

**How Junior High School English Teachers  
in Bengkulu City  
Utilise Published Textbooks in the Classroom:  
A Classroom Observation Study**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to find out: (1) how the junior high school English teachers in Bengkulu city exploited the commercially published textbooks for classroom use; (2) if there was a difference in the way the experienced and the inexperienced English language teachers exploited the commercially published textbooks in the classroom; and (3) whether the teachers adapted textbooks or produced their own materials for classroom use. Twelve English teachers (6 experienced and 6 inexperienced teachers) from four different junior high schools or SMPs (2 favourite and 2 non-favourite) in Bengkulu city were the participants in this study. Data were obtained through a questionnaire, classroom observations, and sample lesson plans. The results of the study revealed that: first, the junior high school English language teachers (ET and IT); (1) used the commercially prescribed textbooks to a large extent; (2) there was not much difference between the way experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers exploited the textbooks; (3) both groups of teachers adapted the textbooks or produced their own teaching materials.

**Key words.** published textbooks, utilised, Junior High School English teachers, English classroom.

It has been widely known that the teaching of English at secondary schools (junior high schools or SMPs and senior high schools or SMAs) in Indonesia has not been very successful. There has been some modifi-



cation to syllabuses and the English teachers have frequently attended upgrading courses. Yet, there seem to be a very slow progress, if any in the efforts to improve the teaching of English in this country (Markus 1993).

In Bengkulu province, for example, the SMP students' average score from the English national exam results (EBTANAS) was often below five from one-to-ten scoring scale. In 1999/2000, for example, the average score was 4.38 and in 2000/2001 it was a little up to 4.87 (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, Bengkulu, 2001). These average scores are even lower compared to the ones obtained ten years ago. In 1988/1989, the average score was 5.25 and a year later it was down to 5.09. In 1990/1991 it was down again to 5.06 and in 1992/1993 it was a little up to 5.74 (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Bengkulu, 1993/1994). These average scores show that most of the students couldn't do the national English exam well enough although the tests were written based on the national syllabus which was used all over Indonesia.

An observation to several English classrooms in junior high schools in Bengkulu city involving with three teachers reveal that they strictly followed the steps in the textbooks although they knew that some of the exercises or activities in the textbook are not very communicative, interesting, or suitable for their students. In addition, the teachers also made no attempt to adapt or modify the textbooks in order to make them more communicative, interesting and comprehensible for their students. In teaching a dialogue, for example, teachers, following the steps in the book, asked the students to read the dialogue individually and answer several comprehension questions about the dialogue found in the textbook. They could have done it in more communicative ways, such as by asking the students to work in pairs or small groups to practice the dialogue, to complete a similar dialogue prepared by the teacher, or to make a similar dialogue with a different topic or characters using given vocabulary.

Studies on the use of teaching materials such as textbooks in the classroom are quite rarely conducted; as a result, there exists limited information available about the topic. As Richards (1998) says, empirical data on how teachers use textbooks and the extent to which they influence their teaching is hard to find. These studies are very important because, although a comprehensive evaluation can be done and adaptation and

modification can be made on published textbooks, this can't answer the question of how a particular textbook can be actually used in the classroom in the best possible ways (Nunan, 1991). According to Nunan, such question can only be answered with reference to their actual use in the classroom. In other words, studies on how teachers actually implement or utilise textbooks or other kinds of teaching materials in the classroom are necessary in order to find out the differences and similarities between successful and unsuccessful language classes.

Among the very few studies on this area are the one conducted by Nunan (1991). Nunan reported a study about the differences between experienced and inexperienced English teachers in using a piece of teaching material in the classroom. The participants of his study were asked to provide detailed information about the aims of the material, the length of the time needed to present the materials; how it is introduced; the steps of presenting the material; changes made to the original material; and evaluation of students reaction to the material; intention to use similar material in the future; the most and the least liked features of the material; and the suitability of the material for a certain group of students. Nunan found that in general there was no significant difference between the experienced and inexperienced in using material in the classroom—the only major difference between the two groups of teachers was the amount of time taken in presenting the material where the inexperienced teachers took longer time than the experienced teachers did. Nunan's interpretation of the findings is that the more experienced teachers provided more elaboration, explanation, and help to make the material more understandable for their students.

Richards, et al. (1995) also compared experienced teachers and pre-service teachers in planning a forty-minute supplementary reading lesson of a short story. Then, they were asked about their reasons for using the plan format; the problems they had in planning the lesson; and how they had overcome the problem. The pre-service teacher trainees had never taught except in the micro teaching classes while the experienced teachers had been teaching for at least five years. Richards found considerable differences between the two groups of teachers in planning a reading lesson where the inexperienced teachers focussed their lesson more on the language comprehension of the story; completely ignored students' knowl-



edge background; and failed to deal with "deeper layers of meaning of the story" while the experienced teachers did. The inexperienced teachers also used limited ways of teaching the stories (only the ways suggested in their textbooks) while experienced ones used various ways of teaching stories.

