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Student and Teacher Perceptions of Features in an English Textbook for Junior High School

Senowarsito¹, Suwandi¹, Siti Musarokah¹, Sukma Nur Ardini¹, Abdalhadi Nimer Abdalqader Abu Jweid²

¹English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

²Faculty of Educational Sciences & Arts, UNRWA, Amman - Jordan

ORCID ID

Sukma Nur Ardini: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9746-9005>

Abstract.

Textbooks have been found to have weaknesses, affecting the curriculum, approaches, methods, and teaching materials. Therefore, changes need to be made to achieve maximum learning outcomes. The objective of the study was to investigate the perception of teachers and students towards English teaching materials that followed a pragmatic perspective as a learning resource to build the communicative competence of junior high school students. Quantitative research with data collection using a 5-scale Linker questionnaire was used to measure the *English for Junior High School Students: Pragmatics Based* textbook. There were 9 teachers and 82 students who filled out 20 questions about their perceptions. The results showed that the teacher's perceptions were: feasibility of content/material (61%), presentation in books (63%), language (59%) and dialogue content conformity (50%). Meanwhile, the student's perception questions included adjustments to students' abilities. These were the vocabulary used in the book, dialogues contained in the book, easy-to-understand instructions and exercises. The results showed that 50% of student respondents felt that the textbook was very appropriate. Hence, it can be concluded that the content of the English textbook with a pragmatic perspective was appropriate for seventh grade junior high school students in Semarang.

Keywords: Textbooks, Pragmatics, Perceptions, Junior High School

1. Introduction

Textbooks are one component of the learning systems that play an important role in achieving Competency Standard (SK) and Basic Competency (KD). Supporting the understanding, textbooks are one of the means of successful teaching and learning processes (1). A textbook is a unit of learning that contains information, discussion, and evaluation. Textbooks that are systematically arranged will make it easier for students to understand the material so as to support the achievement of learning objectives. Textbooks are books that are used as textbooks in certain fields of study, which are standard books compiled by experts in their fields for instructional purposes and objectives, and which are equipped with suitable teaching facilities and are easily understood

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Corresponding Author: Sukma

Nur Ardini; email:

sukmanurardini@upgris.ac.id

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by the users. It is in schools ²³ so that it can support a teaching program (2). ¹⁰ Therefore, textbooks must be arranged in a systematic, attractive, high-readability aspect, easy to digest, and comply with the applicable writing rules. ¹⁷ The role of books has an important impact on the development of materials and the students' understanding of the lessons being taught. Especially in learning English, which requires a good systematic arrangement of books so that students easily understand the material that needs to be mastered. In teaching English, textbooks usually serve a variety of purposes. Accordingly, Cunningsworth explains that these things can be in the form of: (a) sources of presentation materials (oral or written); (b) sources of activities for learning practices and communicative interactions; (c) sources of references; (d) ⁵ syllabus; (e) resources for self-directed learning or self-access work; and (f) support for less experienced teachers. ¹¹ Further, he explains, the quality of the textbook may be very important so that it can determine the success or failure of teaching English (3).

As explained by Tomlinson (4), in developing language learning materials, some basic principles should be considered. The basic principles of developing language learning materials are that (1) learning materials should have a strong influence on students; (2) learning materials must help students find it easy to learn; (3) learning materials must help students to develop confidently; (4) learning materials must provide and facilitate students to become independent learners; (5) learning materials should be available in accordance with the learning focus being taught; (6) learning materials must provide opportunities for students to use authentic language; (7) the attention of students must be given through the use of language styles as input; and (8) learning materials must ²⁰ provide opportunities for students to learn the target language for communication purposes; (9) learning materials must take into account the positive effects on learning. (10) Learning materials must take into account differences in students' learning styles; (11) learning materials must take into account differences in student attitudes. Learning materials must allow a period of silence at the beginning of learning activities. (13) Learning materials should be able to maximize the learning potential of students; (14) learning materials should not control students' practice too much; and (15) learning materials should provide opportunities for feedback. Coupled with the criteria for good textbooks, of course, are books that not only represent the needs of learners but also teachers. Cunningsworth classifies several requirements for a textbook to be a good book in Richard (5): ²⁷ a. Textbooks that meet the needs of students. The books also bring together the goals ²⁵ and objectives of language learning. b. The books should reflect their current and future use. In addition, the books should help the learner to use the language effectively for a specific purpose. c. The book addresses the learner's needs,

