

## AUTHENTICITY AND PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS IN AN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK FOR SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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**Abstract:** *This study deals with the analysis of textbooks for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students of junior high school in terms of authenticity and pedagogical. The purpose of this study was to know to what extent the English textbook accomplishes authenticity aspects and pedagogical aspects. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. The data were collected through documentation. The data source for this research is the Bupena English textbook for seventh grade students of Junior high school written by Nur Zaida and published by Erlangga in 2018. The textbook analysis for authenticity aspects was identified by using authentic assessment criteria, while for pedagogical aspects, it was based on the criteria made by Cunningsworth (1995). The results of the study show that from the authenticity aspects, the textbook fulfills 7 out of 15 criteria and is categorized as "poor" with an average score of 46.67%. From the pedagogical aspect, this textbook fulfills 17 out of 20 criteria and it is categorized as "good" with an average score of 85%. In conclusion, the Bupena English textbook is not good enough for authenticity aspects but it is good enough for pedagogical aspects.*

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**Keywords:** *Authenticity; Pedagogical; Textbook*

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### INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are indispensable for English instruction and learning due to the abundance of instructional and learning exercises contained within each chapter. Activities, dialogues, learning materials, and assignments are included in the textbook. Additionally, textbooks offer some learning resources like workbooks, CDs, cassettes, and other materials that keep students interested in what they are learning. Cunningsworth (1995) stated that textbooks contain instructional material that can be utilized as a resource for learning and instruction. Teachers should be able to choose the appropriate book for the teaching and learning process. One of the methods is to evaluate the textbook.

To determine whether a textbook fits the criteria for a good book, an evaluation is required. Textbook evaluation would involve carefully choosing the materials and checking to see if they meet the needs of the students and are in line with the teaching program's goals, methods, and values (Cunningsworth, 1995). By evaluating textbooks, teachers can gain insight into the content, strengths, and weaknesses of a textbook, allowing them to adapt it to the needs of their students and within the classroom.

There are various types of materials found in textbooks, including authentic, non-authentic, and created materials. Richards (2006) stated that authentic materials refer to the utilization of texts, images, video selections, and other instructional resources that were not intentionally designed for educational objectives. Meanwhile, non-authentic materials, as defined by Beatty (2015), are those materials created for pedagogical purposes with limited connection to the real world, such as multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank exercises, etc.

Further, the materials in a textbook can be categorized into two different aspects, i.e. 'authentic' and 'pedagogical' aspects. A textbook may not possibly have both of these aspects. So if a textbook is good in the authentic aspect, it may not be good in the pedagogical aspect and vice versa. However, a textbook may have a problem if it is lacking in both authenticity and pedagogical aspects. Thus, this study was intended to analyze the authenticity and pedagogical aspects of an English textbook used in the EFL context in the seventh grade of junior high school in Indonesia.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A textbook is a book containing information about a specific subject or field of study. Textbooks are typically used by students in school or college, but they can also be used by professionals or anyone interested in learning more about a specific subject (Wehmeier et al., 2005). Brown (2007) states that a textbook is a book used in an educational curriculum. Richards (2001) says that textbooks are an important part of most language programs. They are sometimes the basis for a lot of the language that language learners hear and the language that they use in the classroom. They might help teachers decide what to teach, how to teach balance, and what kinds of language practice to give their students. The use of textbooks in education is a longstanding practice, and their content significantly influences student learning experiences. The balance between authenticity and pedagogical aspects in textbooks is a critical consideration for educators and curriculum designers.

Tomlinson (2012) stated that an authentic text is one that aims to communicate information rather than to give commands. Being created by a native speaker is not a prerequisite, and it can even be a simplified version of the original that makes communication easier. Furthermore, authentic materials, Richards (2006) claimed that

they consist of texts, photographs, video clips, and other instructional resources that were not created with pedagogical intent in mind. Also, Harmer (2015) explains authentic materials as a language that is free from hesitation when presented to non-native speakers. This means that authentic materials are those created by a native speaker in a real-world setting rather than for educational purposes. Kilickaya (2004) suggests that incorporating authentic texts into language learning can help capture students' interest. Furthermore, Aftab (2011) identifies five characteristics of authentic materials, which he derived from various expert statements, i.e. real audience, real-life-like roles, communicative purpose, relevant situations, and focus on meaning.

Further, pedagogical materials are resources specifically created or adapted for learning purposes (Swe, 2016). Pedagogical aspects in a textbook are the features that make it effective for language learning. These aspects include the content, activities, presentation, assessment, and support materials. Cunningsworth (1995) stated there are 4 main criteria for a good textbook in terms of pedagogical aspect. They are: (1) study skills, (2) principles and approaches, (3) learning/teaching procedures, (4) the student's role.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted to find out to what extent an English textbook for seventh grade students of junior high school accomplishes authenticity aspects and pedagogical aspects. Thus, the descriptive qualitative research method was applied in this research. Sugiyono (2015) stated that the qualitative method is used to analyze data by describing the collected data. The data in this research were collected through the document technique, in which the document technique is to collect data or information from various resources like the internet, articles, journals, documentaries, books, and so on.