In his study, Richards (1998) was looking at teachers' purposes for using lesson plans, teaching materials found in the lesson plans, the way teachers used lesson plans in teaching and the comparison between experienced and less experienced teachers' ways of using lesson plans. He found that experienced teachers could make more improvisation to their lesson plans when teaching in the classroom than the less experienced teachers although both groups (experienced and less experienced teachers) found lesson plans very useful for teaching. Richards' interpretation is that teachers used their knowledge and experiences in order to improve the quality of their teaching; this is done by being creative in using any kind of teaching materials and using lesson plans only as 'prompts' and at the same time becoming less dependent on the lesson plans or other teaching materials.

From the studies reviewed above, several conclusions can be drawn. Teaching experiences could enrich teachers with various ways of teaching strategies or techniques including the ways of utilising textbooks in the classroom. These various ways or strategies will be very important in English teaching because language teachers cannot always predict exactly which strategy or set of strategies will work the best for a particular student or group of students because each student might have different learning styles, strategies and preferences on learning materials. Similarly, various strategies used to teach a particular subject or topic will make the lesson more interesting and at the same time will avoid or reduce boredom.

## **THIS STUDY**

### **OBJECTIVES**

The working hypothesis of this research is that most of the teachers are unable and/or unwilling to modify or adapt the prescribed textbook for

several reasons and therefore they can't create communicative English classes. The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions:

- (1) How do junior high school English teachers in Bengkulu City utilize commercially published textbooks in the classroom?
- (2) Is there any difference on their ways of utilizing the textbooks in the classroom between experienced and inexperienced English teachers?  
And
- (3) What recommendations can be made to the teachers in order to help them utilize the textbook in the classroom more communicatively?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is a descriptive and comparative study in which the main aim is only to discuss the dominant features found in the data and to compare the intended variables. It is not meant to evaluate the quality of the teaching and learning processes of the research participants or to evaluate the quality of the teachers involved in this study.

### **The Participants of the Study**

Out of 19 schools in Bengkulu city, 5 schools are classified into favourite schools and 14 schools are classified into non-favourite schools (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Propinsi Bengkulu, 2001). These classifications are based on students' average score on the national exam administered at the end of the school program.

The participants of this study are two experienced English teachers (with teaching experience of over ten years) and two inexperienced English teachers (with teaching experience of ten years or less) taken from two different quality SMPs in Bengkulu city. Four schools were chosen randomly - SMP 1 and SMP 2 were chosen to represent favourite schools and SMP 7 and SMP 11 were chosen to represent non-favourite schools. Twelve teachers (6 experienced and 6 inexperienced teachers) were chosen from these schools in order to fill out the questionnaire but only 4 teachers (two experienced and 2 inexperienced teachers) were chosen from two schools (one favourite school - SMP 1 and one non-favourite school - SMP 7) for the observation. The participants of the study can be summarized in the following Table.



| Classifications of Schools | Number of Experienced Teachers | Number of In-experienced Teachers | Total |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Favourite                  | 4                              | 3                                 | 7     |
| Non-favourite              | 2                              | 3                                 | 5     |
| Total                      | 6                              | 6                                 | 12    |

**Table 1. The Participants of the Study**

**Notes:**

- Experienced teachers are those with teaching experience of over ten years.
- Inexperienced teachers are those with teaching experience of less than ten years.
- The quality of the SMPs is based on the classification suggested by the Department of National Education of Indonesia, Bengkulu Province Office.

The data for this study were collected using two techniques: questionnaire and classroom observation (the questionnaire and checklist are given in appendices). The classroom observation was conducted in order to know how the teachers used the textbook in the classroom while the questionnaire was used to obtain more information about the teachers' perception on the textbook they used and what they normally did with it. In addition, in order to get samples of any modification or adaptation on the textbook made by the teachers, the lesson plans prepared by the teachers were also collected.

Data analysis technique for this study used qualitative and quantitative technique since the study is descriptive in nature. The data from the questionnaire, the classroom observation and the lesson plan were evaluated against the theory of communicative language teaching following the procedure of data analysis and interpretation suggested by Wiersma (1991): data reduction, data organization, checking hypothesis and theories and description. Then, recommendations were put forward for the teachers and the government in order that the English teaching programs particularly at SMPs in Bengkulu become more effective and successful in the future.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of twelve sets of questionnaire were sent out to and retrieved from twelve junior high school teachers (6 experienced and 6 inexperienced). The data from the questionnaire reveal the following information.

### The Textbooks Currently Used by the Teachers

Twelve teachers in the study reported that they had used one or more commercially published textbooks in teaching English in the classroom. The list of books is given below.

- (1) *Bahasa Inggris Untuk SLTP* (English for Junior High Schools Students) published by Balai Pustaka.
- (2) English for the Junior High School published by Balai Pustaka.
- (3) *PR Bahasa Inggris* (English Assignment) published by Intan Pariwara.
- (4) *Mitra Bahasa Inggris* (English Partner) published by Penerbit Regina.
- (5) *Pasti: Panduan Siswa Berprestasi Untuk SLTP* (Guide for High Achievement Students of Junior High Schools) published by Putra Angkasa.
- (6) English for the Junior High School published by IKIP Malang.