facilitates the learner's learning process, and does not rely on a rigid method. d. These books have an important role and support learning. Like a teacher, a good book is one that bridges the gap between the target language and the learner. From these principles, we can create textbooks that suit the needs of students in understanding English learning.

Based on the statements above, textbooks have an important role that can be renewed by looking at various aspects that occur. For example, the role of teacher and student perceptions is needed to develop textbooks that are in accordance with the needs of learning. In terms of perception, it is a person's picture of an object that is the focus of the problem at hand (6). Supported by Siagian (7) in general, the factors that influence perception are divided into three, namely: 1) The self-conscious; 2) The perception's target; and 3) Situational considerations. The self-conscious if someone sees something and tries to give an interpretation of what he sees, then it is influenced by individual characteristics that also influence it, such as attitudes, motives, interests, experiences, and expectations. The perception's target is the target can be a person, object, or event. The characteristics of the target usually affect the perception of the beholder. The last, situational considerations. Perception must be viewed contextually because the situation is a factor that plays a role in the path to solving a problem. In this sense, it can be said that if a person's perception is formed from observations based on the situation that is being experienced so that it is focused on solving problems, then the perceptions of teachers and students are very important to be analyzed in improving the learning process. With that backdrop in mind, the objective of the study was to investigate perception of teachers and students in developing English teaching materials with a pragmatic perspective as a learning resource to build the communicative competence of junior high school students. It focused on increasing the fulfillment of the needs of the learning process using English textbooks for junior high school children as a learning resource to build communicative competence.

2. Method

The study used quantitative research method since it investigated perceptions using questionnaire of Likert Scale. Creswell (4) noted that quantitative research is the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and writing the results of a study. Therefore, the result of the study ended up by using percentages. There were 9 teachers and 82 students directed to fill out the 20 questions about their perceptions. The method of data collection is one aspect that plays a role in the smoothness and success of a

study. In this study, the data collection method used is the questionnaire, which is a technique of collecting data through forms containing questions submitted in writing to a person or group of people to get answers or responses and information needed by researchers (8). This study uses a questionnaire with Likert Scale to measure the perceptions from teachers and students. A questionnaire is a data collection technique that is done by providing a set of questions or written statements to respondents to answer (9). This study used a questionnaire with a scale of 5 from which respondents can choose their opinion about the object of this research, namely “English for Junior High School Students: Pragmatics Based” textbook (see Figure 1).

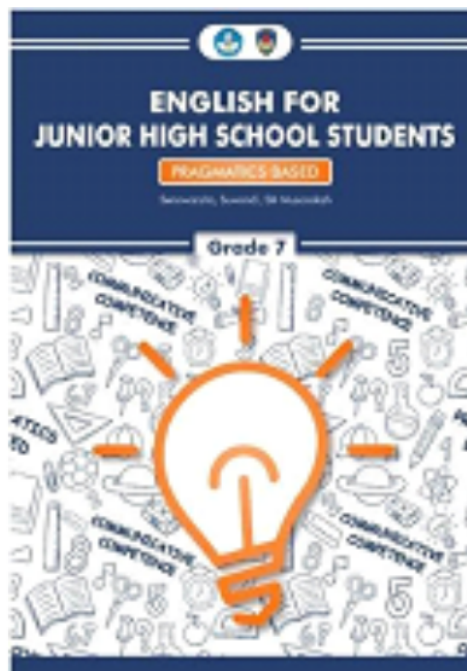


Figure 1: The Object of the Research.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Result

The results of this study covered several important aspects discussed in the textbook, which are divided into A) the teacher's perception results including: 1. Feasibility of content/material, 2. Presentation in books, 3. Language, 4. Dialogue content conformity. B) the results of students' perceptions including: 1. Adjustments to students' abilities; 2.

