Local Characteristics Content: An Analysis of ELT Textbook for Young Learners

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyse the media used in ELT textbook for beginners based on local characteristics of students by showing the data from analysed textbook, which is inappropriate for the the young learners in Indonesia, and this media made the teaching learning process ineffective and inefficient. Descriptive research design was applied in this study. The technique for collecting the data was quantitative approach. There were three (3) textbooks commonly used in primary level grade 4 in Indonesia. Those three were analyzed based on the local characteristics of students using demographic analysis. The result shows that only 5.6% of the media was related to local characteristics of students since the rest were to related general and foreign characteristic which reached 49% and 45.4% respectively. Therefore, the reason why the English learners in Indonesia particularly on primary level grade 4 could not reach the standard of English Learning was because the media was 94.4% not related to the local characteristics of students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Media is a tool used to facilitate for getting an achievement of a job. In teaching learning process, the media facilitates both teachers and students to achieve learning objectives well. This is in line with Gillet (1973) states that media is all printed material, mechanical, electronic forms of communication. They may indeed include anything object, person, situation, that is carrier of communication. Thus, the teacher must be included as one of the media of instruction.

Therefore, in English teaching learning process, the media is very important especially for beginners. In English, beginners feel easier to understand English when the learning process is assisted by using appropriate media that is related to regional characteristics of learners such as using name of person, picture, tool and etc. it matches with the sociocultural theory in 1990s, the sociocultural theory as an account of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), it combined both linguistics theory and cognitive theory as being too mind/brain oriented and instead put the learner as an active students in learning with particular or local social context (Vanpatten & Benati, 2010:5). Because of that, the media, which is suitable with the regional or local characteristics of learners, is extremely important for smooth process of learning English and able to achieve educational goals.

Therefore, media that is applied to students should be accordance with regional characteristics of learners for providing a positive impact on teaching learning process particularly for beginners. Furthermore, it is appropriate that the ability of novice learners to acquire English language learning would be more effective and efficient, and then obtaining the value of students will indicate the number gaining good grades. This would assume the ability to accept or digest student

in English language learning and performing well will be compatible with the education goals.

But in reality, the ability of novice students in the English language is still very far from what was expected. Based on observations done by the author, that students who should have been able to convey the words in the English language was not capable and percentage values obtained from primary schools in Indonesia, only 37% who achieves the highest graduation while 63% is still far from the expectations and goals of national education. Additionally, while the authors interviewed the learners about the textbook, the said that they do not like the textbook because they do not recognize and familiar with the content of the textbook itself. This is a very serious problem and need an analysis of subject matter of why it is happened and also need to be addressed immediately by providing the right, effective and efficient solution.

Therefore, the authors consider that it is very important to analyze the media used in the textbook of English for beginners that is designed by educators or bought by teachers from one printed book company to review whether it is related to students local characteristics or not.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Media in Language Teaching

According to Gagne (1974:22) media is material things that provide the vehicle for message. It is related to National Education Association (NEA) states that media is everything that can be manipulated, seen, listened, read and talked including of instrument used in teaching learning activities. On the other hand, media is a medium that is storage and transmission channels or tools used to store and send information or data. It is often referred to mass media or news media, but it may refer to a single medium used to communicate any data for any purpose.

From the previous elaboration, it can be said that Media is plural of Medium that means mediator, everything that sends the message from a source than will be transferred to the students. Media will be defined as the graphic, photographic, electronic, or mechanical means for arresting, processing, and reconstructing visual or verbal information can stimulate students' interest to know more about lesson. Weaver and Bollinger (1951:5) state that there are some specific ways in which media influence the learners. They are:

1. 1. It is said that use of media can attract and hold attention the students.
2. 2. Media aid retention and visual image
3. 3. Media assist in forming correct image
4. 4. Media assist in understanding proper relationship of component parts.

2.2 Types of Media

Kariman (1991:47-48) says there are varieties of media that can be employed in foreign language teaching. In general, they can be classified into three groups, namely: Audio Media for example: Radio, Audio Tapes, Phonograph disc, Visual Media for example: Flat material (pictures, flash card, maps, charts, cardboard figures), Three dimension materials (realia, puppets, models), and Projected material (slides, overhead projector, film strips) and Audio-visual Media for example: Television, video.