SMP teachers in Bengkulu city use textbooks prescribed by the Department of National Education, Indonesia. Teachers across disciplines have the option to use any of these prescribed textbooks to meet teaching and learning needs and the English language teachers are no exception. They resort to this practice because they want to use a variety of teaching materials in order to avoid monotony in the classroom and to provide students with better thought-out reinforcement and enrichment activities. Students, on the other hand, are required to use only the prescribed textbooks, although, they are encouraged to use other resources whenever necessary.

### Teacher's Views on the Quality of Textbooks

Twelve teachers expressed the following views on the quality of



textbooks used, listed in Table 2.

| Teachers' Views  | ET # | IT # |
|--|------|------|
| 1. Textbooks are communicative.  | 4    | 3    |
| 2. Textbooks are not communicative.  | 2    | 3    |
| 2.1. The content of textbooks doesn't match the syllabus.  | 1    | -    |
| 2.2. The order of the topics in textbooks does not match the order of the topics in the syllabus               | 1    | -    |
| 2.3. Textbooks do not use enough authentic materials.  | 1    | -    |
| 2.4. Textbooks do not use enough simple and interesting reading passages.                                      | 1    | 1    |
| 2.5. Textbooks do not use enough dialogues.  | -    | 1    |
| 2.6. Textbooks do not use enough vocabulary.   | -    | 1    |
| 3. Textbooks match the students' competence in English.  | 2    | 4    |
| 4. Textbooks do not match the students' competence in English.   | 4    | 2    |
| 4.1. There is no match between the students' competence in English and the level of difficulties of textbooks. | 1    | -    |
| 4.2. Textbooks do not use sufficient examples.   | 1    | -    |
| 4.3. Textbooks lack authentic materials.   | 1    | -    |
| 4.4. Textbooks contain too much grammar.   | -    | 1    |
| 4.5. Subsequent units in the textbooks do not relate to each other.  | -    | 1    |

**Table 2. Views on the Quality of the Prescribed Textbooks**

**Notes:**

ET = stands for experienced teachers.

IT = stands for inexperienced teachers.

# represents the number of teachers who used the same strategy.

It can be gleaned from the above table that the majority of the teachers (4 experienced and 3 inexperienced teachers) found the textbooks to be communicative. This is shown in the use of real-life communication such as dialogues, role-play, information exercises, to teach the various macro skills. The majority of the activities in the textbooks focus on fluency more than accuracy, such that students are allowed to express their thoughts and ideas freely in the target language (Cunningsworth, 1995). In other words, the present textbooks hope to develop student's commu-

nicative competence rather than linguistic competence. It is worthy to note that the three inexperienced teachers perceived the textbooks to be communicative, although, they have had one to ten years teaching experience.

Two experienced teachers and three inexperienced teachers found the textbooks to be uncommunicative because they found the content and the order of presentation not matching the competencies spelt out in the syllabus. Moreover, the teachers found the textbooks to be lacking in authentic materials, simple and interesting reading passages, dialogues and vocabulary.

Apparently, the two groups of teachers have different views on the quality of the textbooks used in the English language classrooms, in terms of how communicative these textbooks are. This is due to the fact that teachers themselves may not know the real meaning of communicative language teaching. Or they may have a wrong orientation of what make up effective communicative language teaching.

Table 2 shows that the majority of the experienced teachers (4 out of 6 teachers) found the textbooks to be far above the students' level of competence. They described the exercises to be too difficult and unfamiliar.

The majority of the inexperienced teachers (4 out of 6 teachers), on the other hand, found the textbooks to be matching the students' level of competence. The slight difference in perceptions may be due to the fact that these teachers come from favourite schools whose students are better, in terms of ability level, than those who come from the non-favourite schools.

**Revision Made by Teachers on the Content of Textbooks**

The majority of the teachers (4 ET and 6 IT) did not teach the content as they appeared in the textbooks. They made changes along the way and these changes are presented in table 3.

Table 3 shows that both groups of teachers (6 ET and 6 IT) believed that they had to make changes in the content of the textbooks. The experienced teachers overwhelmingly said, though, that they had to replace the exercises in the textbooks with teacher-made ones. They found the exercises to be lengthy, too complex, not authentic and uninteresting for stu-



dents. The data also show that the two groups of teachers would use real objects and other supplementary materials taken from magazines and newspapers whenever necessary.

| Changes Made   | ET<br># | IT<br># |
|--|---------|---------|
| 1. Teachers arranged topics based on students' needs.  | 1       | 1       |
| 2. Teachers arranged topics based on the order of topics in the syllabus.                            | 1       | 1       |
| 3. Teachers began lessons with reading comprehension activities.                                     | 1       | -       |
| 4. Teachers arranged lessons in the textbooks from easy to complex.                                  | 1       | -       |
| 5. Teachers made the content of textbooks easier.  | 3       | 2       |
| 6. Teachers made the content of textbooks shorter.   | 2       | -       |
| 7. Teachers changed the content of textbooks to more difficult materials.                            | 2       | 2       |
| 8. Teachers prepared supplementary materials taken from magazines, newspapers and used real objects. | 4       | 3       |
| 9. Teachers replaced exercises in textbooks with teacher-made ones.                                  | 5       | 1       |
| 10. Teachers arranged topics based on students' interest.  | -       | 1       |

**Table 3. Changes Made by Teachers On Book Content**

Table 3 also indicates that, in general, there is not much difference among the changes made by experienced and inexperienced teachers when utilizing textbooks in the classroom due to the following reasons: first, experienced and inexperienced English teachers of secondary schools in Bengkulu city may have obtained similar training from the government on ways of utilizing textbooks; secondly, they may have also worked in teams on the content of the textbooks before using them in the classroom; finally, the English language teachers may have held regular meetings among themselves to discuss teaching and learning problems and solutions that relate to textbook utilization.

