

Evaluation of Malaysian Primary English Language Textbooks

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the contents of in-use Year 5 and Year 6 textbooks in Malaysian primary schools in exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks. Does it really apply all the methods and suitability for the pupils? It is also aim to study whether the textbooks fit to all level of pupils' proficiency in English language and whether it giving attention on the pupils' proficiency level in language learning. Sample of the study consists of 32 English teachers chosen randomly from primary schools in Selangor. In this study, the textbook is evaluated in terms of general attributes and learning content categories and evaluation checklists proposed by previous researchers are distributed as instrument used. The findings revealed that the textbook for each year is very highly useful. It is also found that the textbooks are suitable for either for low proficiency or vice versa.

Keywords: textbook evaluation, ELT-TEC, checklist, Malaysian teachers

1. Introduction

As we know, society and teachers are taking a serious thought when selecting the textbook for student to learning. It is broadly known that a good textbook is essential in English language teaching. Despite of the colourful and attractive picture in the book and the beautiful layout, teachers must look in depth in their content as well. It is a guideline for the teacher to know the suitable text or activity considered the various level of students' proficiency that can use in classroom. According to Hutchinson and Waters, the textbook evaluation is a straightforward, analytical 'matching process: matching needs to available solutions' (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:97).

1.1 Statement of problem

Textbook is crucial for any teaching course because it helps teachers and guides them in anyway, but thus the textbook is very useful? Or does it matches the specifications of the syllabus? Are they really interesting to attract students attention in learning? Some teachers might be complaining about the level of the language uses in the textbook or even the content itself, as for them, the content should have some adjustment that suit for their students. These are the questions that always play among the teachers. The need of adaptation and that is why the evaluation on the textbook is needed.

In order to investigate the usefulness and the effectiveness of textbook, the need of evaluating the textbook is fundamental. According to John (2001) "a majority of teachers use textbooks as their principal curriculum guide and source of lessons" (p.32). Textbooks have gigantic influence in classroom learning and teaching, either primary, elementary and secondary classes. It's also took place on how it is being taught. Besides, this evaluation should be done to make sure that the textbook is beneficial for teachers and students. Teacher always want the best for their students nevertheless it will include the usage of teaching materials. The good quality and reliability teaching materials such as textbook will help them to teach the students based on the syllabus and level of proficiency.

With all the concern, the evaluation is essential for them to ensure that the components in the textbook is effective, whether the layout or the language, the activity and also suitability to be used in classroom teaching and learning. The researchers also want to examine whether the textbook is perfectly written and suitable in language teaching and learning class, and also meet the specification in terms of method, syllabus and also pedagogy in teaching and learning, or need some adaptation in it.

1.2 Research Questions

There are several questions that the researchers are aware off:

1. How do the teachers evaluate the general attributes of Year 5 and Year 6 textbooks?
2. How do the teachers evaluate learning-teaching content of Year 5 and Year 6 textbooks?