A REPORT OF TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS
(Scaffolding English for Junior High School Students)

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Abstract

In this paper, the textbook of junior high school entitled *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Students* is analyzed. To this end, types of syllabus containing in the book are firstly explored. Then, it is argued what types of syllabus is dominantly governed the textbook by examining the content, activities and tasks in the textbook. It is revealed that the textbook predominantly instructed by structural syllabus with an approach of genre-based syllabus. However, the book is lacked of communicative approach even though the activities designed are aimed at increasing communicative competence of the students. Finally, the suggestion is made for the perfection of the textbook. It is recommended that to be more communicative in teaching and learning language, teacher can manipulate some activities in the textbook to be more expressive and real. In addition, the translation in every instruction of the task is not a good point of this textbook. It is supposed to be the learners acquire it as they are emergent in the process of learning. It will be meaningful for the learners when they understand by themselves without any translation provided.

Key words: *communicative curriculum, syllabus, textbook analysis*

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I. Introduction

A brief Overview of Communicative Curriculum

Curriculum has been designed for good related questions; "what is to be learned? How is the learning to be undertaken and achieved? To what extent is the former appropriate and the latter affective?" (Breen and Chandlin, 1980: 89). Then, Breen technically asserted that:

> *"a communicative curriculum will place language teaching within the framework of this relationship between some specified purposes the methodology which will be the means towards the achievement of those purpose, and the evaluation procedures which will assess the appropriateness of the initial purposes and the effectiveness of the methodology"* (1980:89).

So it is how the communicative curriculum works. The communicative curriculum has been considered as one type of curriculum that carries both language use and form together and involves learning how to negotiate language in social life interaction. Communicative competence becomes an important issue in this curriculum.

There are several components to focus on when dealing with the communicative curriculum (Breen and Candlin cited in Hall and Hewings, 2001). Firstly, it is purpose, what does this curriculum aim for? With its focus on the communicative competence of learners, the communicative curriculum positions learners as both the subject and object of the learning process so they can eventually participate according to social conventions of the target language within society. Secondly, what do the learner to do and achieve? This includes the target that the learners should reach at the end of the program. One of which is linguistics repertoire is one thing; another thing is how learners use the repertoire functionally in communication. The third component is methodology. It is related to how the learning and teaching process is undertaken, the learners' perspective on language, and the learners characteristics all are essential to construct good teaching and learning. Next is the role of the teacher and learner in the curriculum; the teacher can have multiple roles—teacher, learner, participant, and facilitator. The learners can also occupy several roles—participant, negotiator, problem solver, and agent of change. Another important thing is how the contents are displayed in order to have good continuity in the learning process. Evaluation is the last component of the communicative curriculum; it includes the material that has been taught and also the evaluation of the program as a whole.

The changing of curriculum from the previous to the latter is anticipated to offer a better future for language teaching and education predominantly. However the alteration of the new curriculum from the traditional curriculum into the communicative curriculum inevitably might bring some barriers for the teachers and learners. The implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the classroom for instances, is not fully implemented as what CLT offered. Teachers still have problems with the prerequisite techniques and strategies of the

method. Sometimes, teacher should deal with the condition of the learners that need adaptation with the new method. Teacher in English as Foreign Language (EFL) context still complain that CLT is designed for English as Second Language (ESL) context. Thus, the traditional methods such as audio lingual, grammar-translation, and situational methodology undertake the teaching and learning process. For those methods the process of teaching and learning occur in the domains of textbooks and an explicit syllabus. The subject matter of these courses is predetermined and systematically planned. Those methodologies are highly independent on the context. Therefore, different contexts do not make distinctive differences to such courses. In contrast, CLT methodology is highly dependent on the situational context for it emphasizes on authentic language input, real-life language practice, and creative generation of language output. Moreover, CLT requires both a language setting to provide authentic input of language use and opportunity for the students to use the language in a realistic way (Guangyong Sun and Liying Cheng, 2002).

Regardless any difficulties found in the process of implementing curriculum which lead to communicative learning, communicative curriculum, however, cannot be taken for granted. Education practitioners should not overlook on the dependence of CLT method on situational context, and they should understand the complexity of EFL context adequately. This curriculum however, should be taken into account in curriculum design and implementation.

II.   Types of Syllabus

Syllabus is related to what the teacher will implement and what the learners will do to achieve the goal of the learning. It is logical outcome of the principles developed in the curriculum, and it regulates and guides the instruction process. There are several types of syllabus evolved over the last thirty years. Nunan (1988) stated that the grammatical syllabus has been defined as one which consists of a list of grammatical items selected and graded in terms of simplicity and complexity. Similarly, Breen, (2001) asserted that the structural syllabus which was being used in the late 1970s focused on linguistics form. This syllabus seems inflexible in terms of the material selected and the way in which the material presented. Thus, this syllabus has been criticized for a number of reasons (Baleghizadeh, 2012). Perhaps the most important limitation of the grammatical syllabus lies in its ignorance of language functions.

