

**THE UTILIZATION OF TEXTBOOKS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO THE FIRST GRADE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN SDN 2 TANJUNG, KEDAMEAN, GRESIK**

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**Abstrak**

Buku teks merupakan hal yang penting bagi proses belajar siswa. Buku teks dipakai sebagai media, sumber bahan ajar, bahkan sebagai kurikulum untuk mengajar di sekolah. Tetapi pada kenyataannya buku teks tidak digunakan secara maksimal oleh guru, terutama terhadap siswa kelas satu sekolah dasar. Untuk itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap penggunaan buku teks untuk pengajaran bahasa Inggris di kelas satu sekolah dasar di SDN 2 Tanjung, Kedamean, Gresik. Penggunaan buku teks di kelas mengharuskan guru untuk mempertimbangkan karakteristik dari siswa. Bahan ajar tulis tidak dapat diaplikasikan begitu saja kepada siswa dari segala usia. Desain penelitian dari penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Wawancara dan observasi dilakukan untuk memperoleh data. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah interview guidelines dan lembar observasi. Hasil Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru bahasa Inggris tidak menggunakan buku teks dengan cara yang dianjurkan dalam berbagai teori penggunaan buku teks yang seharusnya. Guru hanya menekankan pada pembelajaran tekstual dalam proses belajar mengajar. Karakteristik pembelajar pemula tidak diperhatikan oleh guru. Tes tertulis yang diselenggarakan oleh pemerintah menjadi alasan mengapa guru menekankan pada pembelajaran tekstual. Buku teks penting untuk pembelajaran. Hanya saja, keuntungan dari penggunaan buku teks hanya dapat diperoleh dengan penggunaan yang baik. Disarankan kepada guru bahasa Inggris untuk mempertimbangkan karakteristik siswa sebelum menggunakan buku teks di dalam kelas.

**Kata kunci:** Penggunaan, buku teks, pengajaran, sekolah dasar

**Abstract**

Textbooks are important for students' learning process. Schools use textbooks as media, teaching sources and even curriculum for teaching. However, in fact textbooks are not utilized maximally by teachers, especially at first grade students. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the utilization of textbook for teaching English to the first grade of elementary school in SDN 2 Tanjung Kedamean Gresik. Utilizing textbooks in classrooms requires the teacher to consider the characteristic of the students. Written materials cannot be applied to all ages of learners. The research design of this study is descriptive qualitative. Interview and observation are conducted to get the data. The data are interview result and observation result. The instruments are interview guidelines and observation sheet. The results show that the English teacher does not utilize the textbook as in the theory of textbooks utilization. The teacher emphasizes textual learning in the teaching learning process. The characteristics of young learners are not considered by the teacher. The written tests held by the government become the reason why the teacher emphasizes on written language teaching. Textbooks are important for learning. However, the benefit of the textbooks can only gotten by good utilization. It is suggested that English teachers consider the students' characteristics before using the textbooks in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Utilization, textbook, teaching, elementary school

## INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are at the heart of educational enterprise, as they offer students “a rich array of new and potentially interesting facts, and open the door to a world of fantastic experience” (Chambliss & Calfee, 1998). It is widely understood that textbooks used in any grades of schools. Textbooks cannot be apart from the process of teaching and learning. Commonly, the understandings of textbooks are as media of learning.

Different schools often use similar or even the same textbook. However, it has to be taken into account that different students have different perspective on the textbook they use in learning activities because every student has their own way to learn something since every student stands on his/ her own way of thinking. In addition, different teachers can have different perspective toward the same textbooks. With different perspectives, it is possible that different teachers have different understandings and idea about the content of the textbook. It is very subjective because the differences of the perspectives are dependent on the person who reads and uses the textbooks. However, it is a real phenomenon that one has to attention because it happens in the real educational.

There are various textbooks offered, and a textbook has various kinds of material or contents. However, one cannot ensure that materials of a textbook can cover all the needs and the certain way of learning that the students have. No students have the same mind. With all students’ characteristics and unique mindset, a very good book probably has a lot of suitable contents for a student. Nevertheless, to accommodate all the students’ need properly, no one can say even a name of a perfect textbook. The imperfections of the textbooks have been known by many teachers, but not all teachers care about this, whereas caring about this can be very influencing

to the teachers in selecting textbooks to use in the classrooms.