Vocabulary used in presenting the book; 3. Dialogues contained in the book; 4. Easy-to-understand instructions and exercises. In testing the results of this study, it covered important aspects of learning, namely aspects in terms of teachers as teachers and aspects of students as the main focus of learning activities. The following is the results of the two important aspects:

A. Teacher's Perception

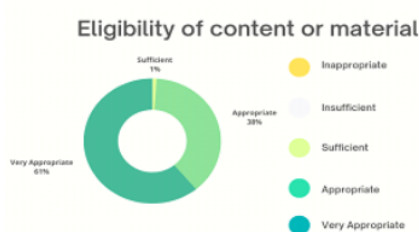


Figure 2: Eligible of content or material.

From the results of the pie chart regarding the feasibility of the contents or materials of the English book with a pragmatic perspective, with the number of respondents being 9 teachers, it showed that the feasibility of the contents or materials of the English book was very appropriate. 61% of respondents chose very appropriate on the choice of statements, which amounted to 12 numbers, 38% responded appropriate, and 1% with sufficient response. There were no respondents who gave less appropriate or very inappropriate responses. The types of statements were as follows: the coverage of the material according to the 2013 Curriculum, the suitability of the material with KI, KD in the 2013 Curriculum, the material is easy to understand by students, building students' communicative competence, loading authentic texts, loading authentic texts that have been modified (simplified according to needs/ability) students), the text presented is context-based, contextual information adequacy, contains general pragmatic information (politeness, appropriacy, formality, register), contains cultural knowledge (cultures of speakers of English as Native Language), including pragmatics and culture-oriented tasks, contains role-play activities.

When viewed from the presentation technique of the English book with a pragmatic perspective, the respondents gave a very appropriate response in the amount of 63%, an appropriate response in the amount of 33%, and a sufficient response in the amount of 4%. And no one gave a less appropriate or very inappropriate response to the statement

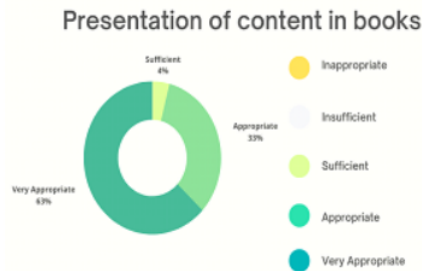


Figure 3: Presentation of Content in Books.

written in the questionnaire. The types of statements written in the questionnaire were as follows: technique of presenting material, suitability of images with the material presented, suitability of color composition, arrangement of image display on cover, arrangement of image display on cover, suitability of book size. There were 6 (six) statements written in the questionnaire that discussed the technique of presenting English books with a pragmatic perspective.

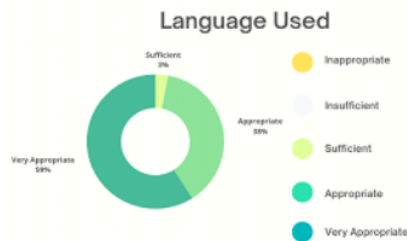


Figure 4: Language Used.

In terms of language, there are 7 (seven) statements contained in the questionnaire, namely as follows: the language used is communicative, dialogical, and interactive, the language is straightforward, easy for students to understand, has a level of difficulty that is in accordance with students' abilities, can increase students' motivation to communicate using English, easy to use by teachers and students. Of the 7 (seven) statements, the responses from the respondents stated that from a linguistic point of view, the English book with a pragmatic perspective was very appropriate, with a percentage of 59% of respondents who answered very appropriate, 38% of respondents

who answered appropriate, 3% of respondents who answered sufficient, and not some answered less appropriate or very inappropriate.



Figure 5: Dialogue's Content.

