

An Analysis of English Textbook Entitled “English for Change” with Reference to Independent Learning Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

The Independent Learning Curriculum has been implemented, and one of the important parts of its implementation is textbook as one of the teaching and learning medias. It acts as guidance for novice as well as senior teachers. Therefore, the researchers were interested in conducting textbook evaluation on an English textbook entitled “English for Change” used by eleventh graders. This study aimed at finding out whether the book already fulfills the criteria of a good textbook regarding its appropriateness and relevance to independent curriculum and CEFR. The instrument used in this study was an evaluation rubric developed by Cunningsworth. The data were analyzed through document analysis techniques. The results indicated that this textbook as a means of teaching and learning has shown good quality and is relevant to the current curriculum. However, the reading passages were above the students’ targeted level and grammar point were inconsistent with the level of targeted CEFR in this curriculum.

Keywords: *Kurikulum Merdeka, textbook, CEFR.*

A. Introduction

Recently, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud), has already announced that the curriculum for 2013 has been changed to an independent learning curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka), although not all schools and grades have implemented and practiced it. Accordingly, when a new curriculum is launched by the government, there must be lots of new adaptations or changes, including the textbook, since one of the most important elements of teaching in any curriculum is the availability of textbooks, as they become a guide for both teachers and students. A textbook is a collection of targeted materials compiled to aid teachers and students to meet the objectives of the curriculum. Due to the importance of the textbook, it is a mandatory to for teachers in choosing an appropriate textbook since it is used by the students as well and mostly teacher use it as the main assistance in their teaching (Miekley & Brantmeier, 2005).

Textbook becomes one of the most important parts in teaching and learning process since it was mostly used by teachers as a teaching source. As it was found by Fuyudloturromaniyyah in 2015 that textbooks was used as the only materials in the process of teaching and learning activities. Provide that, it can be said that textbook plays significant part in assisting teachers in their daily teaching. It does not only become a teacher's guide in teaching the materials, but also presents various activities and explanations which help students learn outside the classroom. Teachers mostly make use of it as a means to expose their students with the targeted materials (Harmer, 2018). To add, Cunningsworth and Kuse (1991) mentioned that there were three activities a textbook used for in teaching and learning; presenting the material, for learners to practice English skills and do activities such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, listening, reading, speaking and writing. In short, a textbook is useful to assist teachers in applying the curriculum because it is developed based on curriculum and as students' learning companion in providing the opportunity for them to learn.

Due to its prominent role in the teaching and learning process, book evaluation needs to be done by teachers not only to make sure that the book is relevant and appropriate to the curriculum and learners but also to find out the imperfections of the textbook that may happen. Therefore, when selecting the textbook, a thorough analysis of a certain textbook is crucial. In this regard, the knowledge gleaned through textbook analysis is critical not only for recognizing the qualities and applicability of the present textbook but also for the success of language education in general (Gholampour & Mehrabi, 2023). A textbook needs an evaluation to improve the learning process, meet students' needs, and acquire the best materials that can help learners achieve the objective of learning (Cunningsworth & Kuse, 1991). They further stated that a good textbook is presented with a consideration of teaching method and the level of readership as well as the theory of learning, the theory of teaching, the theory of changing or revising, and the theory of assessment on the particular subject matter or subject.

As the those facts above, evaluation studies are considered as an urgent matter in order to review the weak points in the current materials and improve them (Scott et al., 1995). Evaluation is the acts of judging, analyzing and deciding about teaching and

learning activities based on objectives of curriculum. According to Tomlinson (2013) textbook evaluation is seen as a process to determine the noteworthy of learning materials.

Having all those arguments, the researcher is interested in finding out if the textbook published by Kemendibudristek on their website, <https://buku.kemdikbud.go.id/katalog/buku-kurikulum-merdeka>, namely “Bahasa Inggris: English for Change,” reflects the objectives of the Independent Learning Curriculum and is appropriate to be categorized as a good book as a means to support the teaching and learning practice in the current curriculum. In addition, this research is aimed to provide an insight for other researchers who have an interest in evaluating English textbooks based on the Independent Curriculum.

B. Research Method

This research applied qualitative study, specifically content analysis. Content analysis concerns analyzing the content of certain matters through classification, tabulation, and evaluation (Mayring, 2022). This research was also classified as a descriptive qualitative research design. As it stated by Jacelon & O’Dell (2005) that the data in descriptive qualitative research was taken from documents, audio-video recordings, transcripts, words, pictures, etc (Jacelon & O’Dell, 2005).

