

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the current study. In detail, this chapter consists of the background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, the scope of the research, significance of the research, clarification of the key terms related to the study, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

The teaching and learning materials play some roles in language learning. The teaching and learning materials is a key component in language program Richards and Renandya (2001). The teachers and the learners can use the materials to facilitate the teaching and learning process. In addition, the materials also act as an exposure of language for learners, which imply on that the materials need to present real language, as it is used, and the full range that learner requires (Evans and John, 2009).

The term materials in education field are not any materials used in teaching-learning process. According to Tomlinson, language-learning materials can be defined as, anything which can be used by teachers and learners to facilitate the learning of a language (Tomlinson, 2003). Ball and Cohen (1996) mentioned that materials are the stuff of lesson and units, of what teachers and students do in the classroom. Materials specifically defined as any systematic description of the techniques and exercises to be used in classroom teaching (Brown, 1995). Thus, though the forms of materials are various, their main function is to facilitate the learning of a language (Sorohiti, 2005).

Of those various forms of teaching material as mentioned above, textbook is mostly used in the teaching and learning process. Similarly, Pinter (2006, p.166) proposes the most important teaching and learning materials that guide teachers' and learners' activities in many classrooms seem to be the textbook. Brown (2001), as well, argues that the most common form of material support for language instruction comes through textbooks. With all the materials support provided by the textbook will make the language learning process become more

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organized and efficient. All the materials will help the learners understand English and use it as the media of communication.

Reading materials are one of the materials support that can be found in the textbook. Reading materials are specifically made for developing students' reading skill. Reading materials are the important thing that cannot be left out in language learning. Reading can help students learn to think in a target language, broaden their vocabulary, improve their writing, and find out about new ideas, facts, and experiences (Mikulecky and Jeffries, 1996, p.1). Reading materials that can be found in an English textbook usually provide with texts, dialogue or any piece of information data and it becomes important materials input in reading session. The reading materials in textbook also provide a number of things, such as activities and task, to stimulus the learners and to provide the opportunities for learners to use their existing knowledge (Hutchinson and Waters, 1994, p.106-107).

For the teachers who use textbooks as their main source of materials, they should be careful in using the materials. The inappropriate materials that are found in the textbook may mislead the students in learning the materials. Related researches found some strengths and weaknesses in some English textbooks. Keban, Muhtar, and Zen (2011), found that the reading material within the textbook used in an elementary school in Malang was appropriate for the learner, yet were served very simply but clearly. However, Intan (2014) found some weaknesses in an English textbook for 7th grade students. The textbook was lack-controlled exercise and no grammar formulas presented. For that reasons, materials evaluation is necessary to be conducted to know the strength and weakness from it and to know the appropriateness of the materials included.

There are some methods of evaluation that can be used to evaluate teaching and learning materials. McGrath (2002), differentiate three methods, which are impressionistic method, in-depth method and checklist method. This research is used the checklist method suggested by McGrath in evaluating the reading materials on the English textbook entitled "English in Focus". An evaluation checklist is an instrument that helps practitioners in English Language

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Teaching (ELT) evaluate language teaching materials. It allows a more sophisticated evaluation of the materials in reference to a set of generalizable evaluation criteria.

The National Department of Education in Indonesia has published an English textbook entitled “English in Focus” in 2008, which can be used by the teachers in their teaching and learning process. Even though the government publishes the textbook, the teachers should be able to conduct an evaluation of its materials before using it as a source for teaching-learning process. To contribute in the development of educational quality in Indonesia, this research will focus on the evaluation of reading materials in “English in Focus” textbook used by the seventh grade students in one of junior high school in Bandung. Reading materials should possess some criteria to be said as a good material, such as subject matter, the words and structure, and the instruction of practice and exercise

Conducting evaluation of the reading materials in “English in Focus” textbook is important. The evaluation conducted is important to see the level of appropriates of reading materials in the textbook. The evaluation is based on the quality of the reading materials within textbook that is fulfill the criteria of good reading materials by Patel and Jain (2008). However, only few researchers concerning the evaluation in English textbooks focused on its reading materials. Thus, this research expects to fill the gap on this field. In addition, this research is aimed at finding out the teachers’ perceptions about the textbook.

