

## Teachers' Perceptions Toward The Use of English Textbook

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**Abstract.** *This study is aimed at: (1) investigating teachers' perceptions toward the use of English textbook; (2) identifying factors that affect teachers' perceptions toward the use of English textbook; (3) investigating teachers' experience in selecting, analyzing, organizing, interpreting, and integrating English textbook; and (4) identifying problems arising while the teachers select, analyze, organize, interpret, and integrate English textbook. This study was conducted with two English teachers of twelfth grade of State Senior High School 3 Surakarta, Jawa Tengah. The data were taken from questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and non-participant observation. The data were analyzed by using Interactive Model. The findings showed that: (1) The teachers believe that they have to consider some considerations to check what is actually contained in the textbook. They do not always follow all the sequences of the materials and activities suggested by the textbook author, but based on the students' needs. They reveal that textbooks should go hand in hand with supplementary teaching materials to serve students' needs even though they are relatively satisfied with the textbook choice; (2) Their perceptions are influenced by some factors such as experience, needs, situation, students' interest, students' ability, workshop/training, and references; (3) The teachers take part in each step of the procedure for the textbook selection. Then, they analyze and describe each component in the textbook. The teachers organize materials and the activities in each unit of the textbook based on the lesson plan they make and their students' need. The latter, supplementary materials is designed based on the pre-existing and the objective of the lesson; and (4) the deficient time and different views among teachers are two major problems faced by the teachers when conducting textbook selection and analysis.*

**Keywords:** *teachers' perception, textbook use, English textbook*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Textbooks play an essential role in determining the students' success in teaching learning process since they are as the primary agent of conveying the knowledge to the students. Tok (2010: 508) argues that since English teachers use textbooks in their class, they have the right to be involved in the process of evaluation in order to provide with the relevant textbook for their specific student group. It is to identify the weak and strong points in relation to their own teaching situation. Grant (1987: 8) claims that the perfect book does not exist, yet the aim is to find out the best possible one that will fit and be appropriate to a particular student group.

One essential consideration in making the most effective use of textbook is obtaining the teachers' perceptions toward the use of textbook. Barcelos (2003: 15) notes that language teachers' perceptions influence what the teachers do in the classroom. Thus, the teachers must be aware of what they perceive and believe when conducting their daily teaching. This means that teachers' perceptions are the basis for teachers to form judgment or make decision.

Particularly this research is proposed:

1. To investigate teachers' perceptions toward the use of English textbooks in EFL class.
2. To identify the factors that influence teachers' perception toward the use of English textbooks in EFL class.
3. To investigate teachers' experience in selecting, analyzing, organizing, interpreting, and integrating English textbooks in EFL class.
4. To find out the problems that arise while, selecting, analyzing, organizing, interpreting, and integrating English textbook.

According to Kotler (2000: 94), perception describes the process of how a person selects, organizes, and interprets the information inputs to create a meaningful overall conception. Gibson et al. (1996: 35) provide a definition of perception as a

cognitive process that is used by individuals to interpret and understand the world around it (the object). They also explain that the perception is the process of giving meaning to the environment by the individuals. Therefore, each individual gives different meaning to the stimulus of the object, even on the same object. How people view the situation is often more important than the situation itself. Meanwhile, according to Devito (1997: 75), perception is the process when we become aware of many stimuli that affect our senses.

Pajares (1992) claims that teachers' perceptions have the same meaning as teachers' beliefs, which are personally-held convictions about the subject matter teachers teach, their roles of responsibility, their students, the curriculum, and their classroom. They guide teachers in their practice and are derived from sources such as experience and personality (Donaghue, 2003: 344).

Since there were only a few studies regarding teachers' perceptions and experiences in Indonesian context, it was necessary to conduct a study studying English teachers' perceptions toward the use of English textbooks includes five aspects of perceptions: selecting, analyzing, organizing, interpreting, and integrating.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study was conducted at the odd semester of the twelfth grade of State Senior High School 3 Surakarta, Jawa Tengah, in academic year of 2014/2015. This study was conducted from October 2014 to December 2014. This study used qualitative approach since qualitative approach focuses on meaning in context, requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data. This study employed a case study in order to investigate teachers' perceptions toward the use of English textbook and also to explore their experience. Considering with case study cannot be separated from the context of the case being investigated, this study also investigated the factors that influence teachers' perceptions toward the use of English textbook.

In this study the subjects were all English teachers who teach English at the twelfth grade of State Senior High School 3 Surakarta. There are two teachers who teach English at twelfth grade.

Table 1. Biographical Information of the Participant

<b>Participant</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>
Designation	Teacher	Teacher
Gender	M	F
Age	45	46
Highest Educational Qualification	S.Pd	MM
Years Of Experience	20	22
Major	English for SMA	English for SMA

All the subjects are certified English teachers in senior high school, have taught English more than eight years, and have experience in evaluating, selecting, and using English textbook. It was believed that the teachers who teach more than eight years have deeper experience about teaching. It was hoped that the more the teachers have experience in teaching the more their perception about the use of textbook were formed.

