

## **An Analysis of the Writing Material in the English Textbook “Joyful English” for the Fourth Grade Students of Elementary School**

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### **Abstract**

Textbooks are important references used by teachers and students in the teaching and learning process. Considering such a situation it is important to conduct a study to describe the shortcomings of the textbook and increase its strength. This study aimed to analyze the presentation of the written material in the textbook “Joyful English” for the fourth grade of elementary school. This research was a descriptive qualitative research using content analysis based on the theory of Hutchinson and Totres (1994 : 315). The data were collected using questionnaires for the teacher of Elementary School and document readings focusing on the analysis of the writing materials. The results showed that in terms of writing materials, all writing assignments were in the form of guided writing, where students were asked to write responses and short texts. The result also showed that writing assignments in textbooks were proportionally covered as required in Kompetensi Dasar (Basic Competence) as required in the Lesson Plan.

**Keywords:** elementary school; textbook analysis; writing material

### **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching and learning activities are the main activities as the main flow of communication between students and teachers. One of the important items in learning and learning activities is textbooks as the main material to be taught and learnt. The teaching materials used must also comply with certain standards and provisions that have been established by the government, as stated in the curriculum and syllabus.

The Minister of National Education (2008: 6) argues that "teaching materials are learning materials that are used to assist students and teachers in teaching and learning activities. The material in question can be in the form of written material or unwritten material." With the teaching material, the teacher will easily guide students in teaching and learning activities; and so do students, if they have learning materials, they will be more focused and understand the subjects being taught.

In Curriculum 2013, textbooks can be a framework for a teacher to achieve K.D. (Basic Competence) and K.I. (Core Competencies) which are the main requirements for

learning stated in the Lesson Plan. Textbooks are expected to have content quality that is in accordance with the available curriculum and have content standards that are easy to understand by teachers and students.

One of the determinants of student success in learning is the quality of textbooks used. In determining the most suitable textbooks, teachers usually use more than one reference as a comparison that can help in the teaching and learning system being implemented. In connection with the fact that English in Indonesia is learnt as EFL (English as Foreign Language), it is important for the teacher to determine the quality of textbooks that can help students at the primary school level meet the standards as stated in the curriculum. It is necessary for the teacher to first analyze the contents of the teaching materials that will be used in order to know its suitability with the students' need in learning English.

Based on Cunningsworth's (1995) theory, textbook evaluation generally analyzes the content in that textbook. Quality English textbooks are books that are in accordance with the available curriculum, that is, 2013 curriculum, which has been implemented this time in English language learning in Indonesia for the primary school level.

The criteria of a textbook as proposed by Byrd (2001) are, first, the suitability between the material and the curriculum. The curriculum is the main guideline in developing a textbook. The suitability of the material and curriculum is determinant that can help students and teachers in achieving value criteria and learning programs in the teaching and learning process.

Second, the suitability of the material and the teaching and learning process. Material in accordance with the curriculum has to adapt to the needs of students and teachers in the teaching and learning process. Suitable material can also make the teaching and learning process more effective. The material presented is tailored to the needs of the student's educational level, such as at the elementary school level, students are in the early phase of learning English with learning materials such as simple vocabulary about colors, animals, etc).

We know that English has four skills that must be mastered, namely; Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. These skills must also be mastered at an early age where children have just started to learn basic English. With a simple learning pattern, children are expected to be able to master the skills contained in learning English. A skill that is somewhat difficult for children to fully master is writing skill. At the elementary school stage, children are required to be able to write simple words and simple sentences that they can use on a daily basis. This is the main reason why the books should be analyzed to suit the needs and levels of children in the teaching and learning process.

In this study, the book to be analyzed by the researcher was an English textbook entitled "Joyful English for the Fourth Grade Primary School" used by one of the primary schools in Palangka Raya. SD Negeri 11 Langkai Palangka Raya is one of the schools

that applies English lessons using the above textbook. The researcher only focused on the writing material in the above textbook for learning English.