Similar work practice has been found in other places. Byrd (2001), for example, states that new teachers may get formal and informal assistance and support to adapt textbooks before utilizing them in the classroom. The formal assistance and support can be obtained from instruc-

tor's manuals, such as curriculum syllabi and copies of handouts used by previous teachers while the informal support comes from colleagues who use the same textbooks or who have used them before.

#### Strategies Used by Teachers to Teach the Difficult Parts of a Textbook

The twelve teachers in the study reported that they had employed strategies to teach the difficult parts of a textbook. The following table 4 summarizes these strategies.

| Strategies  | ET<br># | IT<br># |
|---|---------|---------|
| 1. Teachers worked out ways of teaching difficult parts of textbooks by themselves. | 1       | -       |
| 2. Teachers consulted reference materials.  | 3       | 1       |
| 3. Teachers used teaching support manuals.  | 4       | -       |
| 4. Teachers discussed problem areas with colleagues.                                | 5       | 6       |

**Table 4. Strategies Used by Teachers to Teach Difficult Parts of the Textbook**

Table 4, the twelve teachers (6 ET and 6 IT), somehow, employed strategies to teach the difficult parts of a book. Both groups believed that discussing problem areas with colleagues would be a good way to ease the problem. Three experienced teachers reported that they would use teaching support manuals (TSMs) to handle the difficult parts of a textbook while none of the inexperienced teachers would use them at all. This may be due to the inability of the inexperienced teachers to see the value of the TSMs or they might have found it easier to consult directly with the experienced teachers to work out their own teaching difficulties.

#### Teachers' Strategies in Teaching New Vocabulary

Table 5 summarizes different strategies employed by teachers in teaching new vocabulary. As can be seen in Table 5, the majority of the teachers (5 ET and 4 IT) would give examples to illustrate meanings of words. In teaching vocabulary, arriving at word meaning could be problematic if the difficult words are not presented in context (Harmer, 2002). According to Harmer, words may have several lexical meanings and this



problem can be resolved only when the words are used in appropriate contextual situations. In other words, to teach a particular new word with a particular meaning or set of meanings, the teacher needs to use the word in an appropriate communication situation and not in isolation. Apparently, none of the experienced teachers resorted to translation to explain new words found in textbooks. This is consistent with their previous contention that giving examples to illustrate meanings of difficult words was an effective way to unlock vocabulary difficulties. This also relates to current theories on vocabulary teaching and learning which encourage teachers not to resort to translation if better ways are still possible and to use translation as the last option. Further, DeCarrico (2001), Carter (2001) and Nation (2002) recommend that students go through processes of obtaining meanings of new or unfamiliar words such as using semantic collocations, context clues, mnemonics devices, vocabulary notebooks, and semantic mapping or association.

| Strategies  | E.T<br># | I.T<br># |
|---|----------|----------|
| 1. Teachers gave examples to illustrate meanings of difficult words.              | 5        | 4        |
| 2. Teachers asked students to use the dictionary for meanings of difficult words. | 3        | 5        |
| 3. Teachers used translation to explain meanings of difficult words.              | -        | 3        |

Table 5. Strategies in Teaching New Vocabulary

#### Monitoring Students' Understanding of Content of Textbooks

One hundred percent of the teachers (6ET and 6 IT) reported that they had monitored students' understanding of the content of textbooks. Table 6 summarizes the strategies they had employed.

Table 6 shows that the majority of the inexperienced teachers (5) depended much on the exercises found in the textbooks in contrast to the experienced teachers (3) for obvious reasons. The inexperienced teachers have not had adequate exposure to other instructional resources beyond the prescribed textbooks. Furthermore, the experienced teachers (4) would

also come up with their own practice exercises and tests compared to the inexperienced teachers (4) who would depend most of the time on the exercises and tests provided for in the textbooks. A number of teachers (4 ET and 2 IT) would give their students oral practice to check on students' understanding of the contents of the textbook

| Strategies  | ET<br># | IT<br># |
|---|---------|---------|
| 1. Teachers gave students exercises found in the textbook as either classroom work or homework. | 3       | 5       |
| 2. Teachers gave students teacher-made practice exercises and tests.                            | 4       | 2       |
| 3. Teachers gave students oral practice in English.   | 4       | 2       |

Table 6. Monitoring Students' Understanding of the Content of the Textbooks

#### Utilising the Prescribed Textbook as a Source for Students' Homework

The twelve teachers in the study reported that they had assigned students some homework or assignment taken from several different sources. These sources are presented in Table 7.

