

Evaluating the Relevance of Tasks in EFL Textbooks “Think Globally Act Locally”

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Abstract—The Indonesian government has published students’ textbooks and teacher guidance books as compulsory textbooks for the teaching and learning process following the 2013 curriculum. To ensure that textbooks are of quality, teachers should know the strengths and weaknesses of tasks in the published textbooks. Thus, evaluation of tasks in the aforesaid textbooks is crucial. This article evaluated the relevance of tasks in English Foreign Learners (EFL) Textbooks “Think Globally Act Locally” (TGAL) in the 2013 Curriculum. It investigated the completeness of components and categories of tasks. Qualitative content analysis was utilized, and analysis sheets (TAS) were used as the analysis tools. The researchers chose 4 chapters which represented all the important tasks in the textbooks. The standard 2013 Curriculum was used as the guideline for evaluation. The procedures undertaken were finding out the tasks, coding, matching the criteria, totaling, and finding the percentage. The result showed that input, output, activities, setting, and teacher’s and student’s roles in TGAL EFL textbooks fulfilled the criteria of tasks in the 2013 Curriculum. The researchers suggest that this finding be used by policy makers to further enhance the TGAL EFL textbooks.

Keywords— Indonesian Curriculum 2013, EFL textbook evaluation, qualitative content analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

There are many factors that influence the success of a learning process. One of them is teaching materials. Textbooks are one of the teaching materials which are commonly used in the teaching and learning process as they can facilitate learners in their course of learning. Textbooks are resources, inspiration for classroom activities, and the curriculum itself (Garinger, 2002). In

Indonesia, textbooks are intended for all students and play an important role in the education system.

The function of an English coursebook has become very important in the learning process. It provides the information on knowledge, skills and attitude through the tasks as the form of activities which guide the students to reach the outputs of competency. For that reason, English coursebooks should provide good tasks for the learners to facilitate them in the learning process. Mukundan et al. (2013) stated that the coursebook can often play a crucial role in students’ success or failure. Hence, the various tasks provided in EFL textbooks are primarily to engage the learners in communication and to require the learners to use language.

EFL textbooks are important and used as guidelines for both the Indonesian teachers and students. They aim at providing learners with the necessary knowledge, language skills and information about English speaking countries and preparing them for interaction with people from foreign countries and of different cultural backgrounds (Radić-Bojanić & Topalov, 2016). Besides, they are to develop the intended skills, competency and attitude through the tasks. Abdel Wahab (2013) claims that EFL textbooks can often play a crucial role in students’ success or failure. Hence, the various tasks and practices provided in the EFL textbooks need to engage learners so that the language can be used optimally.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rozati (2014) defines a task as a piece of meaning-centered work that makes learners comprehend, produce and communicate in the target language. In

addition, Ebadi & Hasan (2016) refer to a task as a piece of classroom work which requires learners to understand, direct, produce or interact in the target language. Elmiana (2018) states that tasks can be analyzed in terms of their goals, input, activities, setting, teachers' roles and students' roles. The idea is that students' experiences using the target language should be enriched.

Other theorists such as Cunningsworth, (1995) and Richards (2001) summarizes the role of coursebooks in language teaching as a resource for presentation of materials, effective resource for self-directed learning, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. Ansary and Babaii (2002) supported the roles of coursebook / textbook. They have the idea that textbooks are the framework which manages and times the programs and, in many situations, coursebooks / textbooks can serve as a syllabus. In the eyes of learners, if there are no coursebooks, learners will have no purpose in learning and will not take the lesson seriously, because they are out of focus and teacher dependent. For teachers, coursebooks mean security, guidance, and support. They provide ready-made teaching texts and learning tasks, and they are a cheap and easier way of providing learning materials.

Breen and Candlin as stated in Tomlinson (2011) claims that task refers to any proposal contained within the materials for action to be undertaken by the learners, which has the direct aim of bringing about the learning of the foreign language. Littlejohn (1997) argues that the work we ask them to do in the classroom will contribute to habits in learning that will remain with them their entire lives. Success in tasks is evaluated in terms of achievement of an outcome, and tasks generally bear some resemblance to real –life language use. So task- based instruction takes a fairly strong form of communicative language teaching.

