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The Analysis of Pragmatics Based Textbooks in Indonesia: Perceptions

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Abstract

The study conducted earlier by the researchers showed a huge gap was found between the kinds of textbooks needed and the existing textbooks used this whole time. It became the reason why this current study was aimed at investigating teachers' and students' perceptions of English textbooks with pragmatics perspective that can help English language learners achieve the expected communicative competence. Mixed methods research design was run to determine the objective of this study using 259 student respondents and 41 teacher respondents from 39 junior high schools throughout Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. Observation, in-depth interviews, and questionnaires were used to obtain data. After that, the data were tested for the validity through Focus Group Discussions with experts and colleagues. The data generated in this study were in the form of quantitative (SPSS) and qualitative (descriptive). The study uncovered the need of new English textbooks which are comprised by what is so called pragmatic based textbooks. This urgency occurred since the existing English textbooks spreading on the market place still had not yet fulfilled the communicative competence that should be there, in the content of the textbooks. Hence, as the semester ends, students will be able to achieve this competence. These results might have implications for the development of curriculum, literacy culture, 4C, and HOTS in facing the need of the 21st century and industrial revolution 4.0.

Key Word: Analysis; Pragmatics; Textbooks; Indonesia; Perceptions

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I. Introduction

Failure to learn English is often associated with weaknesses in curriculum, approaches, methods, and teaching materials which are directly in contact with the interests of the learning process inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, all efforts to achieve a maximum learning process will be the main consideration. Following the mandate in Curriculum 2013, English learning in secondary schools emphasizes the achievement of communicative competence. The main competency in communicative competence is discourse competence. Discourse competence will only be achieved if the students have socio-cultural competence, language competence, strategic competence, and speech acts competence. Socio-cultural competence is understanding and recognizing the cultural context. Strategic competence is an understanding of how to act politely to whom, when, where, and what problems to facilitate communication, while language competence is the introduction and understanding of linguistic features that should be used/chosen in speech acts^{1,2}. The ability to communicate in a foreign language is the ability to communicate effectively which concerns the ability to convey messages/ideas with an utterance and how the speech is used to convey feelings, empathy, and sympathy to others well³. Thus, to achieve the expected communicative competence, English learners need to master not only grammar and text organization but also the pragmatic aspects of the target language. This complete ability is what is meant by pragmatic competence in communicating.

In order to support the objectives of learning English, teaching materials are needed that support the implementation of the learning process with a pragmatic perspective. What is meant by teaching materials here are textbooks. The linguistic material displayed in textbooks should have a pragmatic perspective that includes elements and principles of linguistic acts adapted to the context of the situation and cultural context. The results of the observation show that there are not many English textbooks, especially high schools in Indonesia, that contain elements of pragmatic competence. A huge gap was found between the kinds of textbooks needed and the existing textbooks used this whole time. Most of the respondents thought the importance of the pragmatics element should be provided in the secondary textbooks or pragmatics-based-textbooks⁴. This is a challenge for English teachers as well as researchers to develop English textbooks which integrate pragmatic competencies. As Kasper said, "...The challenge for foreign language teaching is how to arrange learning opportunities in such a way that they benefit the development of pragmatic competence in a foreign language"⁵.

Textbooks should be in accordance with the goals and needs of learners are needed. Based on the fact that there is no teaching and learning process without using teaching materials, e.g. textbooks because they can function as a communication tool between students and teachers as well as directing students and teachers to achieve goals in accordance with what is contained in the curriculum. With textbooks, teachers can carry out the teaching and learning process in the classroom well. Some experts stated that young readers require careful teacher modeling and explicit instruction that guides them in using their own language to respond to underlying pragmatic functions of language in texts^{6,7,8}. Given the importance of textbooks in the teaching and learning process and the fact that in Indonesia there are not many English textbooks which concern pragmatic competence, therefore, this research aimed at investigating teachers' and students' perceptions of English textbooks with pragmatic perspective that can help English language learners achieve the expected communicative competence.