| Strategies   | ET<br># | IT<br># |
|--|---------|---------|
| 1. Teachers used assignments from prescribed textbooks.  | 5       | 5       |
| 2. Teachers provided students with teacher-made assignments.   | 2       | 1       |
| 3. Teachers used sample assignments taken from other sources such as reference books and prescribed textbooks other than those used by the students. | 3       | 4       |
| 4. Teachers pre-assigned parts of a prescribed textbook for use in the next lesson.  | 3       | 3       |

Table 7. Utilizing the Prescribed Textbook for Students' Homework

Table 7 shows that the majority of the teachers (5 ET and 5 IT) used the assignments found in the prescribed textbooks. The teachers found these exercises handy and available; others may have found them appro-



appropriate and relevant to meet the objectives of a given lesson. Fifty percent (3 ET and 3 IT) of each group of teachers also used the prescribed textbooks to prepare students for forthcoming lessons.

The data also reveal that a number of teachers (3 ET and 4 IT) used sample assignments taken from other sources (reference books and other prescribed textbooks other than those used by the students). This means that the teachers knew the value of utilizing other resources that could revitalize classroom lessons. A few of the teachers (2 ET and 1 IT) provided students with teacher-made assignments and did away with those found in the textbooks.

One possible reason for this is the fact that developing or creating acceptable teacher-made materials in a second or a foreign language environment is a very difficult task either because teachers lack the competence to produce these materials or they do not have access to authentic texts (Nunan: 1991).

#### Teaching the Language Focus in Textbooks

The following table summarizes the strategies used by teachers in presenting the language focus found in a textbook.

| Strategies   | ET<br># | IT<br># |
|--|---------|---------|
| 1. Teachers used Indonesian.   | 4       | 5       |
| 2. Teachers used English.  | 3       | 2       |
| 3. Teachers gave their own sentences to teach the language rules.    | 5       | 6       |
| 4. Teachers asked students to learn the language focus individually. | 1       | -       |
| 5. Teachers asked students to study the language focus in groups.    | 1       | 1       |

**Table 8. Teaching the Language Focus in a Textbook**

As Table 8 shows, the majority of the teachers (4 ET and 5 IT) said that they would use Indonesian to teach the language focus. Inasmuch as English is taught in Indonesian classrooms as a foreign language, teachers are allowed to use L1 or to resort to translation to teach a difficult task. Another possible reason is that the majority of the teachers are not confi-

dent in using English and therefore feel more comfortable in using L1 in explaining language rules or language concepts. As Tsui (2001) reports, many English teachers find it difficult to provide comprehensible input for their students and to engage them in meaningful interaction using the target language although this is important in order to allow language acquisition to take place.

Table 8 also shows that majority of the teachers (5 ET and 6 IT) provided their own sample sentences or come up with adaptations to illustrate new language concepts. The additional sample sentences provided by the teachers are aimed at matching students' level of language competence with the content of the textbook. According to Cunningsworth (1995), one of the possible reasons for teachers to make adaptations is that they find the exercises too mechanical, meaningless, difficult, uninteresting and unfamiliar.

Another reason for providing additional sample sentences to illustrate the new language points is to engage students in the teaching and learning processes. Teachers have used students' everyday activities as a basis for teaching a language focus. Other sample sentences may have been about specific features of their schools, city or province. This way, the teachers are able to start a lesson from something which students are familiar with.

#### Information from Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted among four out of twelve teachers (two experienced and two inexperienced teachers) from two different types of school- favourite and non-favourite schools. The main purpose of these observations is to see whether or not teachers actually used strategies they reported in the questionnaire when utilizing textbooks in the classroom. The observation was done twice when the teachers were teaching two different sets of materials. The following table summarizes the information.

Table 9 shows that the order of presentation of materials used by experienced and inexperienced teachers is the same. This means, in terms of the order of presentation of materials in textbooks, teachers did not make any change. This is because this order follows the order of materials in the textbooks. The analysis of textbooks content reveals that each chapter or



lesson of textbooks begins with either explanation of new language focuses or points or an introduction of new vocabulary

| No | Aspects  | ET<br>N=2  | IT<br>N=2   |
|----|--|--|---|
| 1. | Order of presentation of materials               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New vocabulary/ Language focus</li> <li>- Vocabulary exercises</li> <li>- Reading passages or dialogues</li> <li>- Comprehension questions.</li> <li>- Dialogue practice</li> <li>- Writing activities</li> <li>- Generalization</li> <li>- Homework</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New vocabulary/ language focus</li> <li>- Vocabulary exercises</li> <li>- Reading passages or dialogues</li> <li>- Comprehension questions</li> <li>- Dialogue practice</li> <li>- Writing activities</li> <li>- Generalization</li> <li>- Homework</li> </ul> |
| 2. | Changes made on the content of textbooks         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers provided extra sentences to introduce new vocabulary and to teach a new language focus.</li> <li>- Teachers simplified difficult comprehension questions.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers used extra reading passages taken from other books.</li> <li>- Teachers used extra dialogues taken from other books.</li> </ul>   |
| 3. | Ways of assigning textbook exercises to students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers to a large extent used Indonesian to give direction to students.</li> <li>- Teachers used mostly individual work and rarely pair or group work.</li> <li>- Teachers provided examples of doing exercises in textbooks.</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers used Indonesian to give direction to students.</li> <li>- Teachers used mostly individual work and rarely pair or group work.</li> <li>- Teachers provided examples of doing exercises in textbooks.</li> </ul>                                       |