Moreover, the role of tasks has received further support from some researchers in second language acquisition. Engaging learners in task work provides a better context for the activation of learning processes than form – focused activities, and hence ultimately provides better opportunities for language learning to take place. Language learning is believed to depend on immersing- students not merely in “comprehension input” but in tasks that require them to negotiate meaning and engage in naturalistic and meaningful communication (Richards & Rodger,2002).

Generally, learning activity is everything the students do with / without a teacher with learning input to reach the output / goal of learning (Kebudayaan, 2016). Teachers and students play crucial roles to ensure learning objectives are achieved. According to Naibaho (2019) teachers have a very important role that must be played with the aim that the learning in the classroom is successful based on the learning objectives. On the other hand, students are the centre of the educational enterprise, and their cognitive and affective learning experiences should guide all decisions as to what and how it is done (Wright, 2011). The students must be given an active role in learning to make the students recognize and internalize their characters. They play the role as a participant in the discussion, as an actor of the experiment, and as the one who performs the result of discussion and experiment.

Coursebook evaluation would involve the careful selection of materials examining whether they reflect the needs of the learners, the aims, method, and values of a specific teaching program. According to (Soori et al., 2011) it is a useful device for both teachers and material writers as an underlying element in the development of innovations and modifications within the teaching / learning context. Through the evaluation of tasks in the coursebook, teachers know the content of the books, its strengths and weaknesses. It also assists educators to prepare their instruction and its relevance to methodology.

In the formal educational settings, especially for language teaching, the necessity of coursebooks leads the way to the exploration of the coursebook evaluation by teachers (Kayapinar, 2009). Therefore, tasks as the learning materials need to be evaluated to ensure its quality and to decide whether tasks are appropriate for the students. All the flaws (weaknesses) of the tasks as the source of learning materials need to be discovered and be corrected before the tasks in the coursebooks are deemed to be usable.

Based on the Indonesian Government Regulation 2013 Number 71, there is a list of EFL textbooks that should be used by educational authorities. These textbooks are deemed appropriate, and they follow closely the 2013 Indonesian Curriculum. These compulsory textbooks termed as TGAL are used in all government Junior High Schools in Indonesia to ensure that all learners have equality in learning opportunities (Ikhsanudin, 2020).

There are eleven chapters in the TGAL textbooks with tasks consisting of extended written discourse. Because TGAL textbooks are compulsory, teachers must be smart in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of tasks contained in the textbooks. The initial observation by

the writers who themselves are EFL teachers is that some of the tasks are repeated which results in a monotonous material. They believe that EFL teachers should use their expertise to vary tasks for learners. Teachers may include various materials and sources to complement the TGAL textbooks in order to help learners enhance their critical thinking skills in the learning process. However, they need to ensure that the chosen tasks are relevant to the 2013 Curriculum and can help learners enhance their language skills and thus be competent. Litz (2005) states that when teaching materials or tasks are to be used by a large group of teachers and learners, these materials need to be evaluated by all of those who will be involved in their use. Taking into account Litz's recommendation, the objective of this article was to evaluate the relevance of tasks in EFL Textbooks "TGAL" in the 2013 Curriculum. Researchers aimed to investigate the completeness of components and the categories of tasks. The results may help teachers of EFL to analyze, choose specific tasks or include other tasks that are relevant to the 2013 Curriculum besides helping policy makers to further enhance the TGAL EFL textbooks.

III. METHODOLOGY

Content analysis, a part of qualitative research, is an analysis of text-based data which requires interpretation but codes or relationships between codes are primarily defined prior to data analysis based on a certain framework (Aboo Bakar, 2021). Content analysis tries to make sense of the content of messages – be they texts, images, symbols or audio data (Gheyle & Jacobs, 2017). Content analysis is used in this research to analyze whether or not the contents of the EFL TGAL textbook have reached the standard criteria of the 2013 Curriculum synthesized from the Ministry of Education and culture of Indonesia (2016).

The EFL TGAL textbook underwent a revision in 2018 and was launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. The textbook consists of 11 chapters respectively. Each chapter consists of four activities which include observing and questioning, collecting information, associating and communicating.