II. Review of Literature

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a science that examines how language units are used in speech in order to carry out communication⁹. Another expert said that pragmatics is the science of language which is seen in relation to its users¹⁰. From some of these views, it can be underlined that pragmatics is a science related to the use of language and the context of speech. Because pragmatics is closely related to the use of language and the context of speech, language has a very important function in the communication process. In addition, there is the classification of language functions into six types, namely 1) convey and seeking factual information, 2) expressing and changing attitudes, 3) Asking others to do something, 4) Socialization, 5) Building discourse, and 6) Enhancing communication effectiveness. Context also has an important role in communication so that communication goals can be achieved. Without understanding the context of the speaker, the speaker, and the speech partner will fail to communicate¹¹. The context of the situation includes the communication partner, the message being communicated, the communication channel, as well as the time and place to communicate. Furthermore, he stated that through this, the interactions that arise do not only consider the accuracy of communication, but also language behavior (communication) that reflects the values of the Indonesian nation because communicating does not mean only understanding, but also respecting and developing character¹². Based on this, it is clear that pragmatics in this situation context has a very important role in communication to avoid communication failures.

Teaching Materials

Teaching material is one of the important components in learning especially language learning. According to Richards, teaching materials are the key to all language learning. Furthermore, he mentioned that some teaching material roles are sources of materials both in oral and written, source of student's activity, syllabus, and support for new or less experienced teachers who do not yet have the confidence to teach¹³. On the other hand, Duddley-Evans & St. John Richards argued that four functions of teaching materials namely language source, learning support, to motivate and stimulate, and as reference¹⁴. From those experts' thoughts, it can be concluded that teaching materials have a crucial role and function in the learning process. Due to the importance of teaching materials, they should be designed and developed based on the curriculum and students' needs. Some experts have different opinions on grouping kinds of teaching materials. For instance, Richards and Schmidt differentiate teaching materials into the form of linguistic, visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. It may be presented in print (a textbook, a workbook, a photocopied handout, so forth), in audio or video form, on CD-ROMS, on the internet, or through live performance or display¹⁵. Basically, everything that presents or informs about the language being learned (English) can be used as learning materials¹⁶.

This paper focused on analyzing printed teaching material which is known as English textbooks with a pragmatic perspective for secondary school students. Based on the result of the researchers' observation, some English textbooks used in secondary school in Indonesia do not show situation context in the student's activity section. For instance, textbooks always start each study with instructions⁴. In this case, students are not given the opportunity to understand the context first before working on the instructions in the textbook. In fact, by understanding the context of the existing situation, besides being able to help students understand the activities or materials contained in textbooks, students can also develop their imagination.

Perception

In philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science, perception is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information. The word "perception" comes from the Latin words *perception*, and means "receiving, collecting action of taking possession, and apprehension with the mind or senses."¹⁷

Everyone has a different opinion or view in seeing the same thing (object). These different views will be followed up with different behaviors or actions. This view is called perception. A person's perception will

determine how he will see the world. According to Robbins, perception is an impression obtained by individuals through the five senses then analyzed (organized), interpreted, and then evaluated, so that the individual obtains meaning. In the big psychology dictionary, perception is defined as a process of observing a person's environment by using his senses that he becomes aware of everything that is in his environment¹⁸. Further, Robbins & Judge explained that there are two kinds of perception; 1) Positive perception, namely perception that describes all knowledge and responses that are in harmony with the object of perception passed on with effort its utilization. 2) Negative perceptions, namely perceptions that describe all knowledge and responses that are not in harmony with the object of perception. This will be continued with certainty to accept or reject and oppose all perceived object efforts.¹⁹

III. Material And Methods

The term "mixed methods" refers to an emergent methodology of research that advances the systematic integration, or "mixing," of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained program of inquiry. The basic premise of this methodology is that such integration permits a more complete and synergistic utilization of data than do separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.²⁰ According to Creswell & Vicki, mixed-method is a research design based on assumptions as well as the inquiry method. This method assumes that in showing directions or providing instructions on how to collect and analyze data and combine quantitative and qualitative approaches through several phases of the research process.²¹

The sample of this study was 259 student respondents and 41 teachers respondents from 39 junior high schools throughout Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia with the calculation of the sample size using the majority of respondents who teach seventh grade as much as 63.4%, grade eight as much as 17.1%, and grade nine as much as 19.5%. In collecting data, the researchers conducted observation, in-depth interviews, and questionnaires to obtain information about the perceptions of students and teachers of the English teaching materials they had received so far, the needs of students and teachers to achieve communicative competence in accordance with the 2013 Curriculum. Data triangulation was carried out to test validity through Focus Group Discussions with experts and colleagues. The data generated in this study were in the form of quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data coming from questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), on the other hand, qualitative data coming from observation and in-depth interviews were analyzed descriptively from a questionnaire to calculate the level of need for English teaching materials with a pragmatic perspective.