For purpose of this study, the data was gathered by using some data collecting techniques consisting of questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and non-participant observation. To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, the writer conducted triangulation method and member checking.

The data were analyzed by using Interactive Model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1984: 21-22). This type of data analysis is divided into four parts, namely data collection, data reduction, data displays, and drawing conclusion and verification.

### **C. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The first aspect of teachers' perception toward the use of textbook is teachers' understanding about textbook evaluation and selection. From the findings, the teachers believe that textbook evaluation and selection as a process in which the teachers identify the textbook and choose the best textbook that fit to their teaching purpose. They believe that textbook evaluation and selection are important to conduct in order to find the best one to be used by the students.

The findings also describe that the teachers tend to select the textbook based on some considerations. The criteria mentioned by the teachers are the relevance of the textbook with the curriculum and objectives, the appropriateness with the students' needs, physical appearance (layout, design, colors, and pictures use), language aspect, topics, variety of activities and exercises, arrangement, the availability, materials equipment (CD), and the price. They suggest that teachers should ensure that careful selection is made and that material selected closely reflect the needs of the students and the curriculum. They also add that textbook evaluation should pay attention on the physical characteristics of textbooks such as layout, organizational, skills, topic, exercises and activities, and practical consideration.

In analyzing textbook, the findings describe the teachers focus on the aspects the actual role of students in the classroom activities, whether language form or meaning is focused, forms of activities and classroom participation and finally the contents of the tasks. Then, they examines the implications derived by evaluating the overall aims of the materials, content, task selection and sequencing, teachers' and students' roles, needs of students' knowledge, effects, skills and abilities, the character values contained in the textbook, and the role of materials as a whole.

The findings also show that the teachers do not follow all the sequence of materials and activities in the textbook. Teacher 1 tends to organize the materials in the textbook based on the lesson plan they made. Meanwhile, teacher 2 considers the

objective of the lesson and students' needs to organize the materials in the textbook. The teachers also point out the instructions in the textbook is too simple. They try to organize the instructions in order to reach the objective of each lesson. Besides, both the length of the text and teaching approach must be considered by the teachers. Materials and instructions should stimulate and build up students' critical thinking. They should not be too obvious or too obtuse.

In addition, there are three aspects covered on teachers' interpretation on textbook: (1) textbook appropriateness with students' need and teacher; (2) textbook relevance with syllabus and examination; and (3) the difficulty of textbook use. The teachers believe that the textbook they use is attractive and interesting for students and culturally acceptable. The textbook reflects the students' needs and interest and have an appropriate the physical characteristic and authentic texts. Moreover, the teachers inform that there is an appropriate balance of the four language skill in the textbook they use and appropriate with the students' competence level.

Related to the teachers' need, the textbook they use required little or no too heavy preparation load. It is because the textbook they use is accompanied by good audio CDs, supplementary materials, and teachers' guide. It indicates that both teachers do not need much time to set some preparation for teaching provided in the textbooks. The teachers also argue that textbook as a reliable printed material that efficient compared to other materials such as photocopied worksheets.

Both teachers also inform that the textbooks has been recommended or approved by the authorities. They describe that the textbook they use have good quality of exercise for examination preparation. However, what textbook provided is not enough to prepare the students to pass the exam. The teachers express that they use supplementary worksheets to give more variety of exercises to their students.

Although in this study shows that teachers' interpretation toward the textbook use is positive, none of the teachers observed taught exclusively from the textbook and none devoted the entire lesson to materials from one textbook. It is because the teachers do not use the textbook as the only source of teaching material. The teachers freely look for the materials from other reliable sources that can increase students' knowledge.

In teaching language, the teachers should have the ability to make the supplementary materials and to adapt or change the materials in the textbook even though they are relatively satisfied with their textbook choices. The teachers in this study believe that supplementary materials make the learning process easier to achieve the aims and increase students' knowledge and motivation.

Teachers' perception cannot be separated from the factors that influence the perception itself. There are seven factors that influence teachers' perception towards the use of English textbook derived from the interview. They come from personal experience, needs, students' interest, students' ability, situation, workshop/training, and references.

The finding is supported by Richardson (1996: 102-119) who highlights three major sources of teachers perceptions and belief. It can be explained that each teacher has differences on educational background, on how long they have been teaching, on who is being taught, where they teach, what they teach, etc.

Moreover, being motivated and being interested is closely related. It can be assumed that people will be motivated when they are interested. Related to the finding of the research, students' interest is considered as factors that affect teachers' perception. The teachers found that the indicators of being interested in subject matter are whether students actively take a part the learning process.

In the case of how teachers select the textbook, the findings describe all English teachers involve in the selection process while the school just let English teachers to decide what textbook will be used. The teachers take part in each step of the procedure for the textbook selection including attending meeting, evaluating textbook individually to filter textbooks which are offered by the publishers, comparing different views about merits and demerits of different sets of textbooks, voting, and come to the final decision on the selected textbook.

