

THE EVALUATION OF A VIDEO-BASED TEXTBOOK FOR LISTENING FOR GENERAL PURPOSES SUBJECT

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ABSTRACT

Textbooks are essential in education. They are used as learning tools to facilitate the teaching and learning process. Before deciding what textbooks will be used or whether the textbook is still appropriate, it is essential to evaluate it. This present study aims at evaluating a video-based textbook for Listening for General Purposes. The research used a content or document analysis approach, which belongs to a descriptive qualitative study (Ary et al., 2010). The instrument was a rubric containing criteria for good textbooks. The data were analyzed qualitatively based on the criteria of designing good textbooks. The finding shows that the textbook is good in terms of language and practicality. The textbook is very practical for lecturers who teach the listening subject in that it gives very clear steps for the lecturers on how to teach each unit of the book. On the other hand, the textbook and videos used still have some weaknesses. They relate to the appropriateness of the contents of the textbook and videos used with the curriculum and students' language level and the quality of the layout. The layout is just like a module. In addition, the quality of some audio and visuals is still bad. Many videos still have subtitles that do not match with the objective of using the videos, namely, to improve students' listening ability.

Keywords: *Textbook, evaluation, Listening for General Purposes*

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks and coursebooks are two terms that are currently used interchangeably. Textbooks/ coursebooks are teaching and learning materials that are essential in education. They facilitate the teaching and learning process both inside and outside the classroom contexts. They function as a guide for learners and instructors, making them engaged in practices and making both the teaching and learning activities thrive (Margana & Widyantoro, 2017). According to Lodhi et al. (2019), the increase in the teaching and learning phase results in an increase in the importance of textbooks.

Furthermore, McGrath (2016) pointed out that textbooks are very important for teachers and learners since they are used as a map showing where one is going on and where one has been. They provide language samples and offer variety. Specifically for learners, they define what is to be learned and what will be tested, reinforce what the teacher has done, and make revision and preparation possible. They thus offer support for learning outside class. For teachers, they provide a structure for teaching. They save time because preparing materials from scratch for every lesson is time-consuming and tiring. They also offer linguistic, cultural, and methodological support. In addition, they are easy to keep track of what teachers have done and tell others where the teachers have reached, for example, when the teachers need to report that to the Head of Department. In other words, textbooks are

learning materials designed for the sake of the teacher and students to make the teaching and learning process run smoothly and help students achieve their learning objectives.

Gilmore (2012) stated that research into language learning materials development, including textbooks, has now been receiving more attention than before. It means that developing materials for language learning has been considered crucial. The development of that developing materials itself will lead to an increase in the need for material evaluation. According to Gholami et al. (2017), "for the purpose of selecting an efficient and appropriate textbook, the evaluation of the materials becomes a mandatory process with respect to definite guidelines and criteria." The evaluation is also conducted in order that the textbook can meet the need of students and help teachers to reach the objective of the lesson. Therefore, before a teacher decides what textbooks to use or whether the textbook can be used for the next teaching and learning process, it is better for him/her to evaluate them.

According to Tomlinson (2011), the evaluation of materials can be done in two ways. They are pre-use and post-use. Pre-use focuses on predictions of potential value. It can be whilst-use and therefore focused on awareness and description of what the learners are actually doing whilst the materials are being used. Meanwhile, post-use focuses on evaluating what happened as a result of using the materials. In line with Tomlinson, Ellis (1997) also points out that materials can be evaluated in two ways, i.e., predictive and retrospective evaluations. Predictive evaluation is done in order to determine which are best suited to the purposes of the teachers. Meanwhile, retrospective evaluation is conducted when the materials have been used, and there is a need to undertake further evaluation to determine whether the materials have 'worked' for them.