IV. Results

As previously mentioned, the aim of this research is to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of English textbooks with the pragmatic perspective that can help English language learners achieve the expected communicative competence. The results are divided into two sections; 1) teachers' perception, 2) students' perception. Both are described in the following tables and paragraphs.

1. Teachers' Perception

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of teachers' perception

| | N | Range | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|-------|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 41 | 64 | 116 | 180 | 149.54 | 17.287 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 41 | | | | | |

The results shown in Table 1 show that the highest value is 180 and the lowest value is 116 with the mean of the two scores being 149.54 which can be rounded up to 150, from the mean it can be transformed from the total in the form of recoding different variables for obtaining a category that can facilitate the analysis of the results so that the calculation of 2 categories is obtained if a score above 150 is said to be positive perception and a score below 150 is declared negative perception. The final result of the category analysis can be seen from table teachers' category and the graph below:

Table 2. Teachers' perception category

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Negative | 23 | 56.1 | 56.1 | 56.1 |
| Positive | 18 | 43.9 | 43.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 41 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

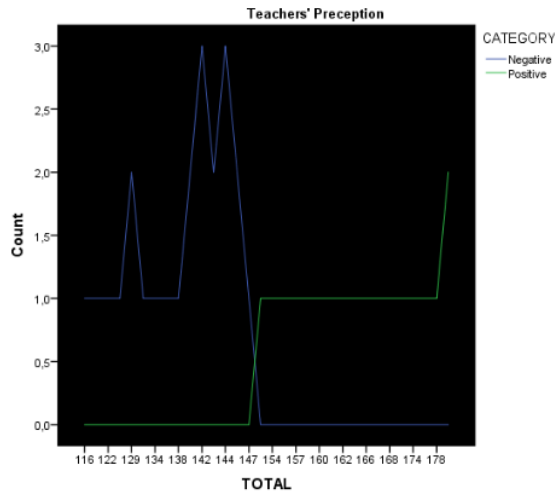


Figure 1. The category of teachers' perception

Figure 1 shows the final result of the calculated category analysis where 56.1% of the teachers were having positive perception, whereas 43.9% of them were having negative perception.

2. Students' Perception

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Table 3. Students' Perception Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|-----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Total | 259 | 30 | 140 | 117.71 | 14.175 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 259 | | | | |

The results shown in Table 3 indicated that the highest value is 140 and the lowest value is 30 with the mean of the two scores being 117.71 which can be rounded up to 118, from the mean it can be transformed from the total in the form of recoding different variables for obtain a category that can facilitate the analysis of the results, so that the calculation of 2 categories is obtained if a score at 28: 118 is said to be positive perception and a score below 118 is declared negative perception. The final result of the category analysis can be seen from the table category and a graph below:

Table 4. Students' Perception Category

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Negative | 146 | 56.4 | 56.4 | 56.4 |
| Positive | 113 | 43.6 | 43.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 259 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

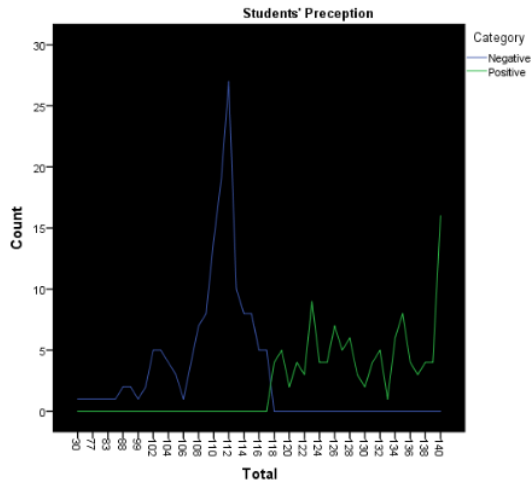


Figure 2. The category of students' perception

Figure 2 shows the final result of the calculated category analysis where 56.4% of the students were having positive perception, whereas 43.6% of them are having negative perception.

To support the results presented above, the interview was conducted after the questionnaire distribution. The interview delved into the teachers' and the students' perceptions proving the different result showed from both teachers and students who had different perceptions. The followings are the interview excerpts of both perceptions.

