

An evaluation of “When English Rings A Bell” textbook

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ABSTRACT

Textbooks are learning media that are often used. They guide teachers in delivering the material to be taught. In addition, textbooks make the material easier to understand. Students can study the subject matter from home by using textbooks. Thus, evaluation is needed to ensure the suitability of this important learning material. The textbook that will be the subject of this research is the textbook “English: When English Rings a Bell” for the seventh grade. It is a textbook that is published by Indonesian Ministry of Education. This research hopefully contribute in revising the textbook. This research will also hopefully help teachers navigate, which part of the book requires revision and which does not. The research uses Daoud & Celce-Murcia checklist to determine whether the textbook is suitable or not. The research finds that the textbook is good overall. But there are some parts that can be improved. The book does not have a syllabus, there is no arrangement of vocabulary gradations, there is no review of past material, and the sentences are quite long.

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1. Introduction

Textbooks play an important role in the teaching and learning process because they guide teachers in delivering the material to be taught. In addition, textbooks make the material easier to understand. Students can study the subject matter from home by using textbooks. Cunningsworth states that the role of English textbooks is to present written and spoken material, to stimulate interaction, as a reference for vocabulary and grammar, as a resource for classroom activities, and to provide independent learning (Demir & Ertaş, 2014).

Moreover, the role of textbooks in English language teaching is universal and central, acting as a reference point for both teachers and learners (Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013). They are essential for providing exposure to learners of English as a foreign language, aiding in the cultivation and promotion of creative language learning (Acharya, 2024). Furthermore, textbooks play a crucial role in manifesting moral values and creating well-rounded learners who hold knowledge of the world and serve their communities better (Marahati & Wiedarti, 2019). The importance of textbooks in language teaching and learning is undeniable, as they contribute significantly to the process of language education (Aghazadeh, 2015).

When it comes to textbooks, there is one topic worth discussing: textbook evaluation. Textbook evaluation is a prerequisite for certifying textbook content and homogenizing it with teaching/learning criteria in EFL/ESL (Ahour et al., 2014). For various reasons, the textbook itself has to go through a review process. The purpose of evaluating textbooks, according to Hutchinson and Waters, is to

evaluate the sustainability of the application of learning materials (Ahour et al., 2014). These evaluations typically involve analyzing factors such as readability, language coverage, alignment with curriculum objectives, and overall appropriateness for learners (Santos, 2020). The use of evaluation checklists has been highlighted as a valuable tool in assessing English language textbooks (Jassim & Jassim, 2021). These checklists usually cover areas such as language skills, exercises, pedagogical analysis, and the overall impression of the textbooks, providing a structured approach to evaluating their quality (Jamshid, 2023)

Therefore, this research was conducted. This study aims to evaluate the textbook "English: When English Rings a Bell" for the seventh grade. This book is a textbook used in various schools, one of which is SMP 14 Yogyakarta. This book was written by Siti Wachidah et al. This book is published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. The contribution of this study is helping publisher to revise the textbook accordingly. This research will also help teacher to know which part of the textbook needs revision.

2. Method

The method used in this evaluation is the observation method with a checklist table. The table used is the evaluation table developed by Daoud and Celce-Murcia. There were five aspects evaluated in Daoud and Celce-Murcia's checklist. The first is the main content, followed by language and language structure, exercises, pictures, and physics. These five aspects have a total of 25 points (Jusuf, 2018).

3. Findings and Discussion

After doing the observation, it was found the following things.

Table 1. Findings

No	Point	Response				
		SD	D	U	A	SA
A. Subject Matter						
1.	Does the subject matter cover a variety of topics appropriate to the interests of the learners for whom the text book is intended (urban or rural environment; child or adult learners; male and/or female students)?					V
2.	Is the ordering of materials done by topics or themes that are arranged in a logical fashion?					V
3.	Is the content graded according to the needs of the students or the requirements of the existing syllabus (if there is one)?			V		
4.	Is the material accurate and up-to-date?					V
B. Vocabulary and Structures						
5.	Does the vocabulary load (i.e., the number of new words introduced every lesson) seem to be reasonable for the students of that level?					V
6.	Are the vocabulary items controlled to ensure systematic gradation from simple to complex items?		V			
7.	Is the new vocabulary repeated in subsequent lessons for reinforcement?					V
8.	Does the sentence length seem reasonable for the students of that level?		V			
9.	Is the number of grammatical points as well as their sequence appropriate?					V

