

EXPLORING THE COMMUNICATIVENESS OF INDONESIAN ENGLISH COURSEBOOK: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

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Abstract: One thing that cannot be denied in the teaching and learning process is teaching material and methodology, as they are often used interchangeably. Therefore, the creation of the teaching materials is underpinned based on the methodology that has been widely used and exists. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the methodology has been widely implemented in the classroom and materials in teaching and learning the language. However, the CLT principles in the coursebook are not much evaluated. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the CLT principles in the English coursebook in Indonesia, to be exact, *Bahasa Inggris SMA Kelas 11 Semester 2* coursebook for secondary school students in Indonesia. The researchers used an adopted coursebook's evaluation checklist from Grant's and Cunningsworth evaluation tools in the evaluation process. Furthermore, there are five aspects to be focused on: the material, CLT claims, activities, provided skills, and tasks in the coursebook. The findings showed that the coursebook is not implementing CLT principles. Moreover, it can be recognized from its activity and skills. Therefore, several aspects such as task, activity, and skills need to be improved. Suggestions to improve the coursebook are also provided.

Keywords: Coursebook, Material, Evaluation, Communicative Language Teaching

INTRODUCTION

One of the educational components that can assist to achieve learning goals is coursebooks. Coursebooks can support accomplished learning goals. According to Tomlinson (2014), encouraging learning involves allowing learners to grasp the language, practising the language used, supporting the use of language, and assisting learners find out the language themselves. Moreover, Richards (2001) emphasized using a coursebook to standardize the learning process. In other words, it can be said that the coursebook will maintain the same material even though in a different classroom setting. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that teaching materials, including course books and courses, contain the same teaching and learning values. By recognizing the pivotal role of a coursebook, the Indonesian government needs to provide a coursebook that represents the nationally promoted teaching approach. Therefore, there must be an evaluation to ensure the in line-ness of a coursebook with the teaching material, a coursebook evaluation is needed. Ariebowo (2014) stated that the product of Policy, such as prose, goal, and material, should be evaluated to keep the development and improvement for the next generation. Besides, the result of the evaluation coursebook may give a general picture of the content and the context in the coursebook with the actual implementation whether it is fit with underpinning principles being promoted or not.

Since the teaching material has a pivotal effect on teaching and learning activity, the teachers must easily use the result. Besides, teaching materials also play a significant role in boosting teachers' motivation when a new method is introduced (McGrath, 2002). Teaching materials in ELT can be said to be authentic and ready-made materials (Johansson, 2006).

Moreover, the authentic and ready-made materials have the same function in ELT. It will be different if we look at the construction of the materials. (Johansson, 2006) mentioned that authentic material can use surrounding stuff, real-life experience and the daily activities. While the read-made material is the material that the author has made to teach English in general without seeing the specific real-life context. Furthermore, a coursebook can be assumed as the ready-made material. Moreover, coursebooks are massively used to provide guidance and steps in carrying out the lesson based on the provided approach (McGrath, 2002). Therefore, in designing the coursebook, the author must examine whether the coursebook can be applied for teachers with two types: novice and experienced teachers (Arfiandhani, 2016).

In language learning, one method has been introduced and used for a long time since 1970: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT comes with its flexibility in integrating four skills, communications-based approach intertwining with the social function (Arfiandhani, 2016; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Furthermore, Communicative language teaching (CLT) is seen as a teaching method that has a goal in communicative competence (Richards, 2006). Communicative competence can be understood as knowing the communication function based on natural conditions. Richards (2006) said that “Communicative competence is viewed as mastery of functions needed for communication across a wide range of situations” (p. 11). Ying (2010) stated that communicative competence also can be understood as language learners’ competency in using the second language in real context outside the classroom.

Furthermore, according to Richards and Rodgers (2014), there are five principles of CLT to be applied into classroom practices: learning by doing, authentic and meaningful communication orientation, focusing on fluency, integrating different language skills in communication, and learning from mistakes as a communicative process. Within this principle, learners should be facilitated with opportunities to practice the target language in communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In many EFL contexts, including Indonesia, most English classes provide the primary source of exposure for learners to practice the language. Therefore, coursebook activities play a pivotal role in allocating how much time and exposure English learners may receive in the classrooms.

Among myriad research on coursebook review, little has been discussed on evaluating the CLT-ness of a coursebook used in Indonesia. They, the scholars, tended to focus on certain aspect such as vocabulary used (Basuki et al., 2018), cultural value (Lekawael & Rafli, 2018), and culture content (Ayu, 2020). The evaluation which underpinned the interconnectedness of the coursebook and an approach has not much been discussed by scholars. Thus, this current research aims at exploring the interconnectedness of the *Bahasa Inggris for SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas XI Semester 2* towards Communicative Language Teaching Approach. This research may give the worthy result of exploration and implications for teachers to check whether the communicative approach can be presented through this coursebook or not.

METHOD

In exploring the coursebook, this research applied the CLT principles from Richards and Rogers (2001). Considering the pandemic condition and the time limitation, we eliminated the last principle: learning from mistakes. Besides, we were unable to see teachers’ activities in the classroom. Therefore, the research focused on the first four principles: learning by doing, authentic and meaningful communication orientation, focusing on fluency, and integrating skills in communication.