As the main purpose of this research here was to evaluate the textbook so the data was taken from a textbook entitled Bahasa Inggris: English for Change for senior high school grade eleven published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. This book contains 228 pages, divided into five units. There are six aspects to evaluate based on the Cunningsworth checklist: aims and approach, design and organization, language content, language skills, and topics. However, this evaluation focuses only on four aspects: aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, and language skill. The data collection was analyzed qualitatively by using an instrument called the tentative checklist for textbook evaluation by (Cunningsworth & Kuse, 1991).

C. Research Finding and Discussion

This section provides the result and discussion of the research. They will be presented in the order of the research questions. The research was aimed at finding out whether the English textbook “Bahasa Inggris; English for Change” for the eleventh graders published by Kemendikbud meets the good criteria based on the Cunningsworth checklist. There are only four aspects which will be evaluated namely aim and approaches, design and organization, language content and language skill.

Aim and Approaches

The first thing to ponder in evaluating a textbook is whether it is relevant to the curriculum, since the curriculum is the core of the educational journey. The current curriculum, the Independent Learning Curriculum, mandates that the goal or aim of English language teaching is to help students use the language to communicate in various circumstances. The objectives or general outcome are manifested into the learning outcome (Capaian Pembelajaran) in phase F. In the Learning Independent Curriculum Phase F, it is stated that students are able to communicate according to their situation, purpose, and audience/readers in any means of text, such as narrative, descriptive, exposition, argumentative, discussion, and authentic text. In addition, students are expected to use the targeted language to discuss and express their feelings and wants. That statement can be found at <https://guru.kemdikbud.go.id/kurikulum/referensi-penerapan/capaian-pembelajaran/sd/sma/bahasa-inggris/fase-f/>.

In addition, The Ministry of Education and Culture stressed that the target of teaching English in Phase F is to achieve level B1 in the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR). Students in B1 level are able to understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They are also expected to deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the targeted language is spoken. To add to that, they can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. The last is that they can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. This book provides a text-based teaching

model in various genres to produce both spoken and written communication, which makes this textbook correspond with the objectives of the curriculum and the targeted CEFR level.

After providing that information, it was found that the textbook was well-written since it was in line with the curriculum suggested approach. To add, in the textbook, it was found data systematic step-by-step approach to applying the genre-based Approach (GBA) as the suggested approach. As it was known that there are five stages in the implementation of GBA (Feez and Joyce, 1998). They are Building Knowledge of the Field (BKoF), Modeling of text (MoT), Joint Construction of the text (JCoT), Independent Construction of text (ICoT), and Linking Related texts (LRTs). Besides, it also used various teaching techniques for Cooperative Learning stated in the instruction. It was proof that this book followed the curriculum mandates in terms of teaching methodology. GBA and CL were integrated to accommodate of effective teaching and learning process. Those two methods were put systematically into clear teaching steps what can be followed by teachers. In his case, teachers would hopefully not have any difficulty doing follow up or implementing the methods. This book is flexible in accommodating different teaching and learning styles. As it was mentioned earlier, CL has many teaching techniques that could be solutions to make the teaching and learning process more enjoyable and accommodating for different teaching and learning styles.

The next concern is whether the textbook meets the students' needs. As it was shown above, mostly the objectives were developed in terms of what students' needs are to learn English and achieve the goal of learning English (to communicate). The needs are accommodated through the various English language teaching materials; the learners' needs are covered in a rigid explanation and exercises through various teaching techniques that are clearly stated in each instruction of the activities. Provided that, this book needs what is required to accommodate the aim and approaches regarding the targeted goals in the Independent Learning Curriculum as the genre-based approach is used in order to develop students' literacy skills.

The objective of the use of genre-based approach is to meet the students' needs in constructing texts in various context to enhance students' literacy skills (Soraya,

2022) In addition, the national curriculum requires students in junior high schools to be able to recognize, use, and produce basic oral and written interactional and interpersonal texts with their social functions, schematic structures, and linguistic qualities (Wachidah, 2017). To sum up, this book can be categorized as a good resource book for teachers in terms of its aims and approach.

