



CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH MATERIALS EVALUATION: LOCALLY, NATIONALLY, AND GLOBALLY

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Abstract

Language teaching materials are very substantial in language teaching and learning process. Therefore, teacher of English should be thoroughly in choosing English materials before the materials used in classroom. This study aims to portray challenges in English materials evaluation. Library research in qualitative used in this study in elaborating challenges in English Material evaluation: Locally, Nationally (Indonesia), and Globally. This research involves a collection of some textbooks, journals, articles, virtual resources and internet access. One of the criteria in local context for language learning must include the target culture and local culture. The debate in using English material has never been whether to prioritize the target culture or local culture. In national context, the challenge that must be faced by teachers is to create a blue line that is in line between the material taught in the classroom and government policies in education or commonly known as the curriculum. Globally, the biggest challenge in evaluating English material is the ability of the evaluators themselves to make decisions. There are many considerations that must be taken into account in taking judgment on an English material. All efforts in evaluating English material are to optimize English learning outcomes for students.

Keywords: *Material Evaluation, English Teaching Materials, Textbook Evaluation*

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, classroom teaching cannot be neglected from materials which were made by teachers or ready-made textbook served by school or institution. The successfulness of English learning process was often argued that related to learning material in the classroom (Harsono, 2017; Ota, 2018). Some teachers of English hold language teaching material as holy book which was either a key or a vehicle in learning process (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Language teaching materials can refer to a wide kind of objects, including teacher-made books/exercises, realia, newspaper articles, radio programs, online practice, games, dictionaries, and full-length novels in addition to the conventional coursebook. In the same line, language teaching materials are combinations of language contents and instructions for interacting learners with that content and the goal of promoting language learning development.

Language teaching materials can come from a variety of sources. Teachers may be among them, as they develop learning materials for their own classes. They may also include students, as students may give views of their needs and their preferences in learning Language. In other side, materials are most commonly and increasingly produced by specialist teams, such as those within ministries of education (Kemdikbud) or language centers, or by author teams commissioned by commercial publishers. In this case, the materials that teachers and students bring into their classrooms will have been conceptualized or posed by individuals distant from them as their needed, with whom they will almost certainly never have direct contact, and who will thus have no direct knowledge of the specific context or users of the learning materials.

The first is that materials frequently serve as an interface between all participants (teachers and students) in the classroom, defining who is to say what to whom and when. The extent to which materials achieve this will be determined by the nature of their design and teachers' desire to follow directions as supplied, but materials may possibly decide what is accidentally to say at any given time. For example, an instruction states that learners should scan a text for broad meaning and one student seeks to ask about the meaning of specific terms in the text, this may be delayed at that time and the request may be postponed for later. Second, and more sense, a number of writers have also pointed to the possibility of 'hidden outcomes' (whether positive or negative) in teaching materials because they will always encode particular views of what language knowledge is, how learning is to occur, and the roles teachers in teaching and learners' outcomes (Pan & Chen, 2020).

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These concerns have grown in importance as the availability of published materials in the classroom has grown dramatically in recent years especially in Covid-19 learning transformation to virtual learning, including not only the traditional package of a student's book, workbook, and teacher's guide, but also items such as online resources, computer assisted learning materials, electronic whiteboard materials, videos, test software, and more (Maisela, 2021; Agusta et al., 2022). As a result, the potential for published materials to successfully structure nearly every instant of classroom time has grown dramatically (Rahmawati & Hasanah, 2021; Reimers et al., 2020; Elvis, 2020).

It can differentiate two similar views in the analysis of published content. The first is the well-known activity of materials evaluation, which refers to assessing and judging the acceptability of a collection of materials for a specific context and teaching/learning goal, and which unavoidably includes a design of how the materials should be. Materials analysis is a similar act in assessing learning materials. This refers to evaluating materials 'as they are' in order to arrive at a description of those materials, most commonly from the perspective of an analytical framework. Materials analysis is an activity in and of itself, but it may also be viewed as a prior to materials evaluation (Littlejohn, 2022).

This article emphasizes in bringing both analysis and evaluation in language teaching materials not only in general but also in specific purposes. Researchers, textbook writers, and teachers accompanied by students will be addressed as evaluators in those activities, as their rights to judge in analysis and evaluation based on their goals, learning environment, and context.

METHOD

To collect data, the analysis is based on library research. This research involves a collection of some textbooks, journals, articles, virtual resources and internet access. So, that is a research which employs the qualitative method of collecting data, describing, classifying and analyzing the data and then drawing conclusions to conduct the research. Data collection techniques used by the author in this study is a literature study, namely with how to find related data discussion in the title of the research (George, 2021).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Materials analysis has changed significantly in both size and technique since it first appeared in the language education literature. Illustrative commentary are the first contributions to analysis. These often provided a unique viewpoint on items and emphasized areas for discussion, usually backed by examples from published sources. They were therefore perspective-driven, reflecting a certain point of view from social commentary rather than any point of view on language teaching methodology or language itself, and frequently purporting to disclose a 'hidden curriculum' inside the apparent language teaching curriculum (Alsubaie, 2015). These reflections played an essential part in widening our knowledge of the role of teaching materials and the types of learning that they may offer in addition to language acquisition. A curriculum centered on learning was released in Indonesia. It was intended that students would study well and have a positive learning impact. Environmental themes were discussed in class with friendly students. Even the goal was the same as the last one: employing a communicative method, the learning was supposed to be about more than just the language itself. However, due to a similar condition- a lack of instructors' knowledge competence- textbook-based education made it difficult for students to utilize English communicatively.