It is clear that textbooks have advantages in the classroom use because textbooks provide syllabus and structure for a program, they are efficient, and they maintain quality (Richard, 2001). Those are some of the advantages that textbooks can offer. Many textbooks have been compiled based on the new curriculum. It is why those textbooks have had their own syllabuses and structure for programs during the semester or the year. Thinking instantly, teachers do not have to work hard to construct a syllabus and the programs during the semester because the textbook they use provide them. In other words, spending the time to construct the programs, preparing the materials, and even the assessments is not needed. The easiness happens because many textbooks are provided within the assessments included. In addition, the contents of the textbook; the texts, materials, and the assessments usually have passed a validation test. In conclusion, the textbooks can help students to be clever or at least to be better after the teaching-learning process using those textbooks. However, the textbook is not the only factors which decide the success of the teaching-learning process. There are still other factors that influence the teaching-learning process success. One of the other factors that influence the teaching-learning process success is the way how the teacher uses the textbook. A consideration is needed to decide whether the textbook is used as the teacher’s only material, as the curriculum, for assessing the students, or else. As stated in William (1983), it is suggested to use textbook judiciously since it cannot cater equally to the requirements of every classroom setting. The design of the textbook is to be an instrument for teaching and learning. As an instrument, the use of a textbook depends on the one who uses it. Whatever how good the textbook

is, without a good user or teacher who uses the textbook, it is doubtful to reach good goals. The way the teacher use textbook goes to something essential. As stated by Kon (1993), the key to implementing reform is the teacher, not the textbook. Kon convinced that whatever the textbooks, a good teacher will be able to reach the goals of learning. Ansari (2002) declared that there is no perfect textbook. It means the teacher should not use the textbook as presented by the publisher. The teacher cannot use the books without any changes in the sequence and the way to use the textbook. Without a good use of the textbooks by the teacher, there is no textbooks bring a big change to the students. That is why it can be concluded that there are many disadvantages of using textbooks without any changes.

Different textbooks are used in different way to different grades. Students with different grades have different characteristics, needs, way of learning, and way to handle. There are six grades in elementary school. It means there are six different common characteristics and way of learning. The way the textbooks used in elementary school is important because elementary students are in the motored-active age. It brings one to a critical point which the textbook should be used or should not be used—the first grade. Strevens (1978) stated that elementary school students have a short attention span, they cannot seriously see their learning in terms of eventual usefulness, and they are deeply affected by their relations with their teacher. All these characteristics make a teacher should have a special way of the textbook use.

Knowing that there is no perfect textbook, teachers should have certain ways to use textbooks, and considering the characteristics of elementary students—especially first graders and the use of textbooks to first grade students, there should be a

research of how the teacher uses textbooks when teaching first grade students.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **Research Design**

The appropriate design of the research was qualitative descriptive research. This type of research study focused on understanding and meaning through verbal narratives and observations rather than through numbers (McMillan, 1992). The aim was to illustrate 'what exist' with respect to variables or conditions in a situation (Ary, 1990). In contrast with quantitative research which aimed to find out 'to what extent' or 'how well' something is done, qualitative research attempted to explain and describe the occurrence. Therefore, the result of this research would be in the form of description and explanation of the phenomena found during the observation.

In this study, the researcher conducted an observation to obtain data needed. The observations conducted twice. The researcher did not enrol in the teaching-learning process. The researcher only observed and reported everything happening.

#### **Subject of the Study**

The subjects in this research were the 1st grade class of SDN 2 Tanjung, Kedamean, Gresik. The reason why the researcher used the 1st grade student was

because the 1st grade students were the lowest level of formal schooling where the most developing ability was spoken language. At the same time, textbooks had been begun to use in that level of students. So a research was needed to know whether textbooks were useful or not, whether textbooks could be used or not to the students of 1st grade age. The ability in spoken

language was in contrast with the ability in written language.

The setting of this study was in SDN 2 Tanjung located in jalan raya Tanjung, Kedamean, Gresik. SDN 2 Tanjung was regarded as a common elementary school in that area with B grade of accreditation. A common school was chose to be the setting of the study to reveal the phenomena happens in most schools.