2.3 Textbook

A textbook is a type of reference work, or other collection of instructions, that is intended to provide ready reference. A textbook is sometimes referred to as a *vade mecum* (Latin, "go with me") or pocket reference that is always intended to be carried at all the times. Beside that, according to Sheldon (1987:1) textbook is a published book that has the explicit purpose to assist learners for enhancing knowledge and communicative achievement. Textbooks may deal with any topic, and are generally compendiums of information in a particular field or about a particular technique. They are designed to be easily consulted and provide quick answers in a certain area.

Beside that "Textbook" is sometimes applied to documents that are produced within an organization that are not designed for publication such as a company textbook for HR, for instance. In this case, the term is used nearly synonymously with "manual". Textbooks are widely used in

teaching learning process as quick references for various kinds of data. On the other hand, Textbook is one of the materials in which provide the core materials for a course on a particular topic for learners, structured for quick reference. The term is often manually used interchangeably (Tomlinson, 1998). In so doing, Textbook in English Teaching is one of the instruction types that contented about English material that will be delivered to the students. In one textbook, there are many topics that consist in a subject of the material.

2.4 The Local Characteristics of Learners

Character is the nature or potential possessed by humans and affect the human mind and character can be influenced by the surrounding environment. It is related to Sunarto and Hartono (1995: 4-5) states that every individual has the characteristics and traits derived from environmental influences. Then the characteristics associated with the development of biological factors tend to be fixed, while the characteristics associated with the social psychological more influenced by environmental factors. On this thing, to connect the learners mind with the topic we need the medium that familiar with them. In so doing, something that familiar with them is something that related to their local characteristic or their socio culture, i.e., the name of person that is commonly used in their environment like their friends, parents, and family names. Because of that as a teacher or practitioners of EFL/ESL, we should use that media to improve the learner's achievement in learning English.

To pursue that purpose, local characteristic of Learners is one of the important elements in giving the information to the students. It means that characteristic of the students must be known by the teacher to reach the objective of teaching learning process. Additionally, the media that is used in teaching learning process must be related to the characteristic of students, not only the individual characteristic but also the environment characteristic of learners particularly for beginners.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This research was designed as descriptive analysis research design by using documentation technique. In this research, the source of the data was review and analysed on stated issue in the book. Then the data were classified and tabulated to find out the demographic result from the collected data.

3.2 Source of Data

The source of the data was three English textbooks used in primary school for grade 4 in Indonesia. From these three books, the investigator reviewed the book whether the local character or local wisdom is stated in the book as the media to make the students ease to understand the knowledge delivered. The three books are from different publishers but the three books contain media like name and picture.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher analyzed the three textbooks by looking at the media used in the textbook and classify whether the media is adopted from local or from outside of the students' area and culture. After the data were collected, data were classified by three categories, which are local, general and foreigner/abroad. Then, the data were tabulated by using demographic analysis in Statistical Package in Social Science (SPSS) to find out the frequency and percentage.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Finding

From the analysis of the Primary School students' textbooks in Indonesia, the data were classified and presented in following table.

Table.1 Data from the textbooks.

No	Topics	Media from 3 Textbooks of Primary School grade 4 in Medan, Indonesia
1	Alphabet and Number	Picture of human, table, map, blackboard, eraser, shoes, chalk, cap, chair, book, fan, lamp, chicken, butterfly, pen, ruler, globe, skirt, shirt, belt, tie, sharpener, Apple, Bag, Cow, duck, egg,

		flower. Computer, tiger, dog, banana and name of People, David and Bondan
2	Greetings and introductions	Ian, Ari, Edwin, susan, Daniel, (no picture media)
3	Colors	Picture of Star, Balloon, English flag, Indonesian Flag, Panda, car, shoes, Shirt, students, bag, grasshopper, rainbow. And name of people, Tommy, Windy, Anna, Sammy, Hersa, Dwi
4	Fruits and Vegetables	Picture of Apples, strawberries, grapes, oranges, Potatoes, tomatoes, and the various forms of lettuce, Apple, Chokeberry, Hawthorn, Loquat ,Medlar ,Pear, Quince ,Rose hip, Rowan ,Service tree ,Serviceberry , Shipova. Banana, strawberry, watermelon, durian, rambutan, papaya, star fruits. Broccoli, cauliflower, globe artichokes, peas, beans, corn, kale, collard greens, spinach, arugula, beet greens, bok choy, chard, choy sum, turnip greens, endive, lettuce, mustard greens, watercress, garlic chives, celery, rhubarb, cardoon, Chinese celery, and lemon grass, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, zucchinis, pumpkins, peppers, eggplant, tomatillos, christophene, okra, breadfruit and avocado. And name of people, David, Daniel, John, Mary, Susan, Robert, Christine.
5	Animals	Picture of Monkey, rabbits, cow, buffalo, crocodile, snake, chicken, lion, tiger, bird, comodo, giraffe, zebra, goat, dog, orangutan and name of people, Daniel, David, John, Mary.
6	Clothes	Picture of Jeans, trouser, short, tie, jacket, shoes, socks, slivers, underwear, T. Shirt, shirt, cap, hat, skirt, neckties, name of people Tommy, Robby, Susan, Shanty, Mary.