While illustrative commentary had improved our awareness of the ways in which instructional materials may have a "hidden curriculum," wider theory-driven studies have evolved to provide a more solid foundation for analyzing resources. Theory-driven analyses, like illustrated commentary, typically present a range of examples to support the theoretical perspective on offer, rather than a deep examination of a single text. Many of these studies begin with a progressive argument that views ideology and ideas as socially and chronologically situated, that is, reflective of a certain society and moment in time.

Rather than emphasizing a certain theoretical viewpoint on materials, data-driven analyses seek to uncover the nature of materials "as they are" through the use of a framework that collects data from materials in relation to specific categories. Data-driven analyses are, of course, theory-driven to the extent that any framework for analysis is dependent on a notion of what is 'significant' in materials. The contrast here is that data-driven analyses try to give a basic framework for data gathering, with the majority of analysis categories based on what is discovered in the materials and the analyst's subjectivity made apparent.

Materials evaluation as a distinct activity precedes the creation of materials analysis by a considerable time. As previously stated, the key distinction between materials analysis and materials evaluation is that the latter is concerned with determining the 'fit' for a specific teaching/learning context and purpose, whereas materials analysis does not normally focus on the suitability or efficacy of materials. However, as with materials evaluation the act of evaluating can play a role in developing awareness among all language teaching professionals (including teachers, researchers, and writers) by assisting in the identification of crucial features of

a teaching-learning connection. This latter component, as addressed later, has affected some of the more modern methods to appraisal (Neustupny, 2018).

Challenges in Local Context of English Material Analysis and Evaluation.

Some questions addressed in English material analysis and evaluation locally: Do English material fulfill students' needs locally? Are English materials suitable with students' character? Do English materials instruction fit with teaching plan? Do English materials fulfill both local and target culture?. Those questions will derive answers about what actually happen in English material analysis and evaluation. The phenomenon happen during analysis and evaluation based on: teachers' decision in giving deliberation and judgement. In learning English, it is most important to pay attention to the ability of students specifically in a class that is taught by teacher. Evaluating an English material is not necessarily based on the teacher's view, but English material that is not relevant to students' prior-knowledge of English will make learning not accepted by students as a sequence process. The character of the students must be considered. Learning that is carried out both inside and outside the classroom must adapt to student abilities, student learning styles, and student interest in learning. Choosing English teaching materials that are too difficult will make learning unattractive for students and learning will not provide maximum results. As an analogy, students are guests we must provide the best service based on their wishes. English material that is in accordance with the student's learning style will make students feel more alive in learning. In learning administration, the teacher prepares a lesson plan that will be applied in the classroom. Some facts that occur, the lesson plan is not in line with the selected English material. Sometimes something that forces in the classroom to use a material or lesson plan must be neglected and choose to be directed based on English material. Language and culture are inseparable. One of the criteria for language learning must include the target culture and local culture (Syahri & Susanti, 2016; Zuchdi & Nurhadi, 2019; Afifah, 2019; Nambiar et al., 2020). The debate in using English material has never been whether to prioritize the target culture or local culture.

Challenges in National Context of English Material Analysis and Evaluation.

In term of national scope (Indonesia), regulations of education standard and criterion will be a deliberation in English material Analysis and Evaluation. Adjustments between government policies on education make the process of evaluating English material look like it has a standard. In some implementations, policies regarding education make it difficult for teachers as evaluators of English material to choose English material that is very suitable to the characteristics of students. The challenge that must be faced by teachers is to create a blue line that is in line between the material taught in the classroom and government policies in education or commonly known as the curriculum. Some of the evaluators judgement in are general characteristics include: relevance to the syllabus and curriculum, methodology, learner appropriateness, physical and utilitarian aspects, and supplemental resources. 'Learning-teaching material': Listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and exercises in general (i.e., task quality, cultural sensitivity, linguistic and situational realism) (Littlejohn, 2022). A lot of considerations make evaluators confused in doing analysis and evaluation. Too many techniques to consider whether checklist, scoring, or subjective assessment using raters. Furthermore, there are many things that must be considered in evaluating English material, not only content, design or availability. However, the linguistic aspect must also be considered.

Challenges in Global Context of English Material Analysis and Evaluation.

In making adequate English material with adopting and adapting process, some hesitations will rise as challenges in analysis and evaluation process. Globally, the biggest challenge in evaluating English material is the ability of the evaluators themselves to make decisions (Cadlin, 1987; Littlejohn, 2022). There are many considerations that must be taken into account in taking judgment on an English material. All efforts in evaluating English material are to optimize English learning outcomes for students. However, it is not something that is easy for a teacher as an evaluator to do. Distinguishes between the terms 'universal criteria' (broadly referring to the conditions in which people most effectively acquire a second language) and 'local criteria' (such as factors relevant to a specific group, individual or culture) are complicated judgement.

All forms of consideration and perplexity of evaluators in evaluating English materials. It also implies, that evaluators should emphasize that analysis and evaluation are both specialized tasks that need a particular need, context, and level of teaching experience and prior professional knowledge. Where this is not possible, analytical and evaluation tools should be accompanied by clear definitions, with examples, of how specific terms and concepts are being used, readings on the key issues involved, and up-to-date guidance on where teacher-evaluators can find additional professional knowledge.

CONCLUSION

There was no best deal in English material evaluation. Evaluators should focus on how analysis may provide illustrative commentary (showing how social themes are represented in materials), theory-driven analyses (where primarily critical theory is directly tied to materials), and data-driven analyses, which strive to disclose materials 'as they are.' In contrast, evaluation evaluates materials in the context of a certain context and goal. There are two techniques to evaluation: checklists and criteria-generation procedures. We've seen some of the issues with both of these techniques, as well as the necessity to be quite specific and transparent in how assessment is carried out. Furthermore, evaluator need certain previous knowledge and expertise, and should hence not be attempted without explicit instruction.

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