### **Data Collection Technique**

To collect the data, the researcher applied interview and observation. The researcher was not involved in the process of teaching and learning. Before the observation was conducted, the interview was conducted initially. Contrast from the observation result which was objective, the interview result could be subjective depended on the teacher. The result of the interview could be influenced by the teacher feeling and thoughts. The interview results can also bias caused by the teacher's activities in the classroom if held after the observation. That was why the observation was conducted after the interview to know the facts on real situation. In this study the researcher did not enroll in the teaching learning process.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

To know how the English teachers utilize the textbooks for teaching English at the first grade of elementary, the researcher used the result of the observation sheets and the result of interview. The result of the interview was analysed and compared with the result of observations. Observation sheets were instruments for qualitative data and were analyzed descriptively. The observation sheets were analyzed and compared to the theories related to the phenomena happened.

The first step was reading and studying the data carefully. Secondly, the inappropriate data

would be eliminated. Then the data were compared, described and interpreted to find out the answer to research question. The last was analyzing the data. All the data from the interview guidelines and observation sheet were presented in the form of words.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To obtain the data, the researcher conducted an interview and observation. The interview guidelines consisted of fourteen questions. They were used to gain the answer of how the teacher utilizes textbook in teaching English for the first grade of elementary students. Moreover, the observation was conducted to match and to support the interview results. The researcher conducted the observation twice. The duration for each observation was 2 x 35 minutes.

### **RESULTS**

#### **The Results of Interview on How the Teacher Utilizes Textbook for Teaching English to the First Grade of Elementary Students.**

Based on the interview guidelines that were made by the researcher, there were fourteen questions addressed to the teacher in order to find out the teacher's beliefs toward the use of textbooks on the first grade students and how the teacher utilized textbooks for teaching English for the first grade of elementary students taken from the teacher's view. From the first question, the researcher found that the teacher believed that English learning was difficult for students of the first grade. The second question revealed that the book was gotten from the government, so the same books are also used in the other elementary schools in the same district. The third question revealed that from the teacher beliefs, the students' abilities are much influenced

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by the textbooks used. From the fourth question, the result was the book matched the curriculum.

From the fifth question, the researcher wanted to know whether the teacher emphasize textual learning for the students' learning activities. And the result was that the teacher emphasized the textual learning for students' activities. The main material used for teaching is the textbook. Most of the students are based on the textbook.

The sixth question was about the way teacher used the textbook, whether the teacher used it orderly as presented by the publisher or the teacher changed the order of the material in the textbook. From the interview, the researcher found that the teacher taught the students following the material order presented by the publisher. The reason was because on every midterm test and final test, the tests would be compiled based on the order of the materials on the textbook. The teacher had no idea but following the material order if the teacher did not want the students got difficulties in doing the tests.

The seventh question was formulated to know the other material used beside the textbook. It resulted that the teacher rarely supplemented the textbook with other materials. The teacher thought that the textbook contained enough materials so the teacher did not have to add other materials beside the textbook.

The ninth question tried to reveal whether the teacher changed the content of the textbook or not. And it was revealed that the teacher did not change the content of the textbook at all. It was related to the second question about the relationship between the materials in the textbook with the tests held. The teacher avoided changing the material because the teacher did not want the students got problems with the midterm and final tests.

The next question was formulated to gain the data whether the teacher used the textbook in various ways based on the different materials she conveyed. The researcher found that the teacher tried to use different way to use the textbook for different topics. On the other hand, the teacher stated that the way to use the textbook tended to be unvaried because the emphases of the learning of first grade students were to reach the reading and writing abilities.

The eleventh question revealed that the teacher considered the students' learning style with the way the teacher used the textbook. The consideration was needed because when the way teacher taught was too difficult, the students would not be able to follow the learning process. It made the teacher had to nurture the students slowly to ensure the students with low learning capability to follow the learning process in the class.

The other factors that influence the teacher in utilizing the textbook were her experiences and lectures she got in university. It was revealed by the twelfth question. At the same time the learning materials development was campaigned, the interview resulted that the teacher did not develop other materials beside the textbook. Once more it was related with the midterm and final term tests. The teacher seemed doubt to add more materials that could take time for teaching the materials from the textbook.