Related to textbook analysis, the teachers have to read and understand the content of textbook to know what is actually contained in the textbook. Then, they decide what should be analyzed. The first level, the teachers focus on physical aspects of materials and how they appear as a complete set or book. At the second level they focus on the actual role of learners in the classroom activities, whether language form or meaning is focused, forms of activities and classroom participation and finally the contents of the tasks. The third level they examines the implications derived by evaluating the overall aims of the materials, content, task selection and sequencing, teachers' and students' roles, demands of students' knowledge, effects, skills and abilities and the role of materials as a whole.

In teaching process, the teachers do some adaptation of materials and activities in the textbook. According to Richards (2001: 260) there are variety of adaptation forms including modifying content, adding or deleting content, reorganizing content, addressing omissions, modifying tasks, and extending tasks. The findings describe the teachers add or delete materials from other sources when the textbook's coverage was inadequate. Textbook may contain too much or too little for language activity. Whole units may have to be dropped, or perhaps sections of unit throughout the textbook omitted. When the teachers found a task or activity that was not suitable for the students' need, they made an adaption by modifying exercises or activity.



Moreover, the teachers in this study point out that supplementary materials have a great influence in making the learning process easier and increase students' motivation. They state that supplementary materials have designed based on the pre-existing and the objective of the lesson. The teachers also describe that supplementary materials could be from anything that can help the students' learn better and increase students' knowledge.

Furthermore, the study also found that there are two problems that teachers faced when they are conducting textbook evaluation and selection. The first is deficiency time in the process of textbook selection and analysis. It is really hard for the teachers to concentrate on evaluating the textbooks in detail because of the heavy workloads. Detailed textbook analysis can be regarded as too time-consuming for the teachers to do due to the usual time pressures created by teaching and other administrative duties. A badly chosen textbook can lead to further problems and lost time as teachers struggle to prepare and adapt.

The other problems derived from the different views among the teachers. Not only related to the criteria of textbook selection, the difference also came from the influence of marketing techniques by publishers on their textbook choices. The teachers should be aware that while publisher may carry out useful training, their agenda is to promote brand loyalty, not necessarily to address methodological issues.

The teachers are relatively satisfied with their textbook choice. The textbook has been recommended and approved by the authorities. The subject and content of textbook are relevant to the current curriculum and appropriate with the students' needs. The textbook use requires little and no time consuming preparation. Moreover, the textbook is accompanied by a good audio file, glossary, and teachers' guide.

To solve the problem arising in the process of textbook selection and analysis, the teachers mention that there should be cooperation among teachers to contribute and be responsible in all steps of the textbook evaluation and selection. They have to use their critical review to choose the suitable one. Through cooperative each other, a more careful review of the textbook is still possible. While in using of textbook, the teachers should have the ability to adapt the appropriate material with what is available and make the instruction as creatively as possible to make the students interested in and motivated in language learning activity.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

From reseach findings, it can be concluded that: (1)The teachers believe that textbook selection is important to conduct to make sure that the textbook they choose is suitable for their students. They consider some considerations to check the quality of textbook. They also reveal that textbook analysis is needed to analyze what is actually contained in the textbook and to know to what extent the quality of textbooks they use. There are none of teachers teaching exclusively from the textbook and relying on the textbook. They do not always follow all the sequences of the materials and activities suggested by the textbook author, but based on the needs of their students. Related to the current textbook they use, they believe the textbook is appropriate with their students' needs and suitable to teacher. The textbook also relevant to the curriculum and examination. Besides, they reveal that textbooks should go hand in hand with supplementary teaching materials to serve students' needs even though they are relatively satisfied with the textbook choice; (2) Teachers' perception toward the use of textbook is influenced by some factor such as personal experience, need, situation, students' ability, students' interest, workshop/training, and references; (3) The teachers take part in each step of the procedure for the textbook selection including attending meeting, evaluating textbook individually to filter textbooks which are offered by the publishers, comparing different views about merits and demerits of different sets of textbooks,

voting, and come to the final decision on the selected textbook. Related to textbook analysis, the teachers have to read and understand the content of textbook to know what is actually contained in the textbook, decide what should be analyzed, analyze and describe each component in the textbook, and then they make a conclusion and give the recommendation what should be done by the teachers. The teachers organize materials and the activities in each unit of the textbook based on the lesson plan they make and what their students need. They also do some adaptation of materials and activities in the textbook including: adding or deleting materials, admitting omission, and modifying exercises or activity. The latter, supplementary materials is designed based on the pre-existing and the objective of the lesson and could be from anything that can help the students' learn better and increase students' knowledge and; (4) There are two major problems faced by the teachers when conducting textbook selection and analysis. They are deficient time and different views among teachers. Besides, the instructions in the textbook are too simple. Management of time and the cooperation among the teachers in textbook selection become their strategies to solve the problem. They also try to make the instruction as creatively as possible to make the students interested in and motivated in teaching and learning activity.

It is therefore recommended that the school provides sufficient time for teachers to conduct selection and provide the training for teaching materials development in order to gain the teachers' capability of selecting, adapting, and using teaching materials. The teachers have to actively participate in any training or course about teaching materials and have more cooperation with their colleagues to ease the burden, exchange information, and expand teaching repertoire. They should also increase their ability and knowledge of making supplementary materials and adapting materials. This may help teachers know the way to solve the problems or weaknesses that they face in using textbook.

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