In analyzing the textbook, some systematic steps were used by the researchers. The first was to find the tasks provided in the EFL textbook TGAL in the 2013 Curriculum. Descriptive tasks were made for all tasks present in every chapter. The second step was coding the data. Tasks were coded in the analysis sheet. Checklist was also developed so that the relevancy of tasks according to the 2013 Curriculum was not missed out. In this step, the researchers matched whether each task was suitable with the criteria or vice versa. The third step was doing relevant tasks in the textbook with the criteria. The fourth step was to calculate the total of the tasks with the assistance of two inter-raters. The

inter-raters were essential to avoid the subjectivity in the analysis. Then, each rating result from the researchers and two inter-raters were calculated to get the average. The last step was to find the percentage of the compatibility of the tasks with the criteria. Based on the findings, the researchers made a conclusion about the tasks by presenting the percentage of each result of the data analysis.

IV. RESULT

This study evaluated the EFL textbook TGAL in the 2013 curriculum by using a content analysis method. The objective of this article was to evaluate the relevance of tasks in EFL Textbooks TGAL in accordance with the 2013 Curriculum. It wished to investigate the completeness of components and categories of tasks.

The analysis of task components was categorized under four sections: 1) Output of the tasks, 2) Input of the tasks, 3) Activities of the tasks, and 4) Setting of the tasks. The detailed analysis is written in Table 4.1.

Table 1: An Analysis of Task Components in EFL Textbooks

Chapter	Total Tasks	Task Component					
		Output	Input	Setting	Activities	TR	SR
1	15	available	available	available	available	available	available
3	24	available	available	available	available	available	available
7	23	available	available	available	available	available	available
11	7	available	available	available	available	available	available

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that the tasks in this book had fulfilled 100% of the components. The EFL textbook TGAL has facilitated input, output, setting, activities, the teacher's role and the student's role in four chapters. From the table above, it is shown that the percentage of all the task components was 100%. The second analysis was to investigate the task categories presented in the EFL Textbook TGAL in the 2013 Curriculum. The results are as follows:

A. The output of the Tasks

The output of the tasks was divided into two sub aspects, Basic Competence 3 (KD 3) and Basic Competence 4 (KD 4). Basic Competence 3 (KD 3) is about knowledge. Basic Competence 4 is about psychomotor. In this case, the output of Basic Competence was divided into two aspects, namely cognitive (knowledge) and psychomotor (skills). Knowledge or Cognitive is all about learning activities which has six levels from the lowest to the highest level

of the taxonomy's theory which includes: memorizing (C1), understanding (C2), applying (C3), analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), or creating (C6). The data analysis on the output of Basic Competence 3 (KD 3) found that most of the activities in the textbook were on understanding (C2). The result was 14% for C1 followed by 58% for C2, 15% for C3, and 13% for C4. C5 and C6 scored 0%.

The second was the output of Basic Competence 4 (KD 4) which has 5 categories: imitation (P1), manipulation (P2), precision (P3), articulation (P4), and naturalization (P5). From the data analysis of the output on Basic Competence 4 (KD 4) above, it can be inferred that the imitation (P1) was 31%, manipulation (P2) was 51%, precision (P3) was 4%, articulation (P4) was 13%, and naturalization (P5) was 1%. It was summarized that the output of Basic Competence 4 (KD 4) of the tasks cannot be considered as part of the 2013 Curriculum. The tasks mostly requested students to exercise manipulation.

B. The input of the tasks

The input of tasks was the vital component of the tasks because it can be constructive input to develop and increase the qualities of the teaching process. It should be innovative and creative to create the best tasks for the students and be continuously improved based on the students' condition, situation, and available materials. The input of the task based on the syllabus consists of 1) Form of output, 2) Source of output, 3) Linguistics Knowledge, and 4) Language skill.

First, the form of input. The form of input is divided into 3 types, namely extended written discourse (EW), extended oral discourse (EO), and Graphic (G). The input data offered to the learners and the output from the learners were produced by the learners. The analysis on the input of the EFL textbook TGAL in the curriculum 2013 shows that the extended written discourse was 100%. It meant that the materials in the textbook were mainly in the written form of texts and illustrations.

Second, source of input. The tasks came from the materials (M), the teacher (T), the learners (L), or outside the classroom (OC). The analysis on the Source of input of the EFL textbook TGAL in the curriculum 2013 shows that the content of the tasks from materials was 56%, and from outside the classroom (OC) was 44%. No content of the tasks came from the learners and teachers.

Third, Linguistic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge has 3 types namely social function (SF), generic structure

(GS), and Language Feature (LF). The analysis shows that the generic structure, language feature and social function had equal scores of 33%.