Quality writing material is expected to help students and teachers in the teaching and learning process so that the proposed objectives stated in the curriculum can be met. The results of this study, theoretically, are expected to add clearer scientific insights regarding the assessment of a textbook that can improve the quality of teaching and learning. And it is also hoped that this can be one way to increase the potential for other skills. For other parties, it is hoped that it can add insight and reference and as a comparison material in other research on textbook as learning material.

## **Literature Review**

### **1. Writing Skill**

Based on Randal (2004: 160) it is explained that writing is the ability to form word for word which is based on facts and reliable events that are written. The results of the writing can be a written product that can be accepted by readers and has a valuable meaning.

Writing is a language of communication that functions to enable students to open up a world of their own learning imagination (Kern 2000: 172). Writing can be used as a sign that can be seen and understood; a sign, which people use for writing in English. Writing can also be interpreted as a second or foreign language in the teaching and learning process. Students will easily understand a learning material in written language.

Sudaryanto (2001: 64) says that writing skill is an ability that a person has to express thoughts which are applied in the form of written language or in the form of messages that can be understood and understood by readers. The opinion of the author itself is the main topic in writing the text.

The point is writing skill is a person's ability to express feelings and thoughts based on facts or events experienced. Writing skills are important skills in learning where students can more broadly understand a lesson and can create their own imaginary world and express their opinions or understanding in the teaching and learning process easily.

At the elementary school level, writing skill is the main skill that guides students to move to the next level of that skill. Simple sentences and simple vocabulary are the foundation for elementary school students to learn English. If elementary school students are able to master writing skill, it will be easy for them to move up to the following levels such as reading skills, listening skills and speaking skills.

## **2. Teaching of Writing Skill**

Teaching English means teaching students not only how to speak, how to read, how to listen, but also how to write. Communication is not only spoken but in written form as well. For some students, writing skill is a difficult skill to master because they are limited in terms of structure, punctuation, vocabulary and spelling. Writing is a process that is symbolically useful as a communication tool intended to show thoughts and ideas in a readable form.

Writing is hard work where students need lots of practice so that writing can be categorized as perfect. Writing is an effective way to communicate and express thoughts, feelings and opinions to others. Writing can also be useful as an entertainment that can stimulate students' imagination in expressing their feelings and thoughts.

There are so many ways that can help students to write simple text using simple sentences based on actual facts and events. At the primary school level, students are asked to write simple sentences such as; "Miss Ratna has long hair, Toni has short hair, Jefri has curly hair, etc". Good writing is one that readers can understand the meaning intended by the writer. Elementary school level is the level where students are asked to be able to spell and copy very simple English utterances accurately with the correct punctuation, which involves very simple words, phrases and sentences, such as congratulations and thanks.

## **3. English Learning Materials**

Tomlinson (2011) states that material for learning that is intended to help students and teachers in the teaching and learning process. Materials can be made in the form of books, workbooks and other media. Today we know that even online media can be shared with students. Sources of learning materials also vary, such as: the internet, learning videos, newspapers, articles and others. The point is that learning material is a written or oral form that is created and distributed to support the teaching and learning process which contains information about the subjects being learned. The materials can be adopted, adapted and developed or a combination of the three, but the material presented must be in accordance with the available syllabus and curriculum (Brown, 1995).

## **4. Textbook**

Textbooks are books compiled by experts in their fields, which are equipped with teaching facilities and practice questions to stimulate the teaching and learning process. Textbooks are prepared with the aim that students can easily understand the materials taught, which is completed with simple illustrations to can attract the students' interest (Tarigan, 1986: 13). The use of textbooks is based on the learning objectives that refer to the curriculum. Apart from text books, teachers can also use certain other facilities or certain techniques in learning. Technically, textbooks aim to facilitate textbook users, especially students, in understanding the material to be taught.

In summary, quality textbooks must be accurate, appropriate, communicative, complete and systematic, oriented towards students-centered, based on state regulations and in accordance with the curriculum used.

