

An Analysis Of English Textbook For Junior High School Students Based On Curriculum Relevance And Language Skills Development

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze English textbooks for junior high school students based on curriculum relevance and language skill development. The study employed a qualitative approach using library research. Data were obtained from various scientific articles published between 2021 and 2025, discussing English textbook analysis, curriculum suitability, and the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Data collection was conducted through a literature search in academic databases, then analyzed using content analysis techniques through the stages of identification, classification, evaluation, and synthesis of research findings. The results indicate that, in general, junior high school English textbooks align with the requirements of the applicable curriculum. The material presented encompasses contextual themes, clear learning objectives, and the integration of character values and language competencies. Textbooks also accommodate the four language skills, although their distribution is not balanced. Reading and writing skills receive a more dominant portion than listening and speaking skills. Furthermore, it was found that activities that encourage critical thinking, creativity, and project-based learning are still limited. This study concludes that junior high school English textbooks are well-relevant to the curriculum, but still require further development to optimally balance language skills and 21st-century competencies. The research findings are expected to serve as evaluation material for teachers, textbook authors, and curriculum developers in improving the quality of English teaching materials.

Keyword: Textbook Analysis, English, Curriculum, Language Skills, Junior High School.



INTRODUCTION

English is a vital subject in the Indonesian education system. As an international language, English serves not only as a global communication tool but also as a means of accessing rapidly evolving science, technology, and information in the era of globalization. Learning English at the junior high school (SMP) level is a crucial stage in developing students' language competencies, which will support their future academic and professional success. In the learning process, textbooks are one of the primary learning resources used by teachers and students to achieve the learning objectives set out in the curriculum (Pido et al., 2022).

Textbooks in English learning cannot be viewed simply as collections of teaching materials containing conceptual explanations and practice exercises. Textbooks serve a broader function, serving as a representation of the curriculum translated into learning materials that students can understand and apply. The quality of textbooks significantly determines the extent to which curriculum objectives can be realized in classroom learning practices. If textbooks do not align with the curriculum's demands, there is a potential gap between expected competencies and student learning outcomes (Mhb. & Mukhlis, 2023).

In Indonesian education, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum demands a paradigm shift toward a more student-centered learning paradigm that emphasizes the development of 21st-century competencies. These competencies include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (Aswadi et al., 2023). In English learning, these competencies are realized through mastery of four interrelated language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Textbooks used in learning should facilitate the balanced and integrated development of these four skills.

Research has been conducted on the evaluation of English textbooks, there are still research gaps that need to be addressed. These include aspects of English language learning policies and intercultural competence, the demands of implementing the Independent Curriculum and 21st-century skills, and analysis of textbook content at the senior high school level. Research specifically examining English textbooks for junior high school students, integrating analysis of their suitability to the curriculum and the development of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), is still relatively limited. Textbooks are one of the primary learning resources that play a crucial role in supporting the achievement of curriculum objectives and the development of students' language competencies. This research aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the relevance of textbook content to curriculum demands and their contribution to developing junior high school students' language skills.



Research shows that there are still problems with the quality of English textbooks used in schools. Some textbooks tend to emphasize reading and writing over listening and speaking skills. This situation indicates an imbalance in the presentation of material that has the potential to hinder the development of students' communicative competence. The primary goal of English learning is not only for students to understand written texts but also to actively use the language in various communication situations (Alfarisy, 2021).

Most material in secondary school English textbooks focuses more on reading activities than on oral communication. Textbook questions primarily measure the ability to understand information literally rather than critical and analytical thinking skills. Research results indicate that although textbooks meet certain aspects of the curriculum, they still lack support for the development of comprehensive language skills.

This issue becomes increasingly important to examine because textbooks are often the only learning resource consistently used by teachers and students in schools. In many cases, teachers follow the structure and activities contained in the textbook as the primary guideline for learning. If a textbook has limitations in developing certain skills, these limitations can impact the overall learning process (Aswadi et al., 2023). Textbook analysis aims not only to assess the quality of the material presented but also to evaluate its impact on student competency achievement.

The relevance of textbooks to the curriculum requires a critical examination. Alignment with the curriculum means not only that the material contained in the textbook covers the established learning outcomes, but also that the presentation of the material, learning activities, and assessment methods support the achievement of those competencies. A textbook may cover all the topics required by the curriculum, but if the activities provided do not encourage students to think critically, communicate, or solve problems, the curriculum objectives will not be optimally achieved (Bimantoro et al., 2024).

