

An Evaluation of English textbook entitled “Kiddie 1” for kindergarten in English Study Centre

Masrobi ^{a,1,*}, Susilawati ^{b,2}

^{a, b} Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon, Jl. Tuparev No.70, Kedungjaya, Kec. Kedawung, Kabupaten Cirebon, Jawa Barat 45153, Indonesia

¹ masrobi.id@gmail.com; ² sasmoro@umc.ac.id*

* corresponding author

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received 11 December 2021

Revised 16 February 2022

Accepted 28 February 2022

Keywords

English textbook

Varela's checklist

Textbook evaluation

Kindergarten

ABSTRACT

English textbooks have become one of the many resources that are necessary (or even the sole source for some institutions) for an effective language teaching program in most non-English speaking countries' schools. Therefore, teachers must be able to choose the right and appropriate English textbooks to utilise in teaching. For those reasons, this present research is aimed to evaluate an English textbook entitled “Kiddie 1” specialised for kindergarten students at English Study Centre Cirebon. It is to know whether the textbook is feasible for kindergarten students or not. This research employed qualitative research with a content analysis design. *English Study Centre's* English textbook entitled "Kiddie 1" was used as the object of the research. *English Study Centre* is one of the English courses in Cirebon. The book is intended for kindergarten. The instrument used in this research was developed and modified based on Varela's checklist for textbook evaluation. Two curriculum development staff of ESC were asked to evaluate the textbook based on the checklist given. After the data were analysed, the finding showed that the feasibility of Kiddie 1 English textbook reached 78.55% or categorised as feasible. It can be concluded that the English textbook “Kiddie 1” is feasible for kindergarten students.

This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



How to Cite: Masrobi, & Susilawati. (2022). An Evaluation of English textbook entitled “Kiddie 1” for kindergarten in English Study Centre. *International Undergraduate Conference on English Education, IUCEE Proceeding 2022, 1*(1), p. 163-168

1. Introduction

The use of textbooks is very important for both teachers and students. Harmer (2007) mentioned that a textbook is an essential feature for teachers to use as a source of learning to explain to students based on the content of the textbook. A textbook represents the information source which is compiled with structures and sequential based on a certain science area (Widyahening, 2015). They provide opportunities for teachers and students in the teaching and learning process by providing a didactical structure of the content that is objectively determined. In addition, in many non-English speaking countries textbook has become the only resource necessary for an effective language teaching program in most school (Ham & Heinze, 2018; Kayaoglu, 2011). It can be concluded that the textbook is one of the important aspects used by teachers to explain and convey material to students. The content and material in the textbook offer teachers and students to teach and learn by providing material that has been set up in such a way as to make teaching and learning easier.

Teaching to young learners differs from teaching adults. (Juhana, 2014). This occurred because young learners have a relatively short focus compared to adults and they get bored easily (Slatery & Willis, 2001). This is in line with Harmer (2001) statement that young learners get bored more quickly and easily lose interest after ten minutes except in a very interesting activity. Hence, a young learners' English teachers should be fluent in English, as well as know the methods and models for teaching English to young learners in order to make an enjoyable lesson. There are some methods for teaching English to young learners. They are listen and repeat, listen and do, song and games, and group discussion (Suyanto, 2004). Those techniques are suitable for use to teach English for young learners because English has different voice from their mother tongue. So listening and repeating is suitable for them. They like to follow the teacher, repeat what the teacher said and repeat what they listen. young learners can do after they listen and understand (Fajarina, 2017). Moreover, young learners like colourful things like books, flash cards, etc. Therefore, teachers should consider the books used to teach young learners.

The textbook that is used must be appropriate and meet the needs of young learners. Therefore, the teacher must choose the right book to be used because each book has a different focus. Hence, Greene and Petty in Tarigan (1986) explain several criteria that a book must have in order to be a good textbook, they are: 1. A textbook should be attractive and interesting for students; 2. A textbook should be able to encourage the students to want to use the book to learn; 3. A textbook should contain illustrative and interesting content for students; 4. A textbook should have appropriate linguistic elements so that it can be in line with students' abilities; 5. A textbook should contain content that is related to other branches of knowledge; 6. A textbook should be able to encourage students to do activities that can be done alone; 7. A textbook should have clearly written content to make it easier for students and teachers to understand; 8. A textbook should have an obvious point of view; 9. A textbook should have balanced values that students can apply; 10. Textbooks should be able to appreciate the unique characteristics of each individual student.

In Indonesia, there are no English textbooks intended for kindergarten students published by the government or Ministry of Education and Culture. So far, English textbooks for kindergarten students have been obtained from book publishing companies and from course institutions. Therefore, there is no standard feasibility for English textbooks for kindergarten students in Indonesia. That's why there needs to be an evaluation of English textbooks for young learners to determine the quality of the books and whether the English textbooks used are appropriate and suitable for teaching English to young learners. One example is the research conducted by Supriyanto in 2019. In his research, Supriyanto focused on finding out whether the English Chest book fulfils the criteria of a good English coursebook for young learners and met the requirements of the syllabus of teaching English in primary school in Indonesia or not. In addition, the goal of textbook evaluation is to offer feedback on how well the book functions in practice and how well it fulfils its goals (Supriyanto, 2019). In the same case, an English textbooks in English Study centre (ESC) that specifically for kindergarten students. The book is entitled "Kiddie 1" English with phonics. The book is colourful, it contains pictures, stories, text, phonics, and fun worksheets for students. The book is a new edition. It was made by four students during in internship at ESC in academic year of 2020/2021. ESC is a pioneer of English course in Cirebon which was founded on April 10th, 1981. The book was made by following the previous book. But there is one part that has been changed, namely "Let's sing" which has been changed to "Let's read". Furthermore, since the book has not been used in teaching and learning process and also it has not been tested for its feasibility, this research was focused to evaluate the book using Varela's checklist in order to find out its feasibility. The previous study that was done by Supriyanto in 2019 was different with this research because he evaluated the book that has been used in teaching. Therefore this research was conducted to answer the research question "How is the feasibility of ESC's English textbook entitled "Kiddie 1" for Kindergarten Students". Furthermore, the finding of this research is helpful for the English teachers in ESC. By knowing about the finding, the English teachers in ESC are convinced and do not hesitate to use the book as the main medium in teaching English to kindergarten students.

2. Method

This research used a content analysis design under qualitative research. According to Denzin & Lincoln (1994) qualitative research is research that uses natural settings with a view to interpreting phenomena that occur and is carried out by involving various existing methods. According Gheyle

and Jacobs (2017) content analysis is a research methodology to understand the content of messages that are often unstructured either in the form of text, images, symbols, or audio data to determine textual meaning. Content analysis looks at data as representations of words, images, and expressions that are generated to be seen, read, understood, and acted upon for their meaning, and thus must be analysed with those uses in mind. (Krippendor, 2004).

The data in this research was collected from English Study Centre's English textbook entitled "Kiddie 1" as it was the object of the research. In collecting the data researchers followed the steps as follows: 1. Reading the textbook repeatedly, in the early stages the researcher read the book repeatedly until the researcher understands the concept and content of the book. 2. Taking notes, after reading the researcher took notes on important information from the textbook in order to facilitate researchers in the evaluating process. 3. Evaluating the textbook, in this stage the researcher analysed the book using Varela's checklist. 4. Concluding, after the data is obtained, the researcher draws conclusions from the results of the analysis.

The data in this research was analysed using Varela's checklist for textbook evaluation. Varela's checklist has four categories, namely: physical format, subject matter, vocabulary and structures, and graphic elements. The results of data analysis was calculated by dividing the total number of criteria met by the total number of criteria satisfied. Then, multiply the result by 100 percent to get the total points. The data was gathered from three evaluators. Each evaluator put a checklist on the Option '4' when he or she admitted the appropriateness of the aspects assessed and the option '1' when he or she observed the incompatibility of the aspects assessed. The evaluators put a checklist on the appropriate choice to respond to the statements as follows: 1 for 'strongly disagree', 2 for 'disagree', 3 for 'agree' and 4 for 'strongly agree'.

Table 1. Varela's checklist for textbook evaluation (2005)

Physical format	1	2	3	4
Is the cover attractive and meaningful?				
Is the cover and binding durable?				
Is the format suitable (horizontal, large margins)?				
Is the paper suitable (can you see through)?				
Is the number of pages adequate?				
Is the size and type of font suitable for children?				
Subject Matter				
Are the topics interesting for the children?				
Are the topics arranged in a logical way?				
Is the content graded in difficulty?				
Is the content bias-free?				
Is the content suitable for the curriculum?				
Are the characters attractive for children?				
Is the content related to other areas of the curriculum?				
Vocabulary and Structures				
Is the vocabulary significant for the age group?				
Is there constant revision of the vocabulary and structures learnt?				
Are vocabulary and structures introduced in context?				
Do the structures gradually increase in complexity?				
Is the level of language appropriate to the ages of the users?				
Graphic Elements				
Are the illustrations clear and simple, suitable for young children?				
Are the materials colourful and have a lot of visuals and pictures?				
Is the appearance of the materials attractive and appealing to learners?				
Are the drawings suitable for the cognitive complexity of the children's age?				
Total				

To validate the data, the researcher used triangulation technique. Where in this research the researcher involved two curriculum development staff at ESC to participate in evaluating the textbook. Then the researchers triangulated the data. The results of data analysis will be calculated

by dividing the total number of criteria met by the total number of criteria satisfied. Then, multiply the result by 100 percent to get the total points. The calculation formula that will be utilised in the evaluation process presented as follows:

First step:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \times 100\%$$

$\sum X$: The total of criteria which are fulfilled by textbooks in each aspect.

N : The total number of criteria in each point.

Second step:

$$\frac{\text{The sum of total percentage of each evaluator}}{\text{Total numbers of evaluators}} = \text{Total Calculation}$$

The above formula will be used to determine the result. There are four criteria presented as follows:

0%-20% = Very not feasible

21%-60% = Not feasible

61%-80% = Feasible

81%-100% = Very feasible

3. Findings and Discussion

After researchers analysed the data, the findings could be seen as follows:

Table 2. Result of textbook evaluation (2005)

Categories	Evaluator 1	Evaluator 2	Evaluator 3	Result
Physical format	83.3%	75%	75%	77.77%
Subject Matter	82.1%	78.6%	78.6%	79.77%
Vocabulary and Structures	75%	70%	75%	73.33%
Graphic Elements	87.5%	87.5%	75%	83.33%
Total	81.97%	77.78%	75.9%	78.55%

From the results of the evaluation that has been carried out using Varela's checklist, the results have reached 78.55% which is categorised as feasible. It means that Kiddie 1 English Textbook is feasible to be used to teach English to Kindergarten students.

From data above it can be seen that the physical format of Kiddie 1 English textbook reached 77.77% which is categorised as feasible. According to Greene and Petty (1981), a textbook should be attractive and make students interested and encourage them to use the book to learn. The first thing a child will see when looking at a book is the physical form of the book or how the book looks. The cover is an important aspect that must be made well so that children can be attracted to the book the first time they see the book. In this case, the cover of the *Kiddie 1 English* textbook is very eye-catching and colourful. On the cover, there are pictures of a rainbow, a tree, two children, the ESC logo, a rabbit, a train and bushes. With the colour and the number of cover images, it becomes very attractive and has a cheerful meaning. The cover and binding is durable. The format is suitable for young learners. The pictures and text are well placed. It's horizontal and uses a large font. The paper itself is very appropriate for young learners. It's thick enough with adequate numbers of pages. It has 70 pages in total.

In case of subject matter, the book writers should pay attention to the characteristics of young learners, where they have a short focus and get bored easily (Slatery & Willis, 2001). The book writers should make an engaging topic that is able to get the students' interest. In this case, Kiddie 1 English textbook reached 79.77% which is categorised as feasible. The topics are interesting for students. Where the textbook raises the theme of animals, fruits, transportation and profession. The books are graded alphabetically starting from the letter A to the letter M. Each chapter consists of a "Let's Listen" part where students are asked to listen to a story with attractive characters that will be read by the teacher. Then continued with "Let's Read" which is the part where students are asked to read together with the teacher. Then on the next page, there is another "Let's Read" part but in this part, the focus is on teaching phonics, which is how a letter sounds and pronounces. In this part, there are letters, phonics, nouns that start with a letter according to the chapter as well as sentences that are still related to the story in the let's listen part. On the next two pages there are worksheets that are interesting and develop students' cognitive abilities.

In terms of vocabulary and structures, a textbook should have appropriate linguistic elements so that it can be in line with students' abilities (Greene and Petty, 1981; Tarigan, 1986). The vocabulary should be significant for kindergarten students as well as the level of language should be appropriate for them. In this situation, Kiddie 1 English text book reached 73.33% and was classified as feasible. The vocabulary taught is suitable for kindergarten students. Most of the vocabulary used is basic and commonly used vocabulary and there are no harsh and inappropriate words for children. The sentence structure used is the simple present tense. Vocabulary and sentence structure related to the context and theme of each chapter. Therefore in each chapter students will learn new vocabulary. It is one of the aims of this book, which is to enrich students' vocabulary. The structure in this book is arranged in stages starting from a single word, becoming a phrase and finally a complete sentence.

The graphic elements category reached 83.33%% which categorized as very feasible. In terms of illustrations, the book has simple and clear illustrations for kindergarten students. In the let's listen part the illustrations and pictures are adjusted to the text as well as in the let's read part on the next page. The illustrations help students to make it easier for them to interpret a word or sentence. As Greene and Petty (1981) explain that a textbook should contain illustrative and interesting content for students. it makes it easier for students to imagine and allows them to relate what they learn and what they see. The illustrations in the Kiddie 1 English textbook are colourful and attractive. Not only contains interesting illustrations and pictures. The book is also equipped with interesting fun worksheets for students. According to Harmer (2001), young learner can get bored easily ad lose their interest after ten minutes except in very interesting activity. Those activity can be in the form of worksheet. The worksheet in Kiddie 1 consist of some activity such as colouring, connecting dots, filling the missing letters, matching images with words, and tracing letters. All of these activities can make students interest to learn as well as help them to develop their cognitive abilities.

Based on the results of Varela's textbook evaluation, it can be concluded that ESC's English textbook entitled "Kiddie 1" is feasible to use to teach kindergarten students. This answers the research question formulated as "How is the feasibility of ESC's English textbook entitled "Kiddie 1" for Kindergarten Students". The result showed that the book fulfilled 81.87% of Varela's checklist for textbook evaluation and was categorised as good.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings above, ESC's English textbook entitled "Kiddie 1" is feasible for kindergarten students. The Textbook is categorised as feasible and fulfilled 78.55% of Varela's checklist for textbook evaluation. The percentage of fulfilment indicates that the textbook was classified as feasible in order to meet the requirements of textbook evaluation criteria covering physical format, subject matter, vocabulary and structures as well as graphic elements.

Although the book has been categorised as appropriate for kindergarten students. The researchers recommend the curriculum development staff at the English study centre to complete the book with flashcards that can be used to introduce or review the vocabulary that has been taught. It is recommended to book writers to improve the illustrations in the "Caca, the big cow" and "Darren, the baby deer" chapters in the let's listen part to use the same and similar illustrations. For the next researcher, it is highly recommended to use Varela's checklist as an instrument to evaluate young

learners' English textbooks because the checklist is specially designed to evaluate English textbooks for young learners.

REFERENCES

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Fajarina, M. (2017). Mastering Teaching English For Young Learners. *Wacana Didaktika*, 5(01), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.31102/wacanadidaktika.5.01.1-11>
- Gheyle, N., & Jacobs, T. (2017). Content Analysis: a short overview. In *Internal research note*.
- Greene, H., & W.T. Petty. 1981. *Developing Language Skills in the Elementary Schools*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Ham, A. Van Den, & Heinze, A. (2018). Studies in Educational Evaluation Does the textbook matter? Longitudinal effects of textbook choice on primary school students' achievement in mathematics. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 59(July), 133–140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2018.07.005>
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *How to Teach English*. New York: Longman Inc.
- Huitt, W. &. (2003). *Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development*. Educational. Valdosta: GA: Valdosta State University.
- Juhana. (2014). *Teaching English to Young Learners : Some Points to be Considered*. *Asian Journal of Education and E-Learning*, 02(01), 43–46.
- Kayaoglu, M. (2011). A Critical Appraisal of the Language Textbook. *JKEF*.
- Klaus Krippendor. (2004). Content Analysis An Introduction to Its Methodology. In *SAGE* (Second Edi). <https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevB.31.3460>
- Pinter, A. (2006). *Teaching Young Language Learners*. Oxford: University Press.
- Slatery, M., & Willis, J. (2001). *English for Primary Teachers*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Supriyanto, N. H. (2019). an Evaluation of English Coursebook for Young Learners Entitled English Chest. *Magister Scientiae*, ISSN 2622-(46), 145–182. <https://doi.org/10.33508/mgs.v2i46.2225>
- Suyanto, K. E. (2004). *Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Dasar: kebijakan, implementasi, dan kenyataan Yth*. <Http://Malang.Ac.Id/Indo/Prof.Htm>
- Tarigan, H. G. (1986). *Telaah buku teks bahasa Indonesia*. Bandung: Angkasa.
- Varela, Raquel M., & Rodriguez, Beatriz L. (2005). Assessing Young Learner's English Materials. *Porta Linguarum* 3, 59-77.
- Widyahening, C. E. (2015). A text book of poetry theory with contextual approach. *Researchers World: Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce*, VI(4), 88–92.