## **5. Young Learners in Learning English**

The definition of young learners is elementary school students aged 6 to 12 years. According to (Sarah Philips, 2001), it is stated that young learners are children in the first years of formal school. The characteristics of young learners are very significant. Students who are active will be very active and students who are passive will be very passive. This is an extra task for a teacher in controlling the class being taught. Young learners are a challenging level for some teachers in teaching English, especially in Indonesia, as English is as a foreign language. It is a challenge for teachers to prepare interesting English teaching and learning materials to make students interested in the teaching and learning process.

## **METHOD**

This study used a qualitative descriptive research method using content analysis, in which the researcher only focused on describing the results of the analysis of the writing material in a textbook using a theory based on Hutchinson and Totres (1994: 315). The research was conducted at SDN 11 Langkai Palangka Raya. The school was selected since it has applied 2013 curriculum. The subject to be analyzed was the learning textbook used in that school for English subject entitled "Joyful English for the Fourth Grade Students" published by Quadra in 2019. The English teacher in that school was also taken as the respondent of the research to obtain the supporting data needed.

This research was conducted in several stages. In the first stage, the researcher prepared the research instrument, i.e., observation checklist and interview guide. In this qualitative research, the main data were the results of observation. In this case, the researcher analyzed the textbook used based on the criteria and provisions of writing materials as stated in the 2013 curriculum. By considering the theory and provisions of the 2013 Curriculum, the writing material is considered appropriate if it is based on students' ability to spell English simple utterances correctly and able to copy written simple English precisely. In the second stage, an interview was done to the teacher as the respondent, and the result of interview would be used to support the main data for discussion. In the third stage, the researcher reported the research results based on certain procedural steps that have been determined.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The following is the result of observation on the identity or general description of the textbook analyzed by the researcher:

1. Title : Joyful English for Primary Grade IV

2. Authors : Tumijo  
Kristyowati
3. Editor : Eko Marsudiono
4. Designers : Bion Roland  
Iwan Gunawan
5. Illustrators : Tim Quadra
6. Proofreader : Kenneth Ament, BSChE, USA

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The content analysis of the above book showed that the book did not include Competency Standards, Basic Competencies and Indicators as required in 2013 Curriculum applied in SDN 11 Langkai Palangka Raya. The textbook only included the syllabus with topics, aspects and examples of material. There were seven units in this book which were divided into four units for the first semester and three units for the second semester.

In the first stage of this research, the writing materials included in the book were analyzed based on content analysis and supported by the result of interviews. The analysis shows the following results:

Table 1. Result of Content Analysis of the English Textbook “Joyful English for Grade IV” Used at SDN Langkai 11 Palangka Raya

UNIT	Analysis
Unit 1	In the first unit, students are asked to master material about body parts, adjectives and personal pronouns. Based on the analysis, it was found that the writing material was not explained much and there were not many exercises for writing skills.
Unit 2	In the second unit, the material presented are about time, Simple Present Tense, and Verb + s / es. Based on the researcher's analysis, in the second unit the writing material was clear and easy to understand. There were quite a lot of practice questions for writing skills.
Unit 3	In the third unit, the material presented are about Like and Dislike, Asking and Offering help, and Quantifiers. In this unit, it was analyzed that the writing material was quite a bit and the problem was that only little practice section was available.
Unit 4	In the fourth unit, the materials presented are Greetings and Introductions, Asking permissions, Prohibitions, Gratitude, Apologies, Invitations and Compliments. In this unit, the materials and exercises for writing skills were many and the explanations given were clear and easy for students to understand.
Unit 5	In the fifth unit, the materials presented are Dates, Ordinal Numbers, There is - There are, Simple Present Tense (Activities) and Times. In this unit, it was seen that there were a lot of materials and the tasks for writing skill. This was the focus of the fifth unit with the Simple Present Tense (Activities)



	material, where students were asked to focus on describing their daily activities in simple written language in English.
Unit 6	In the sixth unit, the materials presented were Present Continuous Tense, Like and Dislike using "wearing ..." gerunds. In this sixth unit, the materials and the tasks for writing skill were relatively just a few.
Unit 7	In the seventh unit, the material presented was the Present Continuous Tense. In this seventh unit, the materials and practice section for writing skill were relatively just a few.