The pie diagram discusses the suitability of the content in the dialogue with 6 (six) questions contained in the questionnaire, including questions about the suitability of dialogue with aspects of skills for junior high school students such as speech function (greeting, offering, requesting, ordering), questions about the suitability of the level of grammar complexity used in the dialogue with the English syllabus of grade VII SMP, questions about the suitability of using turn-taking in dialogue, questions about how conversation in each chapter can ²⁴ make it easier for students to understand the context of communicating in English, and questions about the existence of barcodes in each conversation can make it easier for students to communicate using English because there are examples of conversations that can be heard. The results of the respondents showed that on the element of conformity with the content of the dialogue, 50% of respondents answered very appropriate and 46% of respondents answered appropriate, while 4% answered sufficient and not a single respondent gave an inappropriate or very inappropriate answer.

B. Student's Perception

Questionnaires were also distributed to students in 9 junior high schools in Semarang City. ¹⁸ The number of students who filled out the questionnaire was 82 students. There were 20 questions that must be answered by students using a Likert scale from a scale of 1-5.

The questions in the questionnaire discussed the material in the English book with a pragmatic perspective that has been adapted to students' abilities, the vocabulary used, dialogues in the book that are easy for students to understand, instructions on exercises that are easily understood by students, pictures that are easy to understand.

is in the book is it over or not with the character of junior high school students, etc. ²⁶ The results of the calculation of the questionnaire distributed to students are as follows:

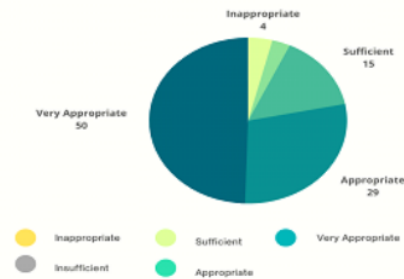


Figure 6: The Result of Students' Questionnaire.

In the questionnaire that has been distributed, it was found that 50% of respondents choose very appropriate answers to the choices in the questions in the questionnaire. 29% of respondents chose the appropriate answer, 15% chose the Sufficient answer, 3% of the respondents chose the Insufficient answer and 4% of the respondents chose the inappropriate answer. This shows that the respondents in this case are junior high school students in Semarang city think that the English book with a Pragmatic perspective is easy to understand by students both from the content of the material which has been adapted to the 2013 curriculum syllabus, the language used is communicative so that students can easily understand it and also the choice of pictures. There are pictures in the book that match the character of junior high school students.

3.2. Discussion

⁴ The objective of the study was to investigate the perceptions of the teachers and the students related to the English teaching materials with a pragmatic perspective as a learning resource to build the communicative competence of junior high school students. The Study was preceded by an R&D in the development of English textbook namely "English for Junior High School Students: Pragmatics Based" (see Figure 1). The results of this study can be used as consideration for improving and completing various aspects needed from a textbook in order to create a learning guide that is in accordance with the needs of the ongoing learning process.

The teacher's perception showed that 1) the feasibility of content/material in the English book with a pragmatic perspective is appropriate for use for seventh grade junior high school students in Semarang city. 2) the presentation in books is in accordance with the English textbooks for the seventh-grade students that are circulating in the market

and have been used as teaching materials for teachers and students. 3) the language used in the English book with a pragmatic perspective is communicative, dialogical, interactive and easy to understand. This can trigger the enthusiasm of students to often communicate using English. 4) dialogue content conformity is in accordance with the 2013 curriculum syllabus for the seventh-grade junior high school students.

The results of students' perceptions including the adjustments to students' abilities, vocabulary used in presenting the book, dialogues contained in the book, easy-to-understand instructions and exercises. Therefore, it can be concluded that the English textbook with a pragmatic perspective is appropriate to use for junior high school in Semarang city.

4. Conclusion

The ⁴ objective of the study was to investigate the perceptions of students and teachers from the results of the questionnaires that have been distributed to support the manufacture of textbooks with a pragmatic perspective that can later create the necessary sources of learning materials. ¹⁴ From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the content of the English textbook with a pragmatic perspective entitled "English for Junior High School Students: Pragmatics Based" was feasible for seventh grade junior high school students in Semarang.

Acknowledgements

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