Further Baleghizadeh asserted that:

"The grammatical syllabus is a powerful device for enabling language learners to master grammatical rules; however, it is not as powerful where sociolinguistic rules are concerned. In other words, it is capable of preparing learners who are grammatically competent but communicatively incompetent. A learner who in response to the question "Do you mind if I open the window?" says, "Yes, I do" is typical of someone whose knowledge of English grammar might be perfect yet who does not know how to give socially appropriate replies" (Baleghizadeh, 2012: 112).

Thus, in the 1980s the orientation of structural syllabus shifted to more analytical syllabuses which focused on communication where learners can negotiate meaning in a real social context. A necessary development of structural syllabus was the notional-functional syllabus. It derived in the early 1980s from the view of applied linguists concerning the functions of language (Breen, 2001). A Focus on language form meant that learners could not function in a real communication situation. Thus the functional and notional syllabus filled in the gap to accommodate the linguistic function of language communicatively. This syllabus basically concentrates on communicative competence and has an association with needs analysis. With regard needs analysis, White (1988, p.84) states "the teacher or planner investigates the language required for performing a given role or roles" and that "needs analysis specifies the ends which a learner hopes to achieve", but not "the means by which the ends will be reached." Therefore, Notional-functional syllabuses are intended to be built around the needs of the learners, which are derived by needs analysis questionnaires and interviews.

Another type of syllabus is the situational syllabus. It is included in analytical syllabuses. It focuses on social life context never in isolation. This syllabus concentrates on a number of settings of language use, for example how we use language when ordering a drink in restaurant, seeing a doctor, etc. Tarfa Ash-Shammari and Dina Al-Sibai (2005) affirmed that the logic behind a situational syllabus is that if the content of

language teaching is formed by a range of real or imaginary behavioral or experiential situations in which a foreign language is used, the situational syllabus provides for concrete contexts within which to learn language structures, thus making it easier for most learners to visualize, and this, in turn, helps in promoting students' motivation. Additionally, they stated that Since situational syllabi are organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning the language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes, situational syllabi are commonly referred to as product-oriented, analytical syllabi whereby learners are required to achieve situational language accuracy (Tarfa Ash-Shammari and Dina Al-Sibai, 2005).

The other of analytical syllabus is task-based syllabus. This syllabus perceives task as the key point in learning language rather than the aspect of language (Breen, 2001). Unlike conventional syllabuses, a task based language syllabus is oriented towards the process of language learning in the classroom. It also engages more experiential learning through completion of tasks (Nunan, 1991). A next analytical syllabus is skill-based syllabus. It is based on the understanding of a certain skill, such as listening, reading and writing. The main objective of skill based syllabus is to mastery the specific language skills. Another feasible objective is to improve more general competence in the language while applying the language skills. Finally is the content based syllabus is teaching other

content or subject through the language that the learners are learning. Integrated language and content instruction offers a means by which English as second language (ESL) students can continue their academic or cognitive development while they are also acquiring academic language proficiency (Jalilzadeh and Tahmasebi, 2014). In a content based syllabus, the activities of the language class are specific to the subject matter and students are stimulated to think and to learn through the use of the target language.

Other development of syllabus is a lexical syllabus that focuses on the lexicon as a basic foundation of syllabus design (Willis, 1990). It draws the large amount of vocabulary learning and language chunks that are directed to a certain text. Next is genre based syllabus that draws an essential focus on text, purpose and meaning (Derewianka, 2003). Students need to be able to understand genre types and their meaning understand the socio-cultural purpose of the genre and also understand the grammatical features beyond the text until they are able to produce them. Furthermore, a combination of syllabus types to be integrated into one package also enriches the language learning syllabus, for instance in tertiary study, Georgetown University combines the content-based and genre-based approach into one syllabus in its curriculum (Graves, 2008). The courses cover various content when then unified by the study of genre to diverse contents. For example, a course on sports and a course on the EU economy both explore the interview genre, using a Hallidayan genre framework (Rinner & Weigert 2006 in Graves,

2008). The study about the content and the language go together. Students learn both new content and the ways in which language is used as a tool of meaning-making. One aim of the approach is for learners to achieve advanced-level competency through the attention to balanced language development over the four years and a coherent curricular progression within the departments' offerings (Graves, 2008)

III. Textbook Overview

The title of the book is *Scaffolding English for Junior High School grade VII*. This textbook has two basic components; oral and written section. Both two components develop four skills of target language; listening, speaking, reading and writing. The book has ten units. The content of the book is divided in several sections, started with a short explanation about the topic and followed by lead-in tasks which engage students more to understand the topics. The instruction of the task is translated into Indonesian language. Most of activities are set out to be done in pairs, group and individual. For linguistics part, it is presented after task is done separately. This textbook provides homework, evaluation, reflection, summary, and vocabulary list and fun site− learning English idioms, wise words and others motivations quotes.

IV. Discussion

Syllabus contained in the Textbook

Based on the syllabus analysis done on the textbook, there are several syllabuses found in it. The discussion about it is explained below.

1. **Integrated syllabus**

This textbook has a combination of syllabus. Although, it is implicitly objected that the goal of the course is to pass the national examination which only test two skills; listening and reading comprehension of English, other skills such as speaking and listening are also taught. Genre based approach basically govern this textbook. However, the functional and notional syllabus also include in this textbook.