The evaluated textbook in this study was a video-based textbook for Listening for General Purposes subject. It was evaluated through post-use or retrospective evaluation. The textbook has been used for three years, and it seems that it needs some revisions since some parts of the content do not seem to match the student's language level. The students are at the pre-intermediate level, while some parts of the textbook are at the elementary level. Besides that, based on SWOC (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenge) analysis that I have conducted previously, it was found that this textbook is very prospective. It means that many Listening lecturers will need this video-based textbook because they are commonly not really sure about what materials they should give to students when teaching listening subjects. This is in line with what has been stated by Wang (2015) that many teachers do not have clear goals for their teaching, so the materials chosen often do not match with the competencies that students have to achieve. They commonly use audio-based textbooks, which seem to be monotonous, and sometimes they also use videos without considering whether the videos are suitable for the students or not. Therefore, I think it is important to evaluate the video-based textbook that has been developed by two English lecturers at a public university in Indonesia to find out whether or not it has fulfilled the criteria of a good textbook. Furthermore, it is beneficial to find out some aspects that can be improved for the textbook, and hopefully, I also can give some recommendations on how to improve it.

METHOD

This study used a content or document analysis approach, which belongs to a descriptive qualitative study (Ary et al., 2010). This study was conducted to find out whether a video-based textbook for Listening for General Purposes has fulfilled the criteria of a good textbook or not. Hence, the textbook and the accompanying videos are the objects of the study, and a rubric containing criteria for good textbooks was used as the instrument. The rubric was designed by following the evaluation criteria of textbooks and videos adapted from Laabidi & Nfissi (2016), Wang (2015), and Zohrabi et al. (2012).

Some steps were used to evaluate the video-based textbook. The first was specifying the phenomenon to be investigated and deciding the object to be evaluated. In this case, it was a video-based textbook for Listening for General Purposes subject to find out whether the textbook met the criteria of a good textbook. The second was designing an instrument for evaluating the textbook in the form of a rubric in which the content was adapted from evaluation criteria by Laabidi & Nfissi (2016), Wang (2015), and Zohrabi et al. (2012). The rubric was filled out by using a checklist. The checklist was used because it is easy to administer when we compare, identify or verify (Widodo, 2015).

The third was collecting the data. The data were collected from the textbook and videos used for the textbook. Next, the analysis of the data was conducted. The aspects being evaluated for the textbook were contents, language, and physical aspects. The content aspect consisted of 6 statements. For the language aspect, there were 7 statements, and for the physical aspect, 10 statements were provided. Meanwhile, the evaluation of the videos included the quality of the videos, language, accessibility of the videos, and the physical aspect. The total number of statements for evaluating the videos was 23 statements consisting of 13 statements for the quality of the videos, 3 statements for the language aspect, 3 statements for the accessibility of the videos, and 4 statements for the physical aspect. The score scale used was from 1 to 4 (1= poor, 2= good enough, 3 good, 4= very good). The judgment of whether each criterion belongs to a good or bad category was based on the average score from all statements in each criterion of the evaluation. After the analysis was conducted, the discussion, conclusion, and suggestions were written based on the finding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The textbook is a video-based textbook. Therefore, the analysis was conducted for both the textbook and the videos used for the textbook. The result of the three aspects of the textbook evaluation and four aspects of the videos used are presented in tables. Table 1 shows the content aspect of the textbook. It contains 6 statements. They are the appropriateness of the contents with the competencies that should be achieved for Listening for General Purposes subject as stated in the curriculum, the appropriateness of the choice of the materials with the level of the students, the appropriateness of the materials with the present era, the appropriateness of the exercises and activities with the need of developing listening skill, the appropriateness of the instructions on how to use the materials with the videos used, the appropriateness of the content of the textbook with the videos used. Below are the table and the calculation result of the finding.

Table 1. The result of the evaluation of the content aspect of the video-based textbook for Listening for General Purposes.

Aspect of evaluation	Statements	Score			
		1	2	3	4
A. Content	1. The appropriateness of the contents with the competencies that should be achieved for the Listening for General Purposes subject as stated in the curriculum		V		
	2. The appropriateness of the choice of the materials with the level of the students.		V		
	3. The appropriateness of the materials in the present era				V
	4. The appropriateness of the exercises and activities with the need to develop listening skills.		V		

	5. The appropriateness of the instructions on how to use the materials with the videos used				V
	6. The appropriateness of the content of the textbook with the videos used				V
	Total Score	18			
	Average	3			

It is obvious from Table 1 that the average score for the content aspect is 3. Therefore, overall, it can be claimed that the content of the textbook is good. The materials are already appropriate for the present era, the instruction on how to use the materials are also good, and the contents of the textbook also already match with the videos used. However, there are three points categorized as bad. First, materials for some units in the textbook do not match with competencies that should be achieved for the Listening for General Purposes subject as stated in the curriculum. Second, the choice of some materials is not appropriate for the students' language level. Third, the exercises and activities are not appropriate for developing students' listening skills.