From the above data, there are 196 words as media of textbook of primary school students in Indonesia. And all the media can be divided into three categories. And it can be seen on the table below.

Table. 2 *Percentage of the origin region of media*

No	Origin Region of Media	The number of Media	Percentage
1	Local	11	5,6 %
2	General	96	49 %
3	Abroad	89	45,4 %

4.2 Discussion

From the presented data, it can be seen that just 5,6 % the origin region of media found in the textbook of primary school in Indonesia, and 94,4 % the media is come from the outside of local characteristics. It is the big problem for the students because the students feel difficult to accept the topic when they are taught with the material and the media are coming from outside the characteristic of the students themselves. And from the problem that is situated in Introduction and if it is looked the previous observation, interview and theory which is mentioned in introduction, it is extremely sure that the problem is coming from the textbook that is not related to the local genuine of the learners. This textbook is also not suitable for students in Indonesia and this textbook is not relevance to the curriculum of Indonesia namely KTSP because in KTSP, Dhanay (2009) states that some things that need to be understood in relation to the curriculum unit level of education (KTSP) are as follows:

KTSP is in accordance with each educational unit, the potential and regional characteristics, and social culture of local communities and learners. Schools and school committees to develop curriculum and educational unit level syllabus basic framework based on curriculum and competency standards, under the supervision of the education service district, and religion departments responsible for education. Curriculum level education units for each program of study at the college developed and specified by each university according to the National Education Standards (www.dhanay.co.cc).

Because of that the textbook of primary school in the beginners of English in Indonesia need to be evaluated and prepared become a good and relevance textbook with the KTSP so the ability

students English can be improved. This meter will be easy to be done if the teacher and the government can work together in evaluating and preparing the textbook of English subject for Primary School in Indonesia.

This issue is not merely happened in Indonesian who is claimed as English as Foreign Language (EFL) rather than English as Second Language (ESL) Learners but many countries in this world that decelerate themselves as (EFL/ESL) has the same issue or problems. Therefor, this article is also provided for international issue that we have to face interestingly and seriously to achieve the international or global goals of English Language Teaching program so that communicative competence among the world can easily realize.

This problem will be finished if the teacher has a political will to resolve the problem. The teacher did not need to fully attend the textbook from one printed company or adopted book from abroad; they have to prepare the textbook consist of syllabus and lesson plan that it is based on the local characteristic of the students. Besides that, the government can organize the workshop for the teachers that insist of the material how to make the textbook based on the local characteristic of the learners.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, English textbook of the Primary School in Indonesia is not suitable for beginners because it is not relevance to the characteristics of learners and even Indonesian curriculum namely KTSP. From the data it is found that merely 5,6% of local media that is put in used textbook, the other 94,4% is come from general and abroad part. This issue is surely not only happened in Indonesia but also in over the world. From this article, hopefully the teacher in over the world consider about the textbook that has been used in their EFL/ESL teaching learning process. This problem will be solved if the teacher in over the world and the government work together to evaluate and prepared the new textbook based on the local genuine of each country so that the ESL/EFL learners can learn well and get the nation and global purpose that is to increase the knowledge and communicative competence of the learners. For the futher research, it is recommended to the next researchers to extend the reseach scope so that the better research can be presented well. Moreover, for the educator and publishers of books could consider the finding of this research to take the best solusion and developing the sutable textbooks for young learners in Indonesia so that the students can easily understand the knowledge that is delivered by the teachers.

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