| No | Aspects   | ET<br>N=2  | IT<br>N=2   |
|----|---|--|---|
| 4. | Ways of monitoring students' understanding on the content of textbooks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers checked students' classroom work.</li> <li>- Teachers checked students' homework</li> <li>- Teachers used comprehension questions found in textbooks and added their own.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers checked students' classroom work.</li> <li>- Teacher checked students' homework</li> <li>- Teachers used comprehension questions found in textbooks and added their own.</li> <li>- Teachers gave students oral practice in English.</li> </ul> |
| 5. | Ways of presenting language focuses in textbooks.                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers to a large extent used Indonesian to present language focus in textbooks.</li> <li>- Teachers provided sample sentences to illustrate language focus.</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers to a large extent used Indonesian to present language focus in textbooks.</li> <li>- Teachers provided sample sentences to illustrate language focus.</li> </ul>  |
| 6. | Ways of teaching new words found in textbooks.                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher used examples from textbooks.</li> <li>- Teachers gave teacher-made sample sentences.</li> <li>- Teacher sometimes resorted to translation.</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers used examples from textbooks.</li> <li>- Teachers gave teacher-made sample sentences.</li> <li>- Teacher sometimes resorted to translation.</li> </ul>  |

Table 9. Information from Classroom Observations

Following the order of materials in textbooks when presenting them in the classroom may make both students and teachers bored and won't enable teachers match students' needs therefore, they need to use the textbook creatively (Harmer, 2001). According to Harmer, teachers should adapt materials in textbooks in various ways including changing the order of materials in order to meet the needs and interests of students as well as teachers. For example, teachers could begin the lesson by discussing or writing sentences on the topic to be introduced in the reading passage or



to practice students' listening skills.

The information from classroom observation, however, is inconsistent with the one obtained from the questionnaire. As indicated in Table 3, all teachers in this study reported that they made some changes to the order of presentation of materials in the textbook by ordering them from the easiest to the most complicated one, following the order of materials according to the syllabus or responding to students' needs. This difference may imply that what teachers reported in the questionnaire is not necessarily the same as what they actually did in the classroom.

As gleaned in Table 9, there are two different changes made by two different groups of teacher (experienced and inexperienced teachers). Experienced teachers adapted the given textbooks and this is consistent with the information obtained from the questionnaire. As shown in Table 4, the majority of experienced teachers made the content of textbooks easier and shorter, replaced exercises in textbooks by teacher-made ones or developed supplementary materials from authentic sources in order to match their students' needs, language competence and interests. The inexperienced teachers, on the other hand, preferred to take materials from other prescribed textbooks other than the one used by students.

Table 9 indicates that experienced and inexperienced teachers employed the same set of strategies in term of their use of Indonesian in giving direction to students to do tasks or exercises found in textbooks. This is probably because the directions in the majority of textbooks are written in English and teachers found them difficult for their students to understand.

Although resorting to translation can be regarded as a kind of modification made by English teachers to textbooks, frequent use of the first language by teachers in a second or foreign language class may result in negative learning attitudes to students. Nunan (1991), for example, reports that study results on teachers' talk suggest that if teachers use the first language frequently in a second or foreign language class, students will use it more frequently. In other words, the use of the first language will discourage students to use the target language and at the same time reduce their chance to use the target language in the classroom.

Table 9 indicates that experienced and inexperienced teachers employed almost the same strategies in order to check students' understand-

ing on the content of the textbook except that inexperienced teachers also gave students oral practices in English. This data is also inconsistent with the information obtained from the questionnaire. As indicated in Table 6, experienced teachers reported that they gave oral practice in English but this strategy was not used at the time of classroom observation took place. This is probably because teachers do not give students oral practice regularly. Since giving oral practice to a big group of students will take a lot of time, it may be only done when it is possible.

Both experienced and inexperienced teachers, as shown in Table 9, used the same strategies in teaching the language focus in textbooks. All teachers used Indonesian in explaining the language focus and provided sample sentences of the use of language focus already introduced. In other words, there is no difference between experienced and inexperienced teachers in teaching the language focus in the textbooks. This information is consistent with the one obtained from the questionnaire as indicated in Table 8.

Table 9 shows that both experienced and inexperienced teachers used the same strategies in teaching new vocabulary. All teachers used sample sentences available in the textbooks, gave teacher-made examples to illustrate the use of new vocabulary and sometimes resorted to translation. This means that there is no difference between experienced and inexperienced teachers in their ways of teaching new vocabulary. This data is consistent with the one obtained from the questionnaire as summarized in Table 5.

#### **Information from the Lesson Plans**

As indicated in Chapter 3, lesson plans prepared by teachers were also analysed in order to see the consistency (if nay) between teaching/learning activities in the classrooms especially on the order of presentation of materials and types of teaching/learning activities and the lesson plans.