It can be summarized that in each unit of the material, the aspects of writing skill learning were relatively small and the exercises were still insufficient. However, in terms of the achievement of the specified competencies, the researcher could conclude that the textbook "Joyful English for Primary Grade IV" is in accordance with the provisions of Basic Competencies (K.D) and Core Competencies (K.I) in the 2013 Curriculum used by the school. However, additional materials are still needed to support the students' writing skill.

The second stage in this research is analysis based on the result of interview with the teacher s stated as follows:

Table 2. Analysis of the interviews with the teacher Concerning the English Textbook "Joyful English for Grade IV" Used at SDN Langkai 11 Palangka Raya

Question	Answer	Analysis
Do you use textbooks for teaching?	Yes, as a learning support book	It is proven that teachers and students of SDN 11 Langkai Palangka Raya use textbooks as the main media for the teaching and learning process.
In your opinion, the textbook you are using is classified as.....	Easy	The textbook level is relatively easy. Based on the researcher's analysis, the book has a short explanation in each unit which is sufficient to help students and teachers understand the material presented.
Do you think teaching "Writing Skill" to the 4th grade students is very important?	Yes, it is very important that they have writing skills	Writing ability is proven to be important to be mastered by students to support the mastery of other English skills.
What obstacles do you often face when you teach "Writing Skill" to your students?	The problem of lack in vocabulary and sentence structure; which is sometimes reversed in English, for example, "jus	Grammar and vocabulary are usually a major problem in a country like Indonesia where English is as a foreign language. Careful

	jeruk” in Indonesian becomes “orange juice” in English.	explanations are important to improve the students’ vocabulary and grammar.
Does the "Writing Skill" material in the textbook that you use suit the needs of your students?	The material is still minimal, mostly about vocabulary.	Additional materials for the book is needed so that the students' writing skill can be developed appropriately.
In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the books you use?	The advantage is that it is accompanied by colorful pictures that make it easier for children to understand a word, also accompanied by a small dictionary at the end of the topic, and the practice questions are not too difficult for elementary school children.	In terms of advantages, it should be true that at the primary school level, learning textbooks should be made more attractive and easier for students to understand.
	The main problems are the four skills in English are not evenly distributed and the explanation of the material on a topic is incomplete and in detail so the teacher has to add explanations taken from other sources.	In terms of disadvantage, the uneven distribution of the four language skills is a weakness that becomes an obstacle to develop the students’ language skills.

It can be concluded that teachers need additional materials that can accompany the teaching and learning process to emphasize the mastery of language skills for students. In terms of fulfillment and application of Basic Competencies and Core Competencies, the learning textbook "Joyful English for Primary Grade IV" has met the available standards stated in Curriculum 2013. However, in terms of meeting the competence in writing skill, additional materials appropriate for the elementary school level are still needed to complete the teaching and learning process.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results it can be concluded that the textbook "Joyful English for Primary School Grade IV":

1. is in accordance with the Basic Competencies and Core Competencies as stated in 2013 curriculum which is applied by the school.
2. is easy to use and suitable for elementary school levels.
3. contains the important writing skill to be taught for elementary school students to develop student skills in learning English.
4. shows that the main obstacle in the English teaching and learning process often occurs in countries in which English is taught as a foreign language. This is because



- it is difficult for students to be able to understand the vocabulary and grammar contained in that textbook used for elementary school level.
5. contains relatively rare writing skill material and few writing assignments that lead to the low improvement of writing skill.
  6. has an attractive appearance with appropriate level of exercises for the fourth grade of elementary school level. However, because of the drawback found in that book, additional materials are still needed to support learning writing in English.

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