The object of this research is the textbook entitled "Bupena English" for seventh grade students of Junior high school published by Erlangga in 2018. It contains 10 chapters and 172 pages. Several steps were applied to collect the data, i.e.: reading, classifying, calculating, explaining, and conclusions. The analysis for the authenticity aspects of this textbook was based on 5 characteristics, namely; (1) real audience, (2) real-life-like roles, (3) communicative purpose, (4) relevant situations, and (5) focus on meaning. While, the analysis for the pedagogical aspects was based on 4 main criteria, namely; (1) study skills, (2) principles and approaches, (3) learning/teaching procedures, and (4) the student's role.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The data obtained from all the book chapters were analyzed to find out to what extent the English textbook accomplishes authenticity aspects and pedagogical aspects. In this research, five characteristics need to be fulfilled for the authenticity aspects and four main criteria need to be fulfilled for the pedagogical aspects.

### **Results**

#### **Authenticity Aspect in Bupena English Textbook**

The assessment in the *Bupena* English textbook has been evaluated by using the characteristics of authentic assessment. There are five criteria for authentic assessment. They are: (1) real audience, (2) real-life roles, (3) communicative purpose, (4) relevant situations, (5) focus on meaning. The evaluation was used to ensure that this textbook met all criteria for authentic assessment.

The textbook was thoroughly organized according to the level of complexity of the activities included in each chapter. It was organized in ascending order of complexity. The identical structure pervaded the entire chapter, from the beginning of the unit. The textbook had two parts, namely knowledge and skill. Students are assigned activities that will give them a complete understanding of a certain material. To assess their skills, the *Bupena* English textbook provides teachers with rubrics. At the end of the chapter, there are also evaluations and end-of-term. Evaluation provides questions to help students assess their understanding of a topic. Besides paper-based evaluations, this textbook is also completed with Computer-based Tests that can be downloaded on the website. End-of-term review material during the first term and prepare students for the end-of-term test.

The results of data analysis revealed that authentic assessments in the *Bupena* English textbook have not met all the checklist criteria for authenticity aspect. From the total 134 tasks from 10 chapters of the *Bupena* English textbook analyzed, only 32 tasks applied authentic assessment. Out of 15 criteria, the authentic assessments only fulfill 7 criteria. This means that 46.67% of the tasks in the *Bupena* English textbook fulfilled the criteria of authentic assessment. Based on the result, the *Bupena* English textbook was categorized as “poor” with an average score of 46.67%.

#### **Pedagogical Aspect in Bupena English Textbook**

The findings of the data analysis indicated that the *Bupena* English textbook has not met all the checklist criteria for the pedagogical aspect. There are four main criteria that need to be fulfilled and 20 questions that must be answered. Cunningsworth (1995) stated the four main criteria are study skills, principles and approaches, learning/teaching procedures, and the student’s role. Out of 20 criteria, this textbook only fulfills 17 criteria.

This textbook does not fulfill the 3 criteria of “Study skills”. There is no aspect of study skills in the textbook. Students are not encouraged to take certain responsibilities for their learning. Therefore, the data shows that 85% of the tasks in the *Bupena* English textbook fulfilled the criteria of the pedagogical aspect stated by Cunningsworth. Based on the result, the *Bupena* English textbook was categorized as “good” with an average score of 85%.

## **Discussion**

### **Authenticity Aspects in The *Bupena* English Textbook**

Based on the results shown above, it was clear that authentic assessments were used in the *Bupena* English textbook. The textbook analyzed fulfills several characteristics of the authentic assessment. Of all the five characteristics, only three characteristics are found in the textbook. There is no real audience and no relevant situation.

The authentic tasks in the textbook do not involve a real audience. The audience in existing authentic tasks is not yet included in the authentic context. Authentic tasks in this textbook use a lot of dialogue and presentation so that the audience is only the students themselves and also the teacher. Rather than an authentic context, this is more of an academic context.

Authentic tasks may be defined as any objects obtained from the outside world and employed by the students and teachers to learn in the classroom (Maley & Tomlinson, 2017). Authentic tasks contained in this textbook provide opportunities for students to take part in carrying out short dialogues that match the pictures given. However, the role may be more academic than reflective of real situations. The guidance provided is also less clear as a real-life role. Students are not given previous examples so students may be confused about the roles given. So it can be seen that the authentic tasks in this textbook only fulfill one of the three criteria contained in the real-life roles characteristics.

Meanwhile, for communicative purposes, the authentic tasks in this textbook have met the three existing criteria. First, the communicative goal of these authentic tasks is to conduct conversations that emphasize speaking and listening skills. Next, the authentic task supports the development of students’ speaking skills through dialogue practice and presentation and involves listening skills from the perspective of students’ partners. Finally, there is a way to measure the achievement of the communicative goals of these tasks. The way to measure is through the scoring rubric which is provided at the end of each chapter in the textbook.