10.	Does the structure gradually increase in complexity to suit the growing reading ability of the students?					V
11.	Does the writer use current everyday language, and sentence structures that follow normal word order?					V
12.	Do the sentences and paragraphs follow one another in a logical sequence?					V
13.	Are linguistic items introduced in meaningful situations to facilitate understanding and ensure assimilation and consolidation?					V
C. Exercises						
14.	Do the exercises develop comprehension and test knowledge of main ideas, details, and sequence of ideas?					V
15.	Do the exercises involve vocabulary and structures which build up the learners' repertoire?					V
16.	Do the exercises provide practice in different types of written work (sentence completion, spelling and dictation, guided composition)?					V
17.	Does the book provide a pattern of review within lessons and cumulatively test new material?		V			
18.	Do the exercises promote meaningful communication by referring to realistic activities and situations?					V
D. Illustrations						
19.	Do illustrations create a favorable atmosphere for practice in reading and spelling by depicting realism and action?					V
20.	Are the illustrations clear, simple, and free of unnecessary details that may confuse the learner?					V
21.	Are the illustrations printed close enough to the extent and directly related to the content to help the learner understand the printed text?					V
E. Physical Make-Up						
22.	Is the cover of the book durable enough to withstand wear?					V
23.	Is the text attractive (i.e., cover, page appearance, binding)?					V
24.	Does the size of the book seem convenient for the students to handle?					V
25.	Is the type size appropriate for the intended learners?					V

Note: SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree U: Undecided A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

The results of this evaluation will be explained in the form of a description. Our first discussion is the subject matter of this textbook. There are 4 points that Daoud & Celce-Murcia highlights in term of subject matter. Those are: the subject matter coverage, the material sorting, the relation of content and the syllabus, and the accuracy of the material. The subject matter covers various topics according to the interests of the intended students. This can be seen from the variety of learning topics in the book. There are 13 English learning topics that will be studied by students. This can be seen in the table of contents section. The subject matter covers various topics according to the interests of the intended students. This can be seen from the variety of learning topics in the book. There are 13

English learning topics that will be studied by students. This can be seen in the table of contents section. Sorting of material is based on topics or themes that are arranged logically. All materials are arranged based on the order of basic competencies in the curriculum prepared by the government. The material is ordered from the easiest such as introduction & asking for attention, and then moves to more complex material such as past tense material. As previously described, the content of this book is based on the applicable national curriculum. It should be underlined, this book does not have a syllabus. So that students cannot see information about their lessons. Students cannot observe the basic competencies that need to be achieved, indicators, assignments, and so on. The material is accurate and up-to-date. The author sometimes uses electronic devices as learning media used. So that the material taught is up-to-date with modern technology.

The next element that we will tackle is the vocabulary and structures in this book. Vocabulary load (the number of new words introduced each lesson) seems reasonable for students of that level. The vocabulary used in the book is general vocabulary that is used daily and is not a special vocabulary that can only be used in certain environments and circumstances. For example, asking attention, which can be used in everyday life. However, vocabulary is not arranged according to the grading system. In one chapter, complex vocabulary sometimes appears at the beginning of the chapter. At the beginning of Chapter I, there are complex vocabulary such as conversation and attention. This can confuse students because the vocabulary that appears is a complex one (Efendi, 2022). Vocabulary items should be controlled to ensure a systematic gradation from simple to complex items. Vocabulary is repeated in the next lesson to strengthen understanding. Vocabulary is repeated in the next lesson. For example the word sentence & conversation in CHAPTER I. Then the word sentence & conversation reappears in CHAPTER II. Thus providing a stronger understanding for students with repeated words. However, the length of the instructions in each section is too long. These instructions are 4-5 sentences or one paragraph long. This lengthy instruction has even appeared in CHAPTER I. So the need for assistance by the teacher in understanding it. Sentence length should be reasonable to students at that level. Grammatical points and their order according to the rules. All sentences contained in the book follow good and correct rules and grammar. It is proven by not finding any grammatical errors in the book. The structure increases gradually in complexity according to the developing reading ability of the students. The grammar taught in Chapter I still uses simple grammar. But as learning progresses, the grammatical structure becomes more complex. As in Chapter X, the discussion becomes more complex, namely discussing the past tense or past tense. The author uses everyday language, and sentence structures that follow coherent rules. Sentences and paragraphs follow each other in a logical order. All paragraphs and sentences are coherent and easy to understand. Linguistic points are introduced in meaningful situations to facilitate understanding and ensure assimilation and consolidation. This is evident from the many exercises that invite students to practice so that learning becomes more meaningful.