The mismatch between contents and competencies that should be achieved will create some problems. The first is the students' English listening mastery might not be able to improve properly since some of the materials are too easy for them. The second is it might also make students feel like there are not enough challenges for them to learn to listen. The last is the achievement of the goals of the learning also cannot be seen clearly. Ahmet (2019) pointed out that:

“textbook evaluation criteria for evaluating exercises and activities are suggested to be the following: The activities in the textbook are interesting for the students. There is an adequate treatment of activities that promote meaningful language use (as opposed to mechanical exercises). The activities provide a variety of interaction opportunities (group work, pair work, etc.). The activities in the textbook promote critical thinking (i.e., analysis, synthesis, and interpretation). There is an adequate amount of activities for practicing the language (vocabulary, grammar) in the textbook. Finally, the activities are appropriate for the level of the students”. (p.4)

Table 2 shows the language aspect of the textbook. It covers 7 statements, which deal with grammar, dictions, appropriateness of the language of instructions and explanation with students' language level, the clarity of the messages, and the cohesion and coherence of the texts. The statements and the result of the calculation can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. The result of the evaluation of the language aspect of the video-based textbook for Listening for General Purposes.

Aspect of evaluation	Statements	Score			
		1	2	3	4
B. Language	1. The use of grammar in the sentences in the textbook				V
	2. The choice of dictions toward the language level of the students as stated in the curriculum (intermediate level)			V	
	3. The appropriateness of the language of instructions with students' language level			V	
	4. The appropriateness of the language of explanation with students' language level			V	
	5. The clarity of the messages				V

	6. The coherence of the text (instruction and explanation)				V
	7. The cohesion of the text (instruction and explanation)				V
Total score		25			
Average		3.6			

From Table 1, it can be seen that the average score for the language aspect is 3.6. It means that, overall, the language used is grammatical. The cohesion and coherence of the text in the textbook are good so that the instructions and explanations in the textbook become clear. In other words, the messages are clearly understood.

The next aspect evaluated is the physical appearance. The physical appearance is evaluated through 10 statements. They are the cover of the textbook, the layout, the balance among units, the organization of the materials, the balance of the presentation of each unit, the display of the materials, the presentation of warm activity, main and follow-up activities, and the color, texture, and symbols in the pictures used in the textbook. The detailed result can be found in Table 3 below.

Table 3. The result of the evaluation of the physical appearance aspect of the video-based textbook for Listening for General Purposes.

Aspect of evaluation	Statements	Score			
		1	2	3	4
C. Physical appearance	1. The cover of the textbook			V	
	2. The layout of the textbook		V		
	3. The balance among units			V	
	4. The organization of materials in the textbook			V	
	5. The materials in the textbook have been displayed chronologically.			V	
	6. The balance of the presentation of each unit			V	
	7. The presentation of the first part (warm-up) of each unit with the topic			V	
	8. The presentation of the second part (main activity) of each unit with the topic			V	
	9. The presentation of the last part (follow-up) of each unit with the topic			V	
	10. The color, texture, and symbols in the pictures		V		
Total score		28			
Average		2.8			

It is obvious in Table 3 that the score for the physical appearance aspect is 2.8. Based on the score, it can be concluded that the physical appearance aspect is still not good. Many statements get good criteria, but there are two things that are considered bad. They are the layout of the textbook and the color, texture, and symbols in the pictures. The appearance of the textbook is more like a module, which is like a copy paper. It is not designed properly. In addition, most of the units are not accompanied by pictures.

As noted in the literature review, several researchers have highlighted the imperative of

the appearance of a textbook. McDonough and Shaw in Laabidi & Nfissi (2016) emphasize the importance of external evaluation because it "offers a brief overview of the outside of the book" (p.146.) They assert the need for a critical evaluation of the blurb, or the claims made on the cover of the students'/teacher's books, and of the introduction and the table of contents. The rationale behind the identification of first impressions as an important criterion for textbook evaluation lies in the idea that students, quite literally, tend to judge a book by its cover and the layout of the textbook. If the cover is attractive and the text clearly organized so as to facilitate students' negotiation through it, the likelihood of students being attracted to the textbook is high. Student attraction to a textbook incites interest in a subject and encourages them to study it, while an unattractive textbook has the opposite effect.

