

FOCUS OF THE TASK IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS OF 2013 CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

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The study was aimed to find out and describe focus of the tasks in English textbooks of 2013 curriculum. The researcher used Mileff's (2009) theory. There are three kinds of focus of the tasks, namely skill focus, structure focus and notional focus. The study used descriptive qualitative design and documentary technique to collect the data. The results of the study showed that the researcher only found one kind of three focus of the tasks, namely skill focus (listening, reading, speaking and writing). In addition, there were four reasons found why the tasks focused on intensive listening, literal reading, responsive and descriptive writing in the task, namely skill focus (listening, reading, speaking and writing). In addition, there were four reasons found why the tasks focused on intensive listening, literal reading, responsive speaking and descriptive writing in the tasks. The first reason why the task focused on intensive listening was because to train students' hearing in getting more understanding of the text. The second reason why the task focused on literal reading was because to make students retell and recall the information presented in a text. The students acquired the information directly from the text through comprehension question. Third reason why the task focused on responsive speaking was because to develop an appropriate short response of students. The last, the reason why the task focused on descriptive writing was because to help students clarify their understanding of new subject matter material.

Keywords: *Task, focus of the tasks, textbook.*

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INTRODUCTION

Textbook is a book which contains some materials of a certain subject to be learned by students in school. It is used as a main component to deliver the material frameworks designed in the curriculum. In studying English, a textbook is one of the best sources in education. Teachers must have a textbook to teach their students and the students also must have books to acquire knowledge. Harmer (2001) states that good textbooks are attractively presented and they are prepared with a good structure that offers a coherent syllabus. Furthermore, many students like textbooks because they feel that they have achieved something when they finish it chapter by chapter, to the end of the whole book, because progress encourages them in a positive way. Richard (2