Next is the exercises elements of the book. The exercises provided develop understanding and test knowledge of main ideas, details, and order of ideas. The exercises provided develop an understanding of the main ideas, details, and sequence of ideas. For example, on pages 171 and 175 there is an exercise to match the illustrations with the story in order. Exercises involve vocabulary and structures that build students' repertoires. On pages 134 and 129 for example, students are asked to fill in the blank sentences. This exercise can help students to use words according to their function and meaning. The exercises provided facilitate students to practice in various types of writing (sentence completion, spelling and dictation, guided composition). There are many exercises that train students to write. In 93 there are exercises to complete sentences that can train students in writing essays. However, this book does not provide a pattern of review in learning and cumulatively also test new material. There are no reviews of the previous chapter. Every new chapter, must immediately discuss new things. Examples can be seen in Chapters I and II. CHAPTER I discusses how to ask for attention and CHAPTER II discusses how to express being able to do something. There is no review of material that calls for attention in Chapter II. Exercise promotes meaningful communication, with reference to realistic activities and situations. Many examples use the setting in schools. So that learning is more meaningful because it is close to students.

The next is illustration. Illustrations create a pleasant atmosphere for practicing reading and spelling by depicting realism and action. The illustrations are clear, simple, and free from unnecessary details, which can confuse students. Illustrations are directly related to the material to help students understand the available text

Our last element is the physical make-up of the book. Book covers are durable enough to withstand wear and tear. This book has a soft cover which is quite thick. So it can withstand enough wear and tear in use. The text is very interesting to read. Bright and attractive colors that make the mood when reading cheerfully. The size of the book seems comfortable for students to read. This book is A4 size. So it is suitable for the hand size of junior high school students. The font size is large enough so that it is clearly readable. Font size is about 12 pts. It can be seen in the figure below.

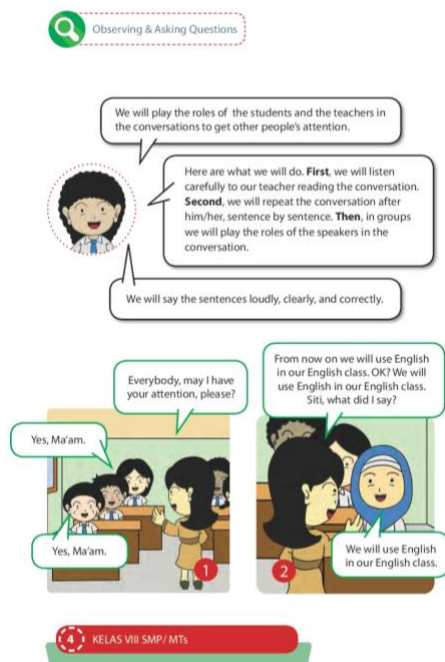


Figure 1. A Part of the Textbook

4. Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn is that this book as a whole is good, but there are things that could be improved and things that could be improved. This book has diverse content and is in accordance with the national curriculum. This book also has a variety of exercises. However, this book is still lacking in several points. First, this book does not have a syllabus. So that students cannot review what they will learn during the next year. Second, this book does not have a systematic grading of vocabulary. So it can make students confused. Third, the instructions in this book are too long for 8th graders. It is necessary to provide assistance by the teacher in understanding the instructions. Finally, this book does not review the lessons in the previous chapter. So the lesson is forgotten.

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