From the perspective of language skills development, the balance between the four language skills is an important indicator in assessing textbook quality. While reading and writing skills play a significant role in academic learning, listening and speaking skills also play an equally important role in developing communication skills. When textbooks focus primarily on reading and writing, students are at risk of experiencing difficulties in using English orally. This situation is often found in students who are proficient in grammar and reading comprehension, but lack confidence or ability to communicate in English (Auliya et al., 2021).

Furthermore, technological developments and the changing needs of global society demand more communicative and contextual English learning. Textbooks must not only be



relevant to the national curriculum but also reflect students' real-life needs in using English in everyday life. Contextualized material, project-based activities, and exercises that encourage interaction and collaboration are essential aspects of developing modern textbooks. Textbook analysis can provide insight into the extent to which these aspects have been accommodated in the learning materials.

Research on English textbook analysis also has both academic and practical significance. Academically, this research can enrich studies on the evaluation of teaching materials and curriculum implementation in English learning. Practically, the research findings can be used by teachers in selecting and using textbooks that meet students' needs. The research findings can provide input for textbook authors, publishers, and curriculum developers to improve the quality of teaching materials used in schools.

Based on this description, it is clear that analyzing English textbooks for junior high school students based on curriculum relevance and language skills development is an important study. This analysis aims not only to identify the suitability of the material to curriculum requirements but also to evaluate the extent to which the textbooks support the development of students' language skills comprehensively. This research is expected to contribute to efforts to improve the quality of English learning at the junior high school level and support the achievement of educational goals that align with the needs of the 21st century.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. The literature study was conducted through the review and analysis of various scientific sources relevant to the research topic, specifically regarding English textbook analysis, curriculum relevance, and language skill development in junior high school students (Creswell, 2021).

The research data was obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2021 and 2025. These articles were selected based on their suitability to the research focus, namely English textbook analysis, curriculum-based material alignment, reading, speaking, writing, listening, and 21st-century skill development in English learning (Creswell, 2021).

The analysis process is carried out in several stages, namely: (1) reading and understanding the entire contents of the textbook, (2) identifying learning materials and activities that are relevant to the analysis categories, (3) grouping data into predetermined categories, (4) providing scores based on the assessment rubric, and (5) interpreting the results of the analysis to determine the level of suitability of the textbook to the curriculum and language skills development.





The data collection process was conducted by searching articles through various academic databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, Garuda, and reputable educational journals. The inclusion criteria used were: (1) articles discussing English textbooks at the junior high school level; (2) articles published between 2021 and 2025; (3) articles available in full text; and (4) articles containing findings related to curriculum relevance or language skills development (Creswell, 2021). Articles that were irrelevant to the research topic or had not undergone peer review were excluded from the review.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques. The analysis stages included identification, classification, evaluation, and synthesis of findings from each selected article (Creswell, 2021). Data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to textbooks' suitability to the curriculum and their contribution to developing students' language skills. The results of the analysis are presented descriptively to provide a comprehensive overview of the quality and effectiveness of English textbooks used at the junior high school level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on an analysis of English textbooks used at the junior high school (SMP) level, it was found that the content generally demonstrates a good level of alignment with the demands of the applicable curriculum. This alignment can be seen in the structure of the material presentation, learning objectives, the types of activities provided to students, and the learning outcomes to be achieved in each chapter. Textbooks are designed to help students achieve the competencies established in the curriculum, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Alfarisy, 2021; Aswadi et al., 2023). Fahmi Alfarisy (2021) English language learning in Indonesia not only serves to improve students' linguistic competence, but also to shape global citizens who have intercultural competence.

From a knowledge perspective, the material presented in the textbooks covers a variety of topics relevant to students' daily lives. Topics such as introducing oneself, family, hobbies, school life, daily activities, public places, and the environment are themes closely related to the experiences of junior high school students. The choice of these themes demonstrates that the textbook authors have considered the developmental characteristics of students in early adolescence (Auliya et al., 2021; Bimantoro et al., 2024). At this stage, students more easily understand material directly related to their social environment and daily activities. The use of contextual themes can help improve students' understanding of the English material being studied.



