

Students' Perception on the Use of English Textbook for EFL Learning

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ABSTRACT

Textbook is a medium that helps teachers plan teaching and learning activities. In other words, it does not take much time to create teaching materials for lessons. In addition, students can participate in different activities depending on what they need to learn. This research aimed to find out the students' perception on the use of English textbook for EFL Learning in the Islamic Secondary School. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 students of class VIII, who were randomly selected from MTsN 1 Kota Palangka Raya. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This research result showed that students generally had positive perceptions of their English textbook. Almost all students felt motivated to learn if the textbook provided interactive problem exercises and case studies that were relevant to real life.

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INTRODUCTION

Textbook is a medium that helps teachers plan teaching and learning activities. In other words, it does not take much time to create teaching materials for lessons. In addition, Cunningsworth stated that textbook is useful because most of the goals and objectives are set out in a series of activities that correspond to what students need to learn. Students can participate in different activities depending on what they need to learn. Cunningsworth said that before deciding whether to use textbook in the classroom, we should carefully consider their usefulness in setting objectives and developing teaching materials. (Sholikah, 2023)

Inappropriate textbook may fill the classroom with uninteresting exercises, be too expensive for students, or not fulfill students' learning rights, or students' rights to meet learning needs are not met. Because of these factors, the selection of textbook by teachers becomes very important. The importance of textbook in the teaching and learning process requires teachers to choose the right textbook for their students. Textbook are required for students because various publishers publish several English books. Teachers should be careful in choosing the right teaching tools. The content should be consistent with the relevant curriculum and the expected outcomes and objectives for students.

Textbook is an important part of the teaching and learning process in the classroom, so they must be of high quality. Textbook should be interesting and engaging for students. Thus, they were enthusiastic about using the textbook. The textbook should be able to motivate students, the content of the textbook should be instructive, and the linguistic aspects of the textbook should be considered. (Pasaribu, 2022). Textbook plays an important role in the teaching and learning process and are the "main agent" in conveying knowledge to others.

Cunningsworth (1984) stated that textbooks are books written by experienced and well-qualified people, and the materials contained in textbook are usually carefully tested in

pilot studies in actual teaching situations before publication. Hutchison and Torre (1994:316) argued that textbook have a very important role to play in English language teaching and learning. They also stated that textbook provide the necessary input into classroom lessons through various activities, readings, and explanations. However, the use of textbook in teaching-learning has advantages and disadvantages depending on how they are used and the context for their use (Richards, 2001:256).

Textbook is the major source of English learning in EFL schools; therefore, they are important for both teachers and students. Textbook are inescapable in Indonesia since they serve as a resource, an activity source, a reference, a syllabus, a great source of aid for new instructors, and a source for self-directed learning or self-access work. Textbook are the most important component in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) or a second language (ESL) because teachers use them as their major source of knowledge in the classroom.(Elfi et al., 2020)

Because of the important role that textbook play, the textbook selection process has become an important aspect of the teaching and learning process. Even if it is not the only component that influences a student's learning success, the textbook has an impact on the teaching and learning process. Which in turn has an impact on the student's. As stated by Wen-Cheng et al classroom teachers spend a lot of time in class reading textbook, therefore picking the right one is critical to making the textbook selection process more and trustworthy. This suggests that in selecting the text thorough analysis of a certain textbook is crucial to be conducted. Based on this description, a research concept with the title "Students' Perception Use the Use of English Textbook for EFL Learning in Secondary School" was developed.(Khan et al., 2020)

Textbook are the primary source of information for practically every subject in formal education, demonstrating the importance of books. The fact that schools typically offer multiple book titles for every subject shows that a large number of publishers, including the ministry, are assisting with the educational process in schools. In the process of teaching and studying English, textbook are crucial. Lesson materials, assignments, dialogues, and other teaching activities are included in every chapter of the textbook. Textbook give teachers precise learning goals for every class, which makes it easier for them to organize the resources effectively. Textbook are used by students as learning tools both within and outside of the classroom.(Qalyubi et al., 2025). Textbook serves as both a guide for all learning activities and a source of knowledge that needs to be imparted. Every textbook ought to take into account the standards for writing high-quality books. Similarly, in order to increase quality, interest, and excitement, textbook should provide both scientific facts about an idea and lofty cultural values (Satinem et al., 2023).

Perception is defined in philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science as the process of becoming aware of or comprehending sensory data. "Perception" implies "receiving, collecting, action of taking possession, and apprehension with the mind or senses," and it is derived from the Latin terms *perceptio* and *percipio* (Qiong, 2017). One important topic that deserves in-depth investigation is the examination of views regarding the teaching and learning process. Classroom learning effectiveness depends on how stakeholders perceive each other, as well as on the caliber of teachers, students, pedagogical methods, and resources.(Yuliana et al., 2024)

The mechanisms via which a person learns about and makes sense of a wide range of information are collectively referred to as perception. Perception is the process by which we attempt to comprehend the world around us by using our five senses to gather information. According to Qiong (2017), perception encompasses the entire conscious human mind's process of utilizing the environment, comprehending the meaning of the stimulus while perceiving the item, events, or connection between symptoms that are subsequently processed by the brain. Furthermore, according to Qiong (2017), perception is a process that is undertaken in order to become aware of or comprehend sensory data.(Suyadi & Aisyah, 2021)

The term "perception of students in learning" describes how students view or apply something when conducting a learning exercise. Teachers can use students' perceptions to assess and make corrections to the system, procedures, or educational resources we offer or employ with them. (Lindawati et al., 2022)

Perception is a way of looking at a problem that occurs, or a certain point of view used in a phenomenon. Schacter (2011) said that perception is the identification, organization, and interpretation of sensory information to represent and understand the information provided, or the environment." Students' perceptions are how students think about situations or problems that occur in a way that makes sense and wisely. Students' perceptions can be defined as respondent's responses either positively or negatively. (Mamudi & Alamry, 2021) According to Wallace et al. (2016: 53), students' perceptions of instruction can undoubtedly predict learning, and letting them voice their opinions about school is a useful diagnostic technique. Since teaching "affects the students themselves, it fosters a sense of appreciation for student participation in the learning process" (Coyle 2013: 249), student participation has become crucial in modern classrooms. (Fadli et al., 2022).