Design and Organization

Based on the analysis, this book supports teaching and learning with media, such as listening to audio through a barcode linked to the recording. Besides, the writers of the book also provide teacher's manuals to help teachers get a better understanding of how to use the book. It is relieving that this criterion has been fulfilled, ELT materials must have multimedia to provide a rich language experience. In addition, there is a teacher's book or teacher's manual as a teacher's companion to guide teachers in using the textbook (Brian Tomlinson, 1998).

Regarding the organization, it was well organized due to the fact that the authors put the genre-based approach teaching step systematically for each skill (listening, speaking, writing, and speaking). Each skill is started with Building Knowledge of the Text (BKoT), Modeling of the Text (MoT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCoT), Independent Construction of the Text (ICoT), and Linking Related Text (LRT). Each step consists of activities to attain each objective of each skill. In this case, the teaching step can be said to be well organized regarding the chosen approach, GBA.

However, this book does not have adequate review; it only has reflective writing in every unit, asking, "What have you learned in this unit?" Another weak point of this textbook is that there is no grammar reference for learners to support individual learning and facilitate their understanding. Basically, there is a section for students to work individually in the section of ICoT, but it is limited to only practicing the targeted text, not especially the grammar part. It could be understood that grammar somehow became one of the reasons why our students' productive skills are low, yet it should not be avoided or limited since it is one of the important factors that makes language stand out and be understandable. That is why it can be a side dish but not the main dish in our

teaching, meaning that the exposure of grammar is just to make the communicative practice more meaningful and understandable.

Speaking of the layout, this textbook has quite a good layout. Layout refers to how the author selected the format, typography, and graphics. However, this textbook seems less attractive in terms of how thick the material is, and the textbook is mostly full of text. The texts mostly occupied each page; for typical Indonesian students whose reading interest is low, it might not motivate them.

Language Content

The next findings are related to the language content in the textbook. Language contents are important, as students' knowledge and skills are developed through the input of the language content. Language content here refers to grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Basically, language content is the foundation of the teaching and learning process. Once students have enough exposure and master them, their language skills will automatically follow. Further, the other skills stated in 21st century teaching, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, will also be easier to develop.

This textbook has indeed covered grammar items as any other ELT textbook does. The grammar covers as stated in the table. However, if the grammar points in this book are related to the aim of this phase F, which is to help students reach the B1 level in CEFR, it can be said that the grammar points are way too simple. It was found on www.englishprofile.org, an official website related to CEFR, that the grammar taught in this book is under the B1 level. In short, it can be said that the grammar in the textbook seems irrelevant to the grammar at the B1 level.

Besides, there is inconsistency in exposing and presenting the grammar. For example, on page 53 of Unit 2, the students are asked to do a mini-lesson reflection by sharing their thoughts with a partner, and the two questions are in past tense form, while in the beginning it is mentioned that the targeted tense is simple present tense. To add, in Unit 3, it is mentioned that simple present and internal conjunction are the grammar teaching, but looking through Unit 3, there is no particular section discussing them. It might lead to confusion for students, and students' performance in working with the

task would be affected. The question is addressed here: does past tense come before or after present tense? Again, the students would have issues doing the exercise.

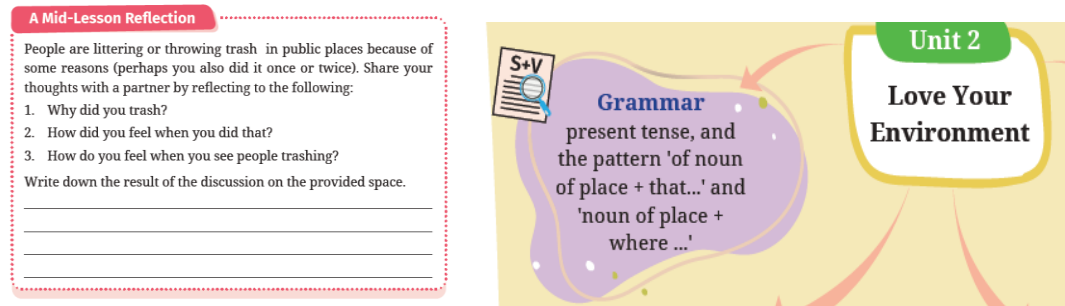


Figure 1 irrelevant grammar goal and task

Regarding the grammar explanation, it was found that it was taught deductively, meaning that explanation and rules come first, followed by examples and exercises, as shown in figure 2. However, this grammar is not embedded in a meaningful and communicative context. That it is not easy to cover meaning of a single word or phrase without having context (Thornbury, 2022). Having grammar in isolated sentences will hinder students to see how grammar works in communication (Rossiter, 2021). In addition, presenting grammar in a context gives a student a hint to a meaningful framework that connects to reality in the targeted language.