Related to the first question, from the thirteenth question the researcher found that beside the teacher emphasized the textual learning; the teacher also used written materials from the textbook. The result of the fourteenth question was almost all the tasks, reading activities, and homework were made based on the textbook and even taken from the textbook.

Moreover, the data that were obtained from interview were verified by the results of the

observation. The observation showed that the teacher utilized the textbook as the interview results. Some points were not the same as the interview result such as the way teacher used different ways in using textbook for teaching in the classroom. From the observation, it was found that the teacher seemed used the same pattern in using textbook for teaching.

### **The Results of Observation on How the Teacher Utilizes Textbook for Teaching English to the First Grade of Elementary Students**

The teacher in SDN 2 Tanjung utilized the English textbook mostly as presented by the publisher. The classroom activities were done based on the topics, reading activities and exercises provided in the textbook. The teacher utilized the textbook without neither various media nor other materials as supplements. The textbook materials were very trusted as complete materials for student learning.

In the first observation, the researcher found that the textbook use made the students move their attention from the teacher explanation to the books they have had. At the time teacher asked the students to open the textbook, the students directly did what the teacher said and focus on the book. The textbook itself were compiled based on the curriculum. It can be seen that the textbook attached the curriculum (standard competences and basic competences) on the first pages. The textbooks were completed with reading materials, exercises, and tests.

The researcher also found that the teacher focused on textual learning. The teacher step by step taught the students vocabularies, wrote the words on the board and asked the students compare them with the pictures available on the textbook. The teacher also showed the students several sentences related to the vocabularies they learnt.

After that the teacher asked the students to fill in the blanks with pictures provided. The teacher did not ask the students to do the task in group so the students did it themselves. It was possible because each student had one textbook. However, some students did discussion with their classmates without teacher's permission.

The researcher also found that the teacher followed the order of materials provided in the textbook. The teacher taught chapter by chapter and page by page following the textbook order. The teacher utilized the textbook by maximizing what the textbook contained. Pictures, vocabularies, texts, and exercises were all used. The teacher did not add other materials to supplement the materials in the textbook.

Related to the teacher beliefs of how first grade students learn, the teacher taught slowly and repeated the vocabularies many times. The teacher asked the students to write the vocabularies and some short sentences but she did not evaluate carefully the students' writing results.

Considering the completeness of the textbook of pictures, vocabularies, reading materials and exercises, the teacher did not use other printed materials to supplement the materials in the textbook. The completeness of the textbook also caused the learning process was run in about 80% using textbook. The assignments and homework were given using the exercises and tests provided on the textbook.

In the second observation, the classroom activities were run as the first observation with some differences. The teacher still followed the materials order in the textbook. But at that time the teacher asked the students to pay attention on some pictures in the textbook. She drew the pictures on the board and asked the students about the pictures. The pictures were actually the same pictures printed on the textbook. But at that time the teacher

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used the board as a media to gain students comprehension. The students were little bit noisy. And the teacher stopped the learning process for a while and tried to calm the students down first. It proved that the teacher considered the students' psychology. Then the learning process ran as before with emphasis on the textbook. At the end of the learning process the teacher gave the students homework which was taken from the textbook.

### DISCUSSIONS

This study was meant to describe the utilization of textbook for teaching first grade of elementary students. The researcher found that the teacher mostly emphasized the textual learning for the students' activities. It is related to the teacher's reason whether the students are prepared to face the examinations held by the government which the materials will be from the books. The examinations themselves are written test. Stated in the chapter 2, Cameron (2001) said that children communicate more easily through talking than writing. Then it becomes a big question how the teacher emphasizes written language than spoken language. This fact shows that there is no good communication between the government and English teachers. However, the government (UPTD Pendidikan) decision influences the teachers way of teaching. Here, the government decision to use written test as the final scoring for the students influenced the teacher to emphasis textual teaching for the students.