Table 5. Interview Excerpts of Teacher's Positive Perception

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Researcher | : What do you think of textbooks used in Indonesia, have they contained Pragmatics competence? |
| Teacher (R-11) | : I think so because the textbooks that I use have already gotten the instruction |
| Researcher | : Do the students understand what should they do to begin the activity on the textbooks? |
| Teacher (R-11) | : Sure, they understand it very well. |

Table 6. Interview Excerpts of Teacher's Negative Perception

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Researcher | : What do you think of textbooks used in Indonesia, have they contained Pragmatics competence? |
| Teacher (R-19) | : Not yet.. most of textbooks kind of ignore it. The dialogue or text provided there mostly straight to instructions not information about the context. |
| Researcher | : Do the students understand what should they do to begin the activity on the textbooks? |
| Teacher (R-19) | : Most of students always ask me what to do. Teachers always need to explain first before giving the task. |

Table 7. Interview Excerpts of Student's Positive Perception

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Researcher | : What do you think of textbooks used in the class, have they contained context of situation and context of culture? |
| Teacher (R-11) | : Yes, they have because there is instruction. |
| Researcher | : Do you understand what should you do to begin the activity on the textbooks? |
| Teacher (R-11) | : Yes, I do. When I don't know I can ask my teacher. |

Table 8. Interview Excerpts of Student's Negative Perception

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Researcher | : | What do you think of textbooks used in the class, have they contained context of situation and context of culture? |
| Teacher (R-19) | : | No, they begin with instruction only. |
| Researcher | : | Do you understand what should you do to begin the activity on the textbooks? |
| Teacher (R-19) | : | No, I ask my teacher or my teacher explains to us what to do. |

V. Discussion

Pragmatics is used to develop the principles of relationship and politeness in the communication process; therefore, the purpose of communication can be achieved. In learning English, to realize appropriate pragmatics, it is important that there are teaching materials (textbooks) in the learning process, textbooks should be designed and developed in such a way that they are adapted to the existing curriculum and also adapted to the needs of students.

Based on several English textbooks that have been used by student respondents, the results showed that the urgency of new textbooks is occurred. As many as 99 (38.2%) student respondents think that there is a need for new English textbooks because the existing English textbooks on the market still do not meet the needs to achieve communicative competence, 76 respondents (29.3%) considered it is very appropriate, 72 (27.8%) respondents considered it is unsuitable, 8 (3.1%) respondents considered it is inappropriate, and 4 (1.5%) respondents considered it very inappropriate. Meanwhile, as many as 22 (53.7%) teacher respondents think that there is a need for new English textbooks because the existing English textbooks on the market still have not yet reflected what is so called pragmatic based textbooks, 13 respondents (31.7%) consider it is very appropriate, 2 respondents (9.8%) of respondents considered it is unsuitable, 1 respondent (2.4%) of respondents considered it is inappropriate, and 1 respondent (2.4%) considered it is very inappropriate. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a need for new teaching materials in accordance with the needs and criteria for learning both students and teachers.

The respondents have various opinions regarding the need for English textbooks other than the books used. The respondents chose textbooks that are equipped with varied exercises and are able to measure student competence well (9 respondents). Another opinion regarding the need for textbooks is that they are in accordance with the pandemic period. 5 respondents stated the need for textbooks that match the needs of students and teachers during the pandemic. In addition, to be in accordance with the pandemic conditions, the respondents also need appropriate textbooks that can be applied in daily life (4 respondents). Furthermore, textbooks that are in accordance with the times are also needed (2 respondents).

Textbooks equipped with interesting illustrations and pictures are also a necessity for some respondents (4 respondents). Then, the respondents needed textbooks equipped with technology such as barcodes, website links, CDs, or cassettes (3 respondents). In textbooks, basic competence is needed to be written in the textbooks that can help determine learning objectives (3 respondents). In addition, textbooks should pay attention to various types of student learning (3 respondents). Some other needs in textbooks include books that contain authentic texts or texts from native speakers (1 respondent), books that are easy to apply in learning (1 respondent), books that focus on students as learning centers (1 respondent), books that contain keys answers from student worksheets (1 respondent), books containing conversation exercises (1 respondent), and books that are in accordance with the curriculum, containing varied learning activities that support strengthening character education, literacy culture, 4C (Critical thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Communication) development, and HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) (1 respondent).

VI. Conclusion

The study uncovered the need of new English textbooks which are comprised by what is so called pragmatic based textbooks. This urgency occurred since the existing English textbooks spreading on the marketplace still had not yet fulfilled the communicative competence that should be there, in the content of the textbooks. Hence, as the semester ends, students will be able to achieve this competence. These results might have implications for the development of curriculum, literacy culture, 4C, and HOTS in facing the need of the 21st century and industrial revolution 4.0 for the researchers and educators to encourage themselves to create textbooks that can support the students' expected outcome of being able to communicate in English comprehensively.

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