Furthermore, the videos as the base of the textbook are also evaluated. The evaluation includes 4 aspects. They are the content and quality of the videos, the accessibility of the videos, the language, and the physical aspect. The result for the calculation of contents and quality of the videos is presented in the following table.

Table 4. The result of the evaluation of contents and quality aspect of the videos used for the textbook

Aspect of evaluation	Statement	Score			
		1	2	3	4
D. The contents and quality of the videos	1. The appropriateness of the contents with the competencies that should be achieved for the Listening for General Purposes subject as stated in the curriculum		V		
	2. The quality of visual		V		
	3. The quality of audio			V	
	4. The clarity of the speakers' voice			V	
	5. The quality of the back sound			V	
	6. The appropriateness of the video content with the students' level		V		
	7. The appropriateness of the content of each video with the exercises/ activities given to students			V	
	8. The materials can be used partially or as a whole.				V
	9. The appropriateness of the contents of the videos with the norm and culture of Indonesia			V	
	10. Clarity of the back sound			V	
	11. Clarity of the audio			V	
	12. Clarity of the visuals in the videos			V	
	13. The difficulty level of video content		V		
Total score		37			
Average		2.85			

From Table 4, it can be seen that there are 13 statements that are used to evaluate the content and quality aspect of the videos used for the textbook. Overall, the average score for this aspect is 2.85. It can be concluded that, as a whole, the quality of the videos is not good. Particularly, there are 4 things that are considered bad (the score is 2 each). The first is the appropriateness of the contents with the competencies that should be achieved for the

Listening for General Purposes subject as stated in the curriculum. This is in line with the content of the textbook since the contents of the textbook are based on the videos used. The second is the appropriateness of the video content to the students' level. Many videos are too easy for students. Moreover, they seem to provide students more with dictation rather than listening skills. Next is the quality of the visual. Some of the videos have subtitles, and some of the subtitles have been closed with a color so that the students cannot see the subtitles. However, the editing is not tidy. The color which closes the subtitles disturbs the visual of the videos as a whole. It makes the videos not nice to be seen. The last is the appropriateness of the videos with the listening skill that needs to be mastered by the students. Some videos are more appropriate for increasing students' ability in grammar because they contain many drills. In addition, they provide more on the repetition of some utterances, which have the same pattern as students need to learn Grammar.

The highest score for this aspect is obtained only from statement 8, i.e., "The materials can be used partially or as a whole." Each unit of the textbook is accompanied by two or three videos which can be used separately. They can also be used as a whole if the lecturer needs to teach them as a whole. The rest of the statements (statements 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12) belong to a good category.

The second aspect evaluated for the videos is the accessibility of the videos. This aspect has three statements to be scored. They are the components of the video. They are strengthened by the existence of audio, the accessibility of the media with technology, and the safety of the videos for students and lecturers. The calculation of the finding is stated in the table below.

Table 5. The result of the evaluation of the accessibility aspect of the videos used for the textbook

Aspect of evaluation	Statement	Score			
		1	2	3	4
E. The accessibility of the videos	1. The components of the video are strengthened by the existence of the audio				V
	2. The accessibility of the media with technology				V
	3. The safety of the videos for students and lecturers			V	
Total Score		11			
Average		3.7			

From Table 5, the average score for the accessibility of the videos is 3.7. All videos are supported with audio, and it is obvious that the videos are accessible with technology. They can be used using a computer or laptop device. The storage is easy. They can be saved on a flash disc or other electronic devices. They are also safe for the students and the lecturers. The contents of the videos are not vulgar. It means that they are not against Indonesian culture and norms. Besides, they do not contain things that can trigger the viewers do crimes.

The next aspect of the video evaluation is the language. This aspect includes three statements. The statements and the calculation of the score are displayed in the following table.