The data from lesson plans reveal that teachers to a large extent follow the order of presentation of materials as suggested in their lesson plans. The majority of the lesson plans suggest that classroom activities begin with vocabulary teaching and vocabulary exercises and then followed by reading comprehension activities and/or teaching language fo-



cus. Then, teachers ask students to do speaking and/or writing exercises. At the end of a class session, teachers should generalize the lesson for the day before assigning students to do homework. This order of presentation of materials to a large extent matches the order of teachers' teaching activities as observed in the classroom. This implies that teachers carried out teaching activities in the classroom by following guidelines in their lesson plans. In other words, the majority of teachers are consistent with their lesson plans when teaching in classrooms.

The analysis of the lesson plans also reveals that there is no significant difference between experienced and inexperienced teachers in their ways of utilizing textbooks. This is probably because teachers had to use the same format assigned by the schools or by the government in writing their lesson plans.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions are drawn based on the findings of the study.

- 1) The Junior high school English language teachers in Bengkulu city had access to varied instructional materials (textbooks and reference materials) to meet students' needs, interests and level of language competence.
- 2) Experienced and inexperienced teachers in this study exploited the textbooks in different ways. Experienced teachers used other resources other than those in the prescribed textbooks. On the other hand, the inexperienced teachers depended, to a large extent, on the activities and practice exercises found in the prescribed textbooks.
- 3) In general, these two groups of teachers found all commercially prescribed textbooks useful in teaching the four language skills.
- 4) Both groups of teachers used 'Bahasa Indonesia' as a medium of instruction in teaching the difficult parts of the textbooks. The inexperienced teachers, however, used it more frequently than the experienced teachers did.
- 5) Experienced and inexperienced teachers strictly followed their lesson plans as demonstrated in the classroom observations.

The following recommendations are given based on the conclusions drawn up.

- 1) Teachers in Junior high schools should get trained in the proper use of commercially textbooks so that they can bring about effective teaching and learning.
- 2) English teachers at SMPs in Bengkulu city should seek link between the learning outcomes set by the Curriculum Division of the Department of National Education of Indonesia and the learning outcomes spelt out in textbooks.
- 3) Textbooks should be constantly evaluated by teachers and writers alike especially in terms of the benefits derive from them.
- 4) There should be more similar classroom research projects carried out in English classes at SMPs in Bengkulu in order to know how teachers perform teaching and learning processes in the classroom including exploitation of textbooks. Data from these studies will be very important in order to find out the answer to the question of why the teaching and learning English at SMPs in Bengkulu are still not yet effective and successful.

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## Appendices

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### A Study on How Junior High School English Teachers in Bengkulu City Use Commercially Published Textbooks in the Classroom

Angket ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi yang digunakan oleh guru bahasa Inggris Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP) di Kota Bengkulu dalam menggunakan buku ajar bahasa Inggris (buku cetak pelajaran bahasa Inggris) dalam kelas.

Isilah angket ini sejujurnya dan sedetail mungkin dan anda tidak perlu ragu karena kami menjamin kerahasiaan isi angket ini.

Dalam mengisi angket ini anda diminta melingkari jawaban dan pada beberapa nomor lain anda diminta untuk menuliskan jawaban anda sendiri.

Nama : .....

Sekolah tempat mengajar : .....

Alamat sekolah : .....

Alamat rumah : .....

1. Sudah berapa lamakah anda mengajar bahasa Inggris di SMP?
2. Tuliskanlah judul buku bahasa Inggris yang sedang anda gunakan sekarang di sekolah.
3. Apakah menurut anda buku tersebut telah memenuhi persyaratan bahan pelajaran bahasa Inggris yang komunikatif?
  - a. sudah
  - b. belum
4. Kalau belum, apa saran anda untuk perbaikan buku tersebut agar lebih komunikatif?

5. Apakah menurut anda buku ajar yang anda gunakan sekarang ini sudah cocok bagi siswa anda?
  - a. sudah
  - b. belum
6. Kalau belum, apa saran anda bagi perbaikan buku tersebut agar lebih cocok bagi siswa anda?
7. Apakah anda selalu mengikuti langkah-langkah bahan pelajaran dalam buku waktu mengajar dalam kelas?
  - a. ya
  - b. tidak
8. Kalau tidak, bagaimana urutan bahan pelajaran yang sering anda gunakan dalam kelas?
9. Bagaimana anda sering menugaskan siswa untuk mengerjakan latihan dalam buku ajar?
  - a. dengan tugas mandiri.
  - b. dengan tugas berpasangan.
  - c. dengan tugas kelompok.
  - d. tergantung petunjuk dalam buku.
  - e. tergantung jenis latihan.
  - f. berfarisasi antara tugas individu, pasangan, kelompok atau seluruh kelas.
  - g. ....
10. Apakah anda sering melakukan perubahan terhadap bahan pelajaran (language focus atau language point) dalam buku ajar?
  - a. ya
  - b. tidak
11. Kalau ya, perubahan yang bagaimana yang sering anda lakukan?
  - a. mempermudahnya.
  - b. mempersulitnya.
  - c. memperpanjangnya.
  - d. memperpendeknya.
  - e. menggantinya dengan yang lebih cocok.
  - f. ....
12. Apakah anda sering menyiapkan media pelajaran tambahan yang sesuai dengan topik yang sedang dibahas dalam buku ajar?
  - a. ya
  - b. tidak
13. Kalau ya, apa bentuk media yang sering anda gunakan?
  - a. gambar
  - b. diagram atau table
  - c. benda nyata
  - d. daftar kata-kata
  - e. aturan tata bahasa
  - f. ....