In addition, the coursebook entitled Bahasa Inggris for SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas XI Semester 2 is a student handbook prepared by the Government of Indonesia in implementing the 2013 Curriculum. This student book has been compiled and reviewed by various parties and has begun to be used to implement the 2013 Curriculum. Student needs. This book was published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture in 2014. Six chapters are starting from chapters 6 to 11, with 126 pages. The books analyzed contain things about the story of writing, Natural Disaster, the last leaf, Father of Indonesian Education, Meaning through Music, and Man-made Disasters.

In evaluating the coursebook, the evaluations tool was the checklist point developed by Cunningsworth (1995), Dewi (2013). Moreover, Cunningsworth (1995) stated three phases of evaluating materials. Those three phases are pre-evaluation, in-use evaluation, and post-evaluation. Considering that the curriculum 2013 has been evaluated. So, this research evaluated the in-use process only. In comparison, the post-evaluation can be seen when the result of the in-use evaluation is used to re-fix some parts based on the evaluation's result.

The evaluation tool was the checklist method. By doing so, the researcher could find the weaknesses and the strengths of the provided coursebook. As mentioned before, the adaptation was from Dewi's (2013) instrument as provided by Arfiandhani (2016) in her appendix. Furthermore, all checklist points had been set into the principles of the CLT Framework (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Additionally, the four principles are also added with the communicative claims by the author of the coursebook. The application of the book with the 2013 curriculum is intended to meet the demands of the realization of the conception of education that is centred on the development of students and the context of their lives as interpreted in the pedagogic concept. This conception demands that the curriculum must be positioned as a vehicle for the maturation of students under their psychological development and receive pedagogical treatment in the context of the environment and era. This then becomes a priority in designing the curriculum for secondary education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the *Bahasa Inggris* for SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas XI Semester 2 coursebook mentioned the CLT claims. It can be found in the preface section in which the author mentioned that the coursebook used English as a means of communication. It has been written by the author that "...menempatkan Bahasa Inggris sebagai wahana komunikasi" (p. iii). Since the researcher found that the coursebook claimed the CLT, the coursebook aims to foster communicative ability. As mentioned by Richard and Rogers (2001), the goal of CLT is to foster communicative competence.

On the other hand, the researchers found that the coursebook does not have any syllabus at the beginning of the chapter or in the preface sections. Therefore, the researchers could not strengthen the CLT activities by seeing the syllabus embedded in the coursebook. However, the researchers noticed that one of the references is about the communicative reference in the reference list. Therefore, finding it can be used to argue that the book uses communicative reference. Even though the amount of the CLT references is not as much as the other's references, it still can be used to argue that the book is using CLT references.

Furthermore, to find the manifestation of CLT in the coursebook, the researchers tried to find it in each chapter of the coursebook. It can be noticed that the coursebook was structured based on the functional syllabus. For instance, some chapters' themes mentioned making food,

interviewing others, finding information by asking others, retelling a phenomenon, telling famous people through biography, and conversation activities. However, one of the coursebook chapters emphasized grammatical learning. For instance, the chapter required the students to write the conditional sentences. Based on researchers' views, that goal was not a functional view. Therefore, as the researchers, we suggest that it can be switched into a conversational practice rather than making a conditional sentence. Besides, the role-play might be suitable to match the topic of conditional sentences in a role-play activity.

The general finding would be interesting to see whether the coursebook contents also show commitment to CLT. Therefore, we have arranged the findings into four focus discussions. Hence, the detailed applications of CLT in its content are presented below:

Learning by Doing

They are subjects that teach students to communicate appropriately and correctly. This communication can be done both orally and in writing. With this conclusion, the competency standard for English subjects is a minimum ability qualification that describes the communicative function of language; the work people do use language, not just its form of English. These competency standards are the basis for students to understand and respond to any situation means that learning by doing. The coursebook also emphasizes the communicative functions of language such as the procedure text of making food, life phenomena, natural phenomena, interviewing friends and making an argument on specific topics. However, one of chapters in the book does not mention the communicative functions by emphasizing the reading activity.

They emphasize skills in using the language, not just the forms of language, and they are therefore activity based, this course book also contains that in every teaching and learning activity, activities that must first have a goal to be achieved. By paying attention to the goals that have been set, it can affect the ability to speak and communicate. This ability must be trained since books containing activity content can help students apply it in daily life. With these activities they can understand first-hand what is conveyed in the book. The practice skill in the coursebook primarily reflects the use of language. For instance, the activities are making a procedure text within daily context, making an opinion, discussing and interviewing.

They are also influential in making students think about things inherent in today's era, where students' freedom of opinion is getting easier, considering that living in an era of advanced and developing technology, all students can easily convey and receive. If you pay attention to this, it becomes crucial, especially students must be aware of the importance of freedom of opinion about any matter. In addition, they discussed that learning grammar is essential because when studying grammar students learn to be good communicators, listeners, thinkers, readers and writers. Studying grammar has many positive impacts on the development of learning English for children and young people whose benefits can be felt in various aspects of life.