Besides, the exercises for the grammar focus are limited, and as a result, students might not be able to comprehend it fully. That is why the exposure to exercises is important so students have the opportunity to practice more. Although grammar is highlighted not as a main teaching, it still should earn some spaces to help students build their accuracy since grammar gives students knowledge on how to combine words into sentence (Mart, 2013).

Grammar Focus

One thing that is often used to describe a place is the use of adjective clauses. The following is the explanation of an adjective clause that relates to describe a place.

There are two adjective clauses used to describe a place.

Noun of place + that ...

Example:

The place that you are talking about.

The restaurant that sells halal food.

Noun of place + where ...

Example:

The city where I was born.

The school where she met her old friend.

Activity 6

Based on the information, make your own sentence by using the patterns about the waste in your surroundings (look at the examples in the Grammar Focus section).

Noun of place + that ...


1. _____

2. _____

Figure 2 Grammar Focus

Next is about vocabulary. The vocabulary in this textbook is limited in terms of exercises. The vocabulary is taught in the text. Students have little opportunity to practice using the vocabulary. For instance, in the first unit, it is presented as a mind map showing what students are going to learn, as well as the vocabulary. For example, in unit 3, it is stated that the vocabulary is related to a healthy life. There is no particular section presenting them, yet the vocabulary is presented before the reading section as a means to help learners understand the reading text, as stated in Activity 2. The meaning of helping words is presented in English as well, which is taken from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary. Then, the vocabulary activity is on Activity 3 to find the meaning of some listed words. In short, these textbook lacks vocabulary teaching in terms of range and exercises. In addition, this book also does not accommodate the students' strategies for learning vocabulary. However, in terms of vocabulary to cover up the lesson, it is enough. Apart from lacking exercises and strategies, this textbook provides lists of useful expressions to help students in conversation. The listed expressions are well written to help students learn functions. The phrases are adequate to aid students in conversation. Yet, exercises are limited. Regarding the language used in the textbook, it is well-written and suits the context and situation.


Activity 3

 Work In pairs, find the meaning of the following vocabularies. If you have difficulty, you can consult your dictionary.

Number 1 has been done for you.

No.	Word	Meaning
1.	Burn	Reduce calories
2.	Weight	
3.	Intensity	
4.	Cardiovascular	
5.	Stroke	

Activity 2

 Work individually. In order to help you to understand the text, let's learn the vocabulary that you will find in it.

Calories	A unit equivalent to the large calorie expressing heat-producing or energy-producing value in food when oxidized in the body
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Unit 3 Healthy Life for a Healthy Future 111

Figure 3 Vocabulary Exercise

Concerning the pronunciation parts, it is found that the textbook provides word stress, sentence stress, and intonations in scope and sequence. Pronunciation is one of the pivotal elements as well as the most difficult to acquire (Sardegna et al., 2018). This book is developed indeed based on a good consideration which one of them is to put pronunciation. However, there were only two chapters that contained pronunciation activities in units one and three. Both of the units presented word stress and sentence stress. In addition, in regards to exercises, they were done individually and in groups with CL techniques. Another is that it seems the exercises need to be added since there is only one material with limited exercises found in the textbook.

Language Skills

Regarding the language skills in this book, they are presented clearly. Each activity in producing a skill is led by background information and signals that what students do with a particular skill This textbook covers all six skills mandated in the Independent Learning Curriculum. Each skill is presented one by one, but there is an activity that requires students to integrate all those skills. So, this book covers integrated activities to convey the four skills in language learning.

Speaking of skills, this book has a pattern to start with listening, speaking, reading, viewing, presenting, and writing. There are no CDs available in this book, but they are replaced by barcodes, which lead the users to the website and download them. This makes the book convenient and easy to use since nowadays people tend to like everything digitalized. Before going to the listening section, there are some leading

questions or activities that assist students in having background information about the topic, so it helps them be ready for what they are going to listen to. In addition, the audio in the recording is clear but not authentic since it was recorded for educational purposes. Using unauthentic material is still debatable since it does not prepare students to face authentic situations. Authentic material itself is learned from learning sources that are taken from real-life situations where the speakers use their normal pace when talking.