14. Apakah anda sering melakukan perubahan terhadap latihan yang ada dalam buku ajar?
  - a. ya
  - b. tidak
15. Kalau ya, bagaimana bentuk perubahan yang sering anda lakukan?
  - a. mengganti dengan latihan yang disusun sendiri.
  - b. mempermudah latihan yang ada.
  - c. mempersulit latihan yang ada.
  - d. ....
16. Apakah anda sering mengadakan evaluasi terhadap tingkat pemahaman dan keterampilan siswa setelah membahas satu topik dalam buku ajar?
  - a. ya
  - b. tidak
17. Kalau ya, bagaimana anda melakukan evaluasi tersebut?
  - a. melihat latihan yang dikerjakan siswa.
  - b. memberikan tes yang disusun sendiri.
  - c. menanyai siswa secara lisan.
  - d. ....
18. Bagaimana anda mengoreksi kesalahan yang sering dilakukan atau dibuat oleh siswa dalam mengerjakan latihan yang ditugaskan?
  - a. tidak mengoreksinya sama sekali.
  - b. mengoreksinya secara individu.
  - c. mengoreksi secara kelompok atau pada seluruh kelas.
  - d. tergantung bentuk kesalahannya.
19. Kalau anda kurang paham bagaimana mengajarkan atau menyajikan suatu bagian bahan pelajaran dalam buku ajar, apa yang sering anda lakukan?
  - a. memikinya sendiri.
  - b. mencari masukan dari buku metodologi pengajaran
  - c. membaca petunjuk pada buku ajar (kalau ada).
  - d. mendiskusikan dengan guru lain.
  - e. ....
20. Kalau siswa anda bertanya tentang arti kata baru dalam buku ajar, apa yang sering anda lakukan?
  - a. memberitahu siswa arti kata tersebut dalam bahasa Indonesia.
  - b. memberi contoh pemakaian kata tersebut dalam kalimat dalam bahasa Inggris.
  - c. menyuruh siswa melihatnya dalam kamus.
  - d. menanyakan pada siswa lain yang mungkin tahu.
  - e. ....

21. Apakah anda memberikan pekerjaan rumah (PR) pada siswa setelah menyajikan suatu bagian dari buku ajar?
  - a. ya
  - b. tidak
22. Kalau ya, darimana tugas rumah tersebut anda ambil?
  - a. dari bukua ajar.
  - b. disusun sendiri.
  - c. dari buku lain yang sesuai.
  - d. ....
23. Apakah anda menugaskan siswa mengerjakan sesuatu sebelum mengajar-kan suatu bagian buku ajar?
  - a. ya
  - b. tidak
24. Kalau ya, bagaimana anda memberikan tugas tersebut?
  - a. menyuruh mereka mengerjakan bagian latihan dalam buku ajar.
  - b. menyuruh mereka membaca bacaan yang ada.
  - c. memberikan tugas awal yang disusun sendiri.
  - d. ....
25. Bagaimana anda menerangkan 'language focus' atau 'language point' dalam buku ajar?
  - a. menerangkan dengan menggunakan bahasa Indonesia.
  - b. menerangkan dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris.
  - c. menerangkan dengan memberikan contoh-contoh pemakaiannya.
  - d. menyuruh siswa mempelajarinya sendiri.
  - e. menyuruh siswa mempelajarinya bersama.
  - f. ....
26. Bagaimana anda memberikan penguat (reinforcement) terhadap siswa?
  - a. dengan kata-kata seperti good, very good, excellent, dsb.
  - b. dengan memberikan imbalan berupa nilai.
  - c. dengan memberikan hadiah berupa benda.
  - d. ....

Terima Kasih Atas Kesediaan Anda Mengisi Angket Ini!



## OBSERVATION GUIDE

### A STUDY ON HOW JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS USE COMMERCIALY PUBLISHED TEXTBOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM

- 
- 
1. Nama guru : .....
  2. Sekolah (SMP) : .....
  3. Kelas : .....
  4. Buku ajar yang dipakai : .....
  5. Pelajaran ke : .....
  6. Urutan penyajian bahan pejaran :
    - I. ....
    - II. ....
    - III. ....
    - IV. ....
    - V. ....
  7. Adaptasi (perubahan) yang dilakukan terhadap buku ajar.  
.....
  8. Cara guru memberikan tugas (latihan) dalam buku ajar pada siswa dalam kelas  
.....
  9. Cara guru mengevaluasi keberhasilan proses belajar mengajar.  
.....
  10. Cara guru menerangkan language focus ataulanguage point.  
.....
  11. Cara guru memberikan contoh-contoh pemakaian kata kata baru da lam buku ajar.  
.....
  12. Cara guru menjawab pertanyaan siswa.  
.....
  13. Cara guru memotivasi siswa.  
.....
  14. Komentar secara umum.  
.....