Further, in dealing with relevant situations, it was found that there was no authentic task in the textbook that was relevant to everyday life situations. These authentic tasks do not create situations that are relevant to students’ daily lives. There’s no active role for

students to exchange opinions or other matters related to students' daily lives. The conversations used are also only formal conversations carried out in class.

Authentic tasks in the textbook have only met two criteria from the "focus on meaning" characteristics. These authentic tasks encourage students to focus on meaning in the English context, such as the meaning of the expressions and dialogues they carry out. These tasks also provide opportunities for students to engage in in-depth activities by engaging in conversations and understanding the meaning of expressions used. However, this textbook lacks guidance or questions that stimulate students to reflect on the connections between their own experiences in the real world.

In addition, several tasks in the book were non-authentic assessments. Such as multiple choice, matching, and gap filling. This does not align with the requirements of authentic assessment, as specified by Frey (2014) that any multiple-choice question is likely to be more artificial since students do not answer them in the real world.

### **Pedagogical Aspects in The *Bupena* English Textbook**

Cunningsworth (1995) mentioned the sections devoted to study skills focus mainly on three different aspects. First, inviting learners to reflect on how they learn, and on which ways of learning seem to be most effective for them. Second, offering advice to learners on ways of developing their study skills. Last, training learners in reference skills for using dictionaries and grammar books. As a fact, none of these aspects are contained in the *Bupena* textbook. This shows that this textbook does not support students' skills well. No place in the textbook invites students to reflect on how they learn and which ways of learning seem most effective for them. The students are only given a variety of diverse assignments. They are not advised on how to develop their study skills.

The *Bupena* English textbook encourages an inductive learning approach. At the beginning of each chapter of this textbook, there is a "Knowledge" section that provides exercises to check students' knowledge of the topic. So students are immediately given exercises from the beginning of the chapter and students must understand them in the process so that they can do other tasks without having to be given rules or explanations first. This textbook presents activity-based learning for skills and communication. Students actively engage in the learning process through the implementation of activity-based learning; they strive to comprehend scientific concepts and implement them in their daily lives (Shah & Rahat, 2014).

The *Bupena* English textbook also commonly uses an inductive approach. It is evident in how the grammar is explained throughout some texts and dialogues. However, the forms or patterns are not explicitly defined. This textbook also presents its material mostly in visuals, such as photos and cartoons which can make the students recognize,

remember, and figure out the real object in their minds by visualization. The variety of visualization tools creates the possibility of their rational use in education, including enhancing learning activities (Mosina, 2020). Although the photos and cartoons are not colorful, they are not difficult to be understood by the 7th-grade students. In addition, all the visuals in this textbook are integral to the coursebook material.

Further, the *Bupena* English textbook uses student-centered learning where students have to do a lot of extensive exploration of the learning material in which the students are expected to play an active role in learning. Not only does this textbook require the students to be active in learning, but it also provides additional material for independent study based on the material already taught. Student-centered learning provides several advantages. Tzenios (2022) clarified that there are five benefits of student-centered learning. For starters, it gets students more involved by sparking their interest and letting them lead discussions, which gets them excited about learning. Second, student-centered learning helps students remember things better by focusing on real-life applications instead of rote memorization, which makes it easier to remember things. Third, it helps students learn how to solve problems by having them do things like role-playing and talking about real-life problems. This encourages critical thinking and new ideas. Next, student-centered learning helps students learn how to work together by giving them group projects and tasks to do. Finally, student-centered learning adapts to each student's learning goals by making the course fit their skills, interests, and needs. This textbook is completed with supplementary digital material for students in the form of videos of native speakers that can be accessed by scanning the printed QR codes and CBT TO (Computer-Based Test Tryouts) that can be downloaded on the *Erlangga* website. This digital material can provide benefits for teachers and students. Digital materials help teachers do their jobs better and give students a wider range of learning opportunities without being limited by time, space, or place (Lee & Hung, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that the *Bupena* English Textbook for Seventh Grade Students of Junior High School published by *Erlangga* is not good enough for authenticity aspects but good enough for pedagogical aspects. From the authentic aspect, this textbook has met 7 out of 15 criteria and this is categorized as “poor” with an average score of 46.67%. In addition, this textbook has poorly met the authentic criteria, this textbook also does not have many authentic tasks in it. In total, there are only 32 authentic tasks out of the 134 tasks contained in the *Bupena* English textbook and each chapter on average only contains 2-3 tasks. On the other hand, the pedagogical aspect in this textbook has met 17 out of 20 criteria and is categorized as “good” with an average score of 85%. This

textbook is still lacking in the study skills category. This textbook has not maximized students' learning abilities well. Overall, this textbook is adequate for use in the classroom as instructional materials.

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