The analysis also shows that the material in the textbooks is structured systematically and hierarchically. Each chapter begins with an apperception activity aimed at activating students' prior knowledge before learning new material. Students are introduced to new vocabulary related to the topic. After the vocabulary introduction, students are guided to learn language structures used in specific contexts. This stage is then followed by various exercises that allow students to practice using language in both spoken and written forms. Evaluations are provided to measure students' level of understanding of the material learned (Fajriah et al., 2025; Lubis et al., 2022).

In terms of skills, the textbook accommodates four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. While the distribution is not entirely balanced, all four skills receive attention in each learning unit. The textbook strives to follow the communicative language learning approach recommended in the curriculum. Through this approach, students are expected not only to understand grammatical rules but also to be able to use English as a means of communication in various situations. Fajar Aji Bimantoro, Handayani, and Ma'fiah (2024) a content analysis of the Pathway to English textbook. Their research found that the textbook met most curriculum criteria and provided activities that support language skill development. The four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—were accommodated in the learning materials.

Analysis of the learning objectives shows that each chapter has clear achievement indicators. These indicators are formulated based on the competencies students must master after completing the learning process. In the self-introduction section, students are expected to be able to introduce themselves orally and in writing using appropriate expressions. In the descriptive section, students are expected to be able to understand the content of descriptive texts and compose simple texts based on observed objects. The clarity of these indicators helps teachers in planning learning and makes it easier for students to understand the learning targets that must be achieved (Mhb. & Mukhlis, 2023; Pido et al., 2022).

The analysis also shows that the textbook integrates elements of character education, a key focus of the Indonesian curriculum. Character values such as responsibility, discipline, cooperation, tolerance, honesty, and self-confidence are evident in various learning activities. Group assignments require students to work together to complete simple projects, discussions encourage students to respect each other's opinions, and presentations foster courage and confidence in speaking in front of the class (Sutarji, 2022). This integration of character education demonstrates that the textbook serves not only as a means of developing academic skills but also as a vehicle for developing students' personalities.



In terms of material presentation, the textbook uses relatively simple language that is easy for junior high school students to understand. The instructions for each activity are clearly structured, making it easy for students to follow the learning process. The use of attractive illustrations, pictures, and colors helps increase student motivation. The visualizations used not only complement the text but also help students understand the context in which the language being studied is used (Zakaria, 2024).

The analysis identified several aspects that still need improvement to optimize the textbook's alignment with the curriculum. The integration of local culture in the learning material remains limited. Most reading texts and conversation examples use general or international contexts. To introduce students to global culture, the curriculum also emphasizes the importance of strengthening local cultural identity through the learning process (Sani, 2024; Setyawan et al., 2023). It would be beneficial if textbooks included more texts highlighting regional culture, local traditions, national figures, and Indonesia's natural resources.

It was found that some learning activities still focused on memorizing and directly understanding information. Activities requiring critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity were not consistently presented in each chapter. The current curriculum emphasizes the importance of developing 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (the 4Cs). More challenging learning activities are needed to enable students to develop higher-order thinking skills.

The analysis also showed that the implementation of project-based learning is still limited. Some chapters do provide simple project assignments, but these are not sufficient to fully support the development of students' collaborative and creative skills. Project-based learning is a recommended approach in implementing a modern curriculum because it connects subject matter to students' real-life situations.

The analysis indicates that junior high school English textbooks meet most of the requirements of the current curriculum. The material presented is relevant to students' needs, learning objectives are clearly formulated, and efforts are made to integrate character education and language skills development. Several aspects, such as the integration of local culture, the development of critical thinking skills, and the implementation of project-based learning, still need improvement to ensure the quality of textbooks is more aligned with the direction of 21st-century education development (Sitoresmi et al., 2024). With improvements in these aspects, textbooks can become more effective learning resources in supporting the achievement of English language learning objectives at the junior high school level.



DISCUSSION

The research results show that English textbooks for junior high school (SMP) students generally meet the requirements of the applicable curriculum. The material presented in the textbooks covers the basic competencies expected in English learning, such as the ability to understand simple texts, engage in interpersonal communication, and develop language skills through various learning activities (Fajriah et al., 2025). Textbooks play a significant role in supporting the implementation of the curriculum in schools.