The language skill is divided into 4 types namely listening (L), reading (R), speaking (S), and writing (W). From the result it is obvious that the tasks mostly provided speaking as language skill with a score of 38%. The writing, reading and listening had a percentage of 35, 18 and 9 respectively.

C. Activities of the tasks

In the 2013 Curriculum, the activity in teaching and learning process applies a scientific approach. Obviously, the scientific approach is also used in the textbook, which was published by the government, especially the EFL textbook TGAL in the Ninth-grade level of Junior High School. Scientific method has 5 procedures namely Observing (OB), Questioning (QN), Associating (AS), Experimenting (EX), Reasoning (CI), and Communicating (CM). From the analysis it can be inferred that most of the tasks are on questioning (QN) with a score of 48%. The other procedures scored 13% in Observing (OB), 14% in reasoning (CI), 15% in associating (AS) and 10% in communicating.

D. Learning Setting

For the learning setting, all the tasks could be done by the teachers and learners, individuals, or in pairs or groups. From the result the researchers and 2 inter-raters had the same conclusion. It could happen because every instruction on the tasks provided from the textbook was very clear whether each of them was conducted by teachers and learners (TL), individuals (IN), or in pair/group (GP). The data from the learning setting showed that 65% of the tasks were conducted in pair/group, 16% by teachers and learners, and 19% individually.

E. Teacher's role and Student's role

The teacher's role facilitates the growth of characters among other teachers as facilitators, motivators, participants, and feedback is only written in the teacher's manual. Meanwhile, the students must be given an active role in learning to make them recognize, be careful, and internalize their characters. The students' role could be as a participant in the discussion, as an actor of the experiment, or as the one who presents the result of the discussion and experiment. There was an analysis whether the role in the tasks mostly focused on the teacher or the students. The result showed that the teacher's role was 44% and the student's role 56%. It means that the students have the most role in the teaching and learning process.

V. DISCUSSION

EFL Textbook TGAL which has been used for a long time is one of the sources of learning and teaching materials widely used in the learning process. Many people consider a textbook as a conventional teaching material. However, it is still quite capable of making a good contribution to the learning process because some learning materials cannot be taught without the help of textbooks. In addition, the EFL Textbook can help the students and teachers to see what can be done in the next lesson and what has been worked on in the previous lesson. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the components of tasks with the categories presented in the EFL Textbook TGAL in the 2013 Curriculum.

Learning in the 21st Century has its competencies. The competencies are critical thinking, creativity and innovation, communication skill, collaboration, and confidence. The government emphasizes that all of the competencies must be targeted for the students in the evaluation system. That is why the English book from the government uses the task-based learning approach which is suitable for 21st Century learning. A task encourages the participants to function as 'language users' rather than 'language learners' using communicative processes as those incorporated in real-world activities (Ganta, 2015).

The teaching process of English cannot be separated from giving students tasks. This is because task-based learning suits subjects such as English, Indonesian and local language (Kebudayaan, 2016, p.93). The task is one of the methods to measure students' understanding. The task is a piece of meaning-centered work that makes learners comprehend, produce and communicate in the target language (Rozati, 2014). It means that it can help students understand and comprehend materials better. Nunan (2006) in Buyukkarci (2009) defines a task as a piece of classroom work involving learners in understanding, directing, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is on the meaning rather than the form. In short, the task is vital to increase students' understanding and mastery of certain lessons that are taught by the teachers.

Based on these findings, the EFL Textbook TGAL in the 2013 Curriculum has five tasks components: 1) Output of the tasks, 2) Input of the tasks, 3) Activities of the tasks, 4) Setting of the tasks in which all the components should be included and 5) teacher and student's roles.

The findings showed that understanding was stressed more than other components. In this case, the researchers were afraid that the students could only understand the materials but could not really apply,

analyze and evaluate the materials. Perhaps, more materials that can develop their understanding, collaboration with other students and transfer of knowledge can be further added.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is suggested that English language teachers should be very careful in selecting the most suitable textbooks for the learning and teaching purposes. Teachers should also be more creative in searching for and reading other sources as secondary references to be adopted as supplementary materials. Policy makers can also look at the findings to further improve the contents included in textbooks so that students and teachers can benefit from them. Information is expanding very fast in today's world; textbooks may just not be able to race against the ever-expanding data. However, students and teachers can always benefit from textbooks which are carefully crafted to be evergreen and can withstand any peripheral pressure.

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