From the answer of the second question of the interview that has been compared with the result of the observation, the researcher found that the teacher taught the students mostly based on the textbook without any changes or additions of the materials used. Stated in chapter 2, textbooks cannot be used as presented by the publisher. As

Lamie stated, adapting, modifying or supplementing textbook is always needed in utilizing textbook (Lamie, 1999). But in fact, in the learning process the textbook is used with no supplements and changes. Even the order of the material in the textbook are used orderly as presented. The easiness could be the main reason why the teacher does not develop the materials beside textbook. Another reason which probably causes the teacher used the book as presented is the completeness of the textbook with curriculum and exercises. The way how those written materials and written exercises are taught, comes after.

The textbook which has been compiled based on the curriculum are trusted by the teacher as a complete material to use for teaching and students' learning process. It is reasonable as Harmer (2002) stated that textbooks offer a completeness of a source of teaching and learning assistance. In the learning process, pictures, vocabularies, texts, and exercises used and given are taken from the textbook. In addition, the teacher asks the students to do task and test provided on the textbook for students' homework. Related to the data, the completeness of the book and the easiness become the teacher's reason to utilize textbook as presented.

Related to the textbook use orderly, the teacher said in the interview that teaching the material as presented was done to evade the students from getting difficulties in doing the mid semester and final semester tests. The tests are made by the committee formed by the UPTD Pendidikan Kecamatan, and the sources of the tests are the book used in the district (kecamatan). It makes the teacher has to take into consideration to change the order of materials to teach. Harmer (2002) stated that the teacher are flexible in the material sequences then textbook commonly offer. Based on the Harmer's theory, the decision of the

order of the materials sequences is on the teacher's hands. In fact, the teacher does not have choice but to follow the material order. Changing the material order can increase the risks of the students' failure of the test they are going to face. In this case, it is a must for the teacher to agree with the government-agreed-curriculum attached in the textbook. Developing materials is impossible to do if the teacher has no freedom to rearrange the material order.

In the interview, the teacher said that she used the textbook in various ways depending on the materials taught. In fact, the researcher found that the teacher used the similar ways in utilizing the textbook. It probably happens because the teacher cannot not find another way to teach the first grade of elementary students which the emphasis are on the abilities to write and read. Cameron stated that children communicate much more easily though talking than writing (Cameron, 2001). However the government holds tests which are harder than the first grade students normally could do. In the chapter two stated that the best way to teach children is through spoken languages. Then if the students are taught using spoken language, it becomes a question why the tests are in the form written tests. The teacher argues that it was too risky to teach the students in different way because the students have to be prepared for the written examination. Only if the examinations could be held using spoken test, the teacher would have developed the way the teacher taught. In fact, the examinations are given as written test. Written test requires the students to comprehend written questions and after that answer the question using their own writing. The teacher seems to have no time to teach the students using another way but emphasizing on comprehending and writing text.

The interview and the observation results show that the elementary English teacher utilizes

textbook not maximally. The understanding whether the teacher should develop, should supplement, and change the materials in order to get a better result of the students' English learning are left as theories. In fact the teacher does not utilize the textbook as theories. But it is reasonable since the government's decision of the examinations takes role in that situation.

## CONCLUSION

### Conclusion

The teacher in SDN 2 Tanjung, Kedamean, Gresik utilized the textbook following the material order as presented by the publisher. The learning process was textual based using the textbook as the source of materials and exercises. As the book attached the Standard Competences and Basic Competences, and contained pictures, texts, and exercises, the textbook was trustful because it was judged as a complete textbook for students' learning. The textbook was utilized totally without any changes and supplementary materials. The changes and supplementary materials were not needed since the mid semester and final semester tests will be a kind of written test and based on the textbook used by all the elementary school in that sub-district area. It showed that the goal of learning was the students' abilities in doing written tests, not developing communication ability.

### Suggestions

After conducting the research and getting the result, the researcher would like to give some suggestion to all English teachers in elementary school, especially ones who concern with teaching young learners.

Teachers should realize that young learners learn in various ways. As young learners are not able to write well, the learning should emphasis on spoken language. Textbook is best to

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be partner of students' learning, not the main source of learning. Using textbooks all the time can make the students get bored. The researcher suggest to all elementary teachers to use various materials and activities to gain students' creativity and learning enthusiasm.

The researcher also suggests to the other researchers to conduct further research to gain the causes of problems revealed in this research and find the solutions. Besides, the other researchers can conduct this research in different places and respondents. Therefore, they can take this study as the previous study and take the other sources as supporting data.

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