In terms of curriculum relevance, textbooks include various text types that align with the learning outcomes of junior high school students, such as descriptive text, procedural text, recount text, and narrative text. Furthermore, the material presented also supports the development of linguistic and communicative competencies, which are the primary goals of English learning. A good textbook must be able to accommodate both curriculum objectives and students' needs in the language learning process (Lubis et al., 2022).

The analysis results indicate an imbalance in the development of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading and writing skills receive a greater share of attention than listening and speaking skills. Activities in the textbooks focus on reading texts, answering questions, completing sentences, and writing simple paragraphs. In contrast, activities involving oral communication practice are relatively limited and often consist of short dialogues, providing little opportunity for students to actively develop their speaking skills (Sitoresmi et al., 2024).

The dominance of reading and writing activities indicates that textbooks are more oriented toward developing academic and literacy skills. This is understandable, as reading and writing skills are often the primary focus of learning evaluations in schools. If speaking and listening skills are not given adequate attention, students will struggle to use English as a means of communication in real life. Effective language learning must provide balanced opportunities for students to develop all language skills so they can communicate competently (Sitoresmi et al., 2024).

Some material in textbooks is still not contextualized to students' daily lives. Some conversation examples and reading texts do not fully reflect situations close to the experiences of Indonesian students. Using relevant context can increase learning motivation and help students better understand the material. Meaningful and contextual learning is one of the main principles that must be applied in the learning process.

The findings of this study indicate that teachers have a crucial role in optimizing the use of textbooks. Textbooks should not be the sole learning resource, but rather serve as guides that



can be developed according to students' needs. Teachers can enhance listening activities through the use of audio or video media, and enrich speaking activities through role-play, group discussions, presentations, and language games. Shortcomings in textbooks can be addressed through teacher creativity and innovation in managing learning.

The results of this study confirm that junior high school English textbooks are well-suited to the curriculum, but require further development to create a balance in language skill development. Improvements in listening and speaking aspects, as well as more contextual presentation of materials, will help students achieve more comprehensive English language competencies that align with the demands of 21st-century learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results of "An Analysis of English Textbooks for Junior High School Students Based on Curriculum Relevance and Language Skills Development," it can be concluded that the English textbooks used at the junior high school (SMP) level generally demonstrate good alignment with the demands of the applicable curriculum. The material presented covers various competencies expected in English learning, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The textbooks also contain themes relevant to students' daily lives and are systematically structured to support a focused learning process. The analysis shows that the textbooks accommodate four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, the distribution of development is not entirely balanced. Reading and writing skills receive a more dominant portion than listening and speaking skills. This condition indicates that textbooks are still more oriented toward developing literacy and academic skills than oral communication skills, one of the primary goals of English learning.

Textbooks have attempted to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum through contextual presentation of material, integration of character education, and several activities that encourage collaboration and communication. The development of 21st-century skills, particularly critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration, has not been optimally demonstrated across all learning units. Project-based activities and assignments that require higher-order thinking skills are also relatively limited. Textbooks play a crucial role in curriculum implementation, but their effectiveness in developing students' comprehensive language competencies still requires improvement. While the textbooks analyzed largely meet the curriculum's requirements, several aspects still need to be refined to support the development of language skills and 21st-century competencies more comprehensively.



Based on the research findings, several recommendations for textbook authors and publishers are expected to improve the balance in the development of the four language skills by providing more listening and speaking activities. Furthermore, assignments that encourage authentic communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration should be added, in line with the demands of 21st-century learning. Teachers should not rely on textbooks as the sole learning resource. They should develop and complement the activities contained in textbooks with various learning media such as audio, video, language games, group discussions, role-playing, and project-based learning to strengthen students' communication skills. Curriculum developers need to develop more comprehensive textbook evaluation guidelines, focusing not only on the suitability of the material to learning outcomes but also on the balance of language skills, local cultural integration, and the development of 21st-century skills. Schools need to provide additional learning resources that can support the development of listening and speaking skills, such as language laboratories, digital learning platforms, educational podcasts, and other audio-visual materials so that the learning process does not rely solely on textbooks. Further research is recommended to analyze textbooks used at various levels of education or compare several textbooks from different publishers. Furthermore, research can be expanded to include classroom observations and interviews with teachers and students to gain a more in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of textbook use in English learning.

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