Authentic and Meaningful Communication Orientation

The coursebook uses authentic material in the teaching process. For example, they use food context, natural disasters in Indonesia, asking and giving information about themselves to others, songs, and global warming. However, one discussion using non authentic material which is a reading from western. Asking an activity carried out by someone to ask for information and get a more straightforward answer to something that has not been understood or not understood. So, it can be concluded that if students ask questions, the circumstances or traits that exist in each individual will show confidence and overcome fear when asking for information and obtain clear

answers to something that has not been understood. It is crucial in the learning process because it can dig up information, confirm what is already known, and direct attention to aspects that are not yet known.

This coursebook also included asking about someone's favourite song and how they feel about that song. Listening to music is one of the most popular hobbies for many people. Listening to music can also be a complement to daily activities. One of them is doing certain activities; many people choose to listen to music. Furthermore, it turns out that people's relationship with the choice of music they feel is also related to the mood they feel.

Besides that, this coursebook also presents about procedure, phenomena, biography, song, recent issues, that may encourage students to make the reader understand more about something. The text is complete with how to do or make something. The procedure text is based on the rules that must be observed. Many people make mistakes when understanding the form of the guide. Then learn biography which contains the life history of the character, students can also know the struggle of the character to achieve success. Being a role model for students, they are also expected to imitate the good qualities shown by the characters in the biography.

Focusing on Fluency

Fluency is defined as the ability to perform natural language use in communication (Richards, 2006). This could be achieved by facilitating learners to perform meaning negotiation, avoid communication breakdown, correct misunderstanding, communicate their intent, and demonstrate grammatical accuracy. Coursebooks must provide activities that encourage students to also focus on their fluency.

The coursebook is also emphasizing fluency, not just accuracy. There are two of six chapters that emphasize fluency. The rest of the chapters do not. Instead of emphasizing fluency, they focus on accuracy such as grammatical, post reading activity, and writing tasks. Even though there is unbalancing, the fluency is emphasized by the arguing activity, procedure text, and asking about information of someone. It can make many ideas come up because they can motivate each other. This is very useful to continue to evaluate to be better in the future. Therefore, this book also contains the task organization is primarily an individual project which requires them to do the task individually.

Integrating Different Language Skills in Communication

In terms of the integrations of the language skills, this coursebook did not emphasize those integrations. As mentioned in the checklist form, the integration must be the four skills or at least it emphasized the listening and speaking. Therefore, the researcher found that the task in each chapter did not emphasize it. Besides, the activity recalled information about what the students have read. In short, most activities emphasized the reading and writing activity. There is one missing skill in every chapter which is the listening practices. Even though one chapter discussed the song, listening skills are still missing.

On the other hand, the activities and tasks in the coursebook also referred to individual tasks that required students to do it alone. The researchers, at least, mentioned that the individual task was the primary task. Meanwhile, the group task had less attention. It noticed 'work in-pair' as the work group which required students to work with their peers.

Scrutinizing the result of the exploration, some points were interconnected with several previous research findings. The communicative activities in this coursebook were presented into two styles, the practical and the social communication purposes. The manifestation can be seen

when the activities were limited to enrichment activities and the conversation activities. It was in line with Firiady (2018) who explored the CLT in speaking activities presented in a coursebook. He found that the CLT activities were divided into functional and social interaction activities. In the other sense, the author also mentioned that the coursebook was created as the *Wahana Komunikasi* which means the CLT approach must be presented as the majority activities of the students. As Ali and Walker (2014), CLT sometimes appears and integrates to some ELT Curriculum. So, it is not surprising that sometimes in some English books CLT dominates the activities as found in the analysis of this book. Nonetheless, some activities did not reflect CLT.

CONCLUSION

In brief, a communicative approach is used in the classroom in the context of CLT. The approach includes classroom activities that direct students to the use of language, such as groups, peers, interviews, information gaps, games, language exchanges, surveys, pair work, learning by teaching, and others. Moreover, the implementation of CLT can be found in coursebooks, including Indonesian coursebooks. Recognizing the coursebook's importance, the coursebook's coursebook evaluation is needed to keep the coursebook holds the correct principles. In this research, the researcher intended to evaluate the government's coursebook, which claims CLT in its function. By using the adapted coursebook evaluation checklist from Grant's and Cunningsworth evaluation tools, the researchers found that the coursebook was not implementing CLT principles. Even though the discussion in each chapter tried to implement CLT principles, the activities did not. Moreover, the skills taught in this coursebook also emphasized writing skills which should be equal to four skills.

Furthermore, by seeing this research result, the policymaker and the author can use it as an evaluation starting point. Teachers are expected to have concrete supplementary documents to give students nuances about communicative activities in the classroom settings. By doing so, students can nurture themselves in gaining the skills of a second language communicatively. In the other sense, the future researchers are highly suggested to future researchers to reach a wide range of the data and increase the number of the coursebook to be analyzed. Besides, the implemented methods to analyze the coursebook are also encouraged to use deep data analysis. Therefore, the research's results can be more profound and detailed.

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