According to Stone and Neilson, perception is a conceptual arrangement of internal and external sensory stimuli associated with a certain individual, thing, or occasion (Kosmas Sarkol, 2016). Positive and negative perception were the two categories into which the varieties of perception were separated. Positive perception refers to a person's assessment of an item or piece of information from a favorable angle or in line with expectations based on the perceived item or existing laws. Negative perceptions, on the other hand, were individual opinions about specific things or information that were not favorable and went against what was anticipated of the item or the rules in place (Ramlah, 2020). (Harclinda et al., 2023)

The researcher chose this title due to the importance of student perspectives: Understanding how students perceive and respond to their textbook is critical for improving learning effectiveness. Research on student perceptions can help educators and policymakers create and select effective teaching materials. Also provides feedback for improvement: Understanding students' impressions of English textbook can help textbook authors, teachers, and educational institutions enhance textbook quality and use in learning.

The subjects of this study were students of class VIII MTs N 1 Kota Palangka Raya. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. MTs N 1 Kota Palangka Raya is one of the educational institutions in the city of Palangka Raya which according to the researcher's analysis is one of the educational institutions that is growing very rapidly. Since its establishment in 1978, it has had many students, has accreditation, and is known in various regions in Central Kalimantan province. In addition, the researcher also saw that the facilities and infrastructure at the school had developed quite significantly. Therefore, the researcher assumes that if the school is good, then the quality of the books used is also adequate for students.

Some previous research investigated the students' perception on the use of English textbook. Syifa et al. (2021) investigated the students' and teacher's perception about the current English Textbook used by the eighth grade students' of public junior high school. Elfi et al. (2020) investigated the students' perception about English textbook "When English Rings A Bell" used by the seventh grade student of public junior high school. (Pasaribu, 2022) sinvestigated the students' perceptions of the quality of the English language textbook used by the eleventh grade students of public senior high schools.

All the previous research stated above only investigated the students' perception on the use of English textbooks in non-religious-based schools. However, no research reports have been published regarding the students' perception on the use of English textbook in a religious-based school. This research was important because it provided insight into how the students of Islamic secondary school perceived their English textbook, which could help teachers select or develop more effective materials.

METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 students of class VIII, who were randomly selected from MTs N 1 Kota Palangka Raya. The interview guidelines were adopted from (Sholikah, 2023). The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Interviews, questionnaires, and documentation studies are some data collecting approaches used. Interviews were conducted with ten randomly selected students to interview how they perceived the English textbook they used. Data collected through documentation includes pictures of interview activities. The researcher chose this method because it is more capable of capturing students' understanding, opinions, and subjective experiences of English books in depth.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The interview was done to gain information about the students' perception on the use of English textbook for EFL learning in Islamic secondary school in terms of attraction and student engagement, relevance and contextualization of material, support for cognitive and communication skills, adaptation to student learning styles, and learning potential and feedback.

Attraction and student engagement

The question was "Does the textbook attract students to study and is the materials in the book considered varied?" In this question, almost all students (90%) explained that students felt the material in the book was interesting but there was some language that they did not understand, so students sometimes asked the teacher how the material was, they had difficulty understanding the material if it was not explained by the teacher. The materials and chapters that students encounter also have new and interesting materials, the materials learned are also diverse and can help them develop their English.

Relevance and contextualization of material

The question was "Are the materials in the textbook in line with students' interests and real life and is the language used authentic?" In this question, almost all students (85%) thought that the textbook was useful, the exercises in the textbook were also useful for students, and also for the use of authentic language sometimes only some students could easily understand it. For material related to the real world, it is not fully appropriate, sometimes there is material that is not understood and the exercises are also less relevant because students do not fully understand the material in the textbook if there is no explanation from the teacher. There may only be some materials or exercise that use authentic language and students' also find it difficult to understand. With the material, students become aware and increase their knowledge about learning English, and not all the language used in the textbook reaches the communication target because some of the students do not understand the material.

Support for cognitive and communication skills

The question was "Does the textbook take into account the comfort of students' culture and have suitability for students' learning styles?" In this question, almost all students (95%) felt comfortable with the textbook they used because it was in accordance with their culture so that students' could understand the material, but the exercises in the textbook did not all look at students' readiness or learning style.

Adaptation to student learning styles

The question was "Does the textbook encourage students' to think critically and promote communicative purpose?" In this question, almost all students (95%) felt that the exercises in

the textbook made them think so that they also learned, but the exercises in the textbook also sometimes.

Learning potential and feedback

The question was "Does the textbook have learning materials and exercises and provide opportunities for self-evaluation?" In this question almost all students (90%) thought that exercises can increase students' potential. Students are also given the opportunity to provide feedback on the materials and exercises they learn.

CONCLUSION

This research found that students generally had positive perceptions of their English textbook, especially if they were interactive and relevant to real life. However, some students had difficulties with the language used in the textbook. The implication of these findings is that teachers need to consider students' preferences when selecting or developing textbook.

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