2. Different types of syllabus strands evident in this textbook

    a. Genre-based

The genre-based syllabus can be noticed from the presentation of the material in the unit. Each unit has one functional text that is developed through several tasks done firstly in the unit until students are able to understand the text and it becomes the last product of the topic. For instance in the first unit students are introduced about how to greet and introduce themselves , then as the tasks developed the students are asked to produce a short letter writing about themselves and asking someone's identity. In another unit, students are asked to understand announcements and how to make it. And they are expected to produce an announcement at the end of the unit as one achievement for each unit. The unit always provides a short functional text. This approach, moreover support the students to understand short functional texts as they will be tested in National examination.

    b. Form-centered or structural syllabus

Looking at the tasks provided for each unit, this textbook set many tasks to do in order to gain more understanding of the students about the topic. In term of the skills, the tasks vary. Starting with the listening and speaking skill— it builds the communicative competent of the students and for reading and writing skills— the tasks are more delicate with focus on the production of the students understanding about the topic. For instance, firstly, a lead-in task is presented as an introduction about the topic and when the students' understanding are built up, the task goes more complex. However, most of the task always links to the linguistics features. Each task directs the students to understand the form of the language, even though; the tasks are focused on the reading and writing skill.

Regarding communicative approach, *Scaffolding English for Junior High School grade VII textbook* set the tasks conducted in pairs and group activities that seem it is a student-centered focus and related to process syllabus, but there is not many spaces for students to develop and express the language freely. The students have to follow a certain pattern that already setup in the book. Although there is a task called *survey game* in this unit that guides the students to negotiate meaning with their friends by finding some information about their classmates' background but the opportunity for negotiating meaning in the classroom is negligible.

In a nutshell, the textbook dominantly adopt structural syllabus emphasizing on language form mostly with a combination of several syllabuses in term of activities

provided in the units. The language use as the ways to manage information for negotiating meaning provided in small portion.

2. Organizing principles of the unit

Looking at the students' needs which are designed for grade VII, the material presented is appropriate for them which are started with greeting where it is basic thing that the students should know in communication. It is a primary level of learning language. Through all units it can be seen that the topics are all about how to use, express and negotiate meaning. The sequences of the material are started with the easy part and move on to more delicate conversation context. Starting with how to greet people then move to the next step of how to introduce somebody else to other people.

The material focus is on how to use several kinds of expressing such expressing apologizing, politeness, commanding, etc. linking to the types of functional text; it is also started with the simple letter, message, and descriptive to procedural text. When it comes to language use in the textbook, it has very small content of authentic language, for example, asking *what's your name*? the answer form is *my name is Budi*, but in addition to be more flexible form *I'm Budi*, also attached. For socio-cultural part, this textbook present local orientation value, there is no multicultural content for the topics. However, it will be more meaningful when the learners can learn some information about other culture. Inevitably when learning a language deliberately we learn the culture of the target language itself. Although the

learners are from the EFL context, where the local values are complex, the socio cultural values should be taken into account in curriculum design and implementation.

Besides, the design of material presentation in the textbook seems cover the continuity of the topics. Each unit has link to the next topic and language form. For instance, students should understand how to greet people and introduce themselves before moving to introducing other people. This principle can assist learner to understand the topics. Learners should be esy to follow the material and develop their language skill gradually.

V. Conclusion and Recommendation

The content of the textbook analyzed significantly emphasize on the language form, which it is steadily presented in similar separated way after the text presented. However, the language use is also provided around the activities in each unit. It can be looked through the activities assigned to the students. Students are asked to do the activities in pairs and in a group. It seems that the textbook employ communicative approach. As communicative approach emphasize communicative interaction involving all the participants such as teacher, learners, texts and activities in the learning and including the various material resources on which the learning is exercised. Nevertheless, the communicative approach implemented in the textbook seems limited since the activities for the students to explore the negotiating for meaning and meaning making are restricted to the certain patterns which show very rigid way

of communication. In this case, teachers should be creative to develop more possibilities of other pattern to be used.

Regarding to the activities set in the textbook, the learners are set up to work in pairs and groups. This is a great point for EFL learners in acquiring language. It is in line with Krashen's theory about affective domain where the learners will learn better when they also engage affectively in learning. The learners feel respected and comfortable in learning. What the learners need to know about the learning process is that learning a language is not all about language but how the learners use it in their real social context. Thus, the learning process is meaningful and not only for a certain goal such as for passing examination. What's more, teachers should create more engaging pedagogy to let the learners use the language to be meaningful communication.

Furthermore, it is recommended that to be more communicative in teaching and learning language, teacher can manipulate some activities in the textbook to be more expressive and real. For some activities such as learners can interview their friend with some different questions that they want to ask or teacher could write some other expression on the board and for role play teacher could record and play it again to gain more attractive participation of the learners. in addition, the translation in every instruction of the task is not a good point of this textbook. It supposed to be the learners acquire it as they are emergent in the process of learning. It will be meaningful for the learners when they understand by themselves without any translation provided.

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