaknesses about the content of the materials and the interface. The book receives score 162 out of 208 which means this book is actually quite excellent in quality. Even though this book is already in excellent quality, it is better for the author to still optimise the quality of the books since there are still some weaknesses that need to be paid attention to.

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