In each unit, there are twenty reading passages, and they are related to the targeted text as mentioned in the curriculum. Each unit consists of two to four reading texts. However, many of them are above the students' level. It is stated that the government's goal for phase F is at B1 level in CEFR, yet there are only seven reading texts that are at B1 level; the rest of them are above the targeted level. To know the reading level, it was found out using the tool <http://www.roadtogrammar.com/textanalysis/>, and the result is shown in Table 8. Having the fact that the reading texts are mostly above the students' level, students could get difficulty, and although the number of words (NoW) was not that long, the longest text was found in unit four with a total number of words of 384 and the shortest was found in unit three with 95 words.

Looking at the above, it seems that the students will find it difficult since it is above their level. This kind of situation will demotivate them from reading and cause poor comprehension. According to Westwood (2008), students should be given reading text that is at their level since the difficulty level of the text influences students' ability and motivation to read.

Table 1 Reading Text Level Based on CEFR

Unit	Title/topic	Type of text	NoW	ASL	AWL	WC	CEFR Level
1	The Blogging Algorithm Works	Authentic text	128	18	4.1	1773	B2
	Inspiring Post by Greysia Polli	Authentic text	117	12	4.2	1141	B1
2	Waste Not, Want Not: "Waste Banks" in Indonesia	Descriptive text	289	21	5	1839	C1
	Types of waste	Descriptive text	259	8	5.1	2749	C2
	Plastic pollution	Descriptive text	298	16	4.7	2576	C2
	Pawnshop	Descriptive text	238	15	4.2	1300	B1
	Marine polluter	Descriptive text	95	16	4.9	2260	C1

3	The Easiest Way to Stay Healthy	Analytical exposition	256	13	4.6	1764	B2
	The Importance of Sleep for Health	Analytical exposition	273	11	4.7	1333	B2
	The Problem of being too Fat	Analytical exposition	151	9	4.7	1064	B1
	The Benefits of Vegetables	Analytical exposition	155	16	5.3	3649	C2
4	Laetania Belai Djandam	Narrative essay	384	17	4.8	1085	B1
	Salsabila Khairunnisa	Narrative essay	293	15	5	2114	C1
	Aeshnina Azzahra Aqilani	Narrative essay	243	10	5	1500	B2
	Tasya Kamila	Narrative essay	220	14	5.5	1587	B2
	An Inspiring Story of Healthy Living	Narrative essay	710	12	4.1	1126	B1
	Xiye Bastida USA	Narrative essay	352	15	5	2138	C1
5	How to Wire Money Online	Procedure text	181	13	4.2	954	B1
	How to change your pin	Procedure text	109	3	4.3	2967	C2
	Here are 10 ways to save money in high school	Procedure text	222	6	4	1210	B1

Based on the analysis of this textbook, it was found that it covers a few conversations and short functional text to accommodate speaking examples or models. The activities are also provided with case studies, which require work in pairs, groups, and individual activities. Each activity is well designed, starting with building up the students' knowledge in pairs of grouping activities and individual speaking activities. The activity presented is useful to accommodate the real-life situation. It gives students a chance to practice the targeted language.

As it was mentioned earlier, this book already has a sequence in presenting the skills, and it relates to the approach used in this book, a genre-based approach. Writing becomes the last skill presented, and it has been presented in a well-made sequence as the approach suggested. The writing tasks are well-guided, given the useful phrases and vocabulary to help students compose their targeted writing.

D. Conclusion

The researchers found that this book entitled "Bahasa Inggris: English for Change" written by Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia is well-written book and followed the Genre-Based Approach and Communicative Language Teaching as the suggested approach and method. Each

skill is also presented in understandable sequence. However, the researchers revealed that some of the reading texts in the book are at higher level of the students. It was suggested that the authors consider the students' proficiency level to help students get motivated and do not feel frustrated. Another issue appears with the irrelevant grammar which found inconsistent with the targeted CEFR level. To sum up, the writers should pay attention to level of the students and the targeted goals stated in the curriculum.

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