Table 6. The result of the evaluation of the language aspect of the videos used for the textbook

Aspect of evaluation	Statement	Score			
		1	2	3	4
F. Language in the videos	1. The use of grammar in utterances/expressions in the videos				V
	2. The appropriateness of language level used in the videos with students' (intermediate)		V		
	3. The clarity of the messages				V
Total score		10			
Average		3.3			

Table 6 provides the average score for the accessibility of the videos. The average score is 3.3. From the score, it can be concluded that the language used in the videos is good. The expressions used in the videos are grammatical. It is no wonder since the speakers in the videos are mostly native speakers of English. Even when they are not native speakers of English, they use standard British/American English since most videos were developed for educational purposes. It can be seen from the topic and the way they present the contents of the videos. Therefore, the messages expressed by the speakers are clear. One statement that has a bad score is statement 2. It is about the appropriateness of the language level used in the videos with students' (intermediate).

The last aspect of evaluating the videos is the physical appearance. For this aspect, there are 4 statements to be scored. The statements and the result of the calculation are displayed in the table below.

Table 7. The result of the evaluation of the physical appearance aspect of the videos used for the textbook

Aspect of evaluation	Statement	Score			
		1	2	3	4
G. Presentation	1. The color, texture, and symbols in the videos		V		
	2. The balance of duration among the videos		V		
	3. The variety of English accents in the videos			V	
	4. Video materials can cultivate students' competence in intercultural communications.			V	
Total score		10			
Average		2.5			

Table 7 shows that the average score for the physical appearance aspect of the videos used for the textbook is 2.5. It means that the physical appearance of the videos is considered bad. The variety of English accents in the videos is good. The speakers in the videos are not only from native English countries but also those who are from non-native English countries such as Spain, Jamaica, etc. From the various accents and topics spoken by different people from different cultures, the students are also able to learn intercultural communication. Most students do not have the chance to go abroad, and they have limited opportunities to observe distinctive cultural values. In this respect, the cultural aspects of various cultures represented in the videos can be regarded as an important contribution. On the other hand, some of the videos still have subtitles, which may distract students' listening focus. They might not concentrate on what they are listening to; they might just read the subtitles instead. Hence, their listening skills might not be able to develop well.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed at evaluating a video-based textbook for Listening Purposes Subject. Therefore, the evaluation covers two things, namely, the textbook and the videos used as the base of the textbook. Based on the result and discussion, it is found that the video-based textbook for Listening for General Purposes that has been used for three years has some strengths and weaknesses. For the strengths, there are several things that can be pointed out. The first is the appropriateness of the materials with the present era. Using videos as teaching and learning media is not uncommon in this globalization and digital era. Therefore, it is very appropriate to use videos as the base of this textbook. Second, the contents of the textbook have really represented the contents of the videos used. Next, the language used for both the textbook and the videos has fulfilled the standard of good English so that the messages are clear. The instructions and explanations are clear, and the textbook provides clear steps on how to use the textbook and how the lecturers should teach each unit of the textbook. In addition, the textbook contains various activities/ exercises for students. Finally, they are easily accessed through technology.

Besides the strengths, the video-based textbook also has some weaknesses. The crucial thing is some of the contents do not match with students' language level and the curriculum. Besides, the quality of some audio and visuals is still bad. Many videos still have subtitles that do not match with the objective of using the videos, namely to improve students' listening ability. Some of the video contents also do not match with the competencies that students need to achieve in learning English Listening. In addition, the layout also needs to be improved. In short, this video-based textbook needs a major revision, even though Cunningsworth in Haghi (2013) states that it is natural that “no course books will be totally suited to a particular teaching situation. The teacher will have to find their own way of using it and adapting it if necessary. So one should not be looking for the perfect course book which meets our entire requirement, but rather for the best possible fit between what the course book offers and what the teachers and students need.”(p.89)

SUGGESTIONS

Considering the weaknesses of the video-based textbook, I would like to offer some suggestions. To revise this textbook, the first thing to do is to find appropriate videos as the base for the textbook. Instead of creating the videos themselves, the listening lecturers can develop a video-based textbook by taking videos from Youtube or other resources. The choice of videos needs to consider the students' needs, interests, and abilities and the demand of the curriculum. Besides, the audio and visuals also need to be checked thoroughly and edited properly.

The language level of the video contents can be checked by following these two ways. First, the utterances/ expressions used in the videos are transcribed. Then, the transcripts can be checked at <http://www.readabilityformulas.com>. Next, if the videos need editing, the textbook developer has to make sure that they are edited properly. Furthermore, for the layout, the textbook designer may ask help from someone who knows better about such a matter.

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