1.2 Research Questions

This study is conducted to investigate:

1. To what extent do the reading materials in “English in Focus” textbook for seventh grade students fulfill the criteria of good reading materials?
2. What are the perceptions of the teachers about the reading materials in “English in Focus” textbook?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Considering the research questions above, this study aims at:

1. Evaluating the reading materials in “English in Focus” textbook for seventh grade students based on the good reading materials criteria.
2. Finding out the teachers’ perception about the reading materials in “English in Focus” textbook.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the evaluation of reading materials on an English textbook entitled “English in Focus” for the first grade of junior high school. The National Education Department of Indonesia publishes the textbook in 2008.

The evaluation criteria used in this research is based on Patel and Jain’s good reading materials criteria. The criteria are (1) the subject matter should be well graded; (2) the words and structure are carefully graded; and (3) clear and unambiguous instruction should be given alongside the practice and exercise. This research used the checklist method of evaluation suggested by McGrath (2002). The evaluation conducted in every reading section of the textbook. There are eight reading sections within the textbook.

Furthermore, it investigates the teachers’ perception about the textbook. This research employed semi-structured (Nunan, 1992) to get the information from guided questions with the freedom to answer to the questions based on their opinion towards the reading materials on the textbook.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant from three perspectives. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich research about the evaluation of reading materials in Indonesia. It is also expected to make contribution to the understanding of the importance of reading materials evaluation for the teacher also for EFL classroom in Indonesia. It is also hoped that this research can contribute to the improvement of EFL reading materials on an English textbook in Indonesia.

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Practically, the study can give information to other teachers in implementing reading materials evaluation in evaluating other learning materials before they use it in the teaching and learning process. The teacher can be more selective in choosing the learning materials. Through learning materials evaluation, the material can be more appropriate to establish the students' ability and can help the teacher determine whether the learning materials within the book is good or not. Therefore, it can help the teacher to avoid using inappropriate material when teaching their students.

Professionally, this study is expected to give a motivation to the English teacher in designing and developing learning materials to establish students' reading ability. As a result, students can improve their language ability based on the material designed and developed by the teacher.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, some terms are clarified as follows:

1. Evaluation involved in this study refers to the process of finding out the aspects from the reading materials in an English textbook entitled "English in Focus", which fulfill the criteria of good reading material.
2. English textbook is a textbook consists of materials to be taught and completed with some exercises. The language that used is English language. In this case, the textbook is "English in Focus" for the seventh grade of students published by National Education Department of Indonesia.
3. Reading materials are reading texts and exercises in eight reading sections in English textbook "English in Focus" for the seventh grade students.
4. Criteria of reading teaching materials are aspects of standard good reading text proposed by Patel and Jain which covered by some aspects. They are:
 - The subject matter should be well graded
 - The words and structure are carefully graded
 - Clear and unambiguous instruction should be given alongside the practice and exercise

5. Perceptions

Perception in this study is the teachers' response to the interview given related to their understanding and point of view about the reading materials on "English in Focus" textbook.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This research study organized into five chapters. Each chapter is subdivided into subtopics that elaborated the given issues. The chapter is arranged as follows:

CHAPTER I is Introduction. This chapter provides the information on background of the study, research question, purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II is Literature Review. This chapter provides the elaboration of the theoretical foundation of the topic related about the role of textbook as a material resource in language teaching, reading materials in an English textbook, the criteria of good reading materials, materials evaluation, reading materials evaluation checklist and the definition of perception.

CHAPTER III is Research Methodology. This chapter focuses on the research methodology, which explains how the research is conducted. It includes research design, subject and respondents of the research, data collection techniques and data analysis.

CHAPTER IV is Findings and Discussion. This chapter elaborates the findings of the research. It provides answer of the research questions. It also supplies the result of the research which consists of findings.

CHAPTER V is Conclusion and Recommendation. This chapter summarizes the findings and discussions, also gives the recommendation for future studies.

1.8 Concluding Remark

This chapter has presented the principle of the study, specifically on the reading materials evaluation. Based on the elaboration presented in this chapter, it can be concluded that this study is conducted due to fact in which reading materials evaluation is important. Thus, this study attempts to achieve the goal on finding out the aspects from the reading materials in an English textbook entitled “English in Focus”, which fulfill the criteria of good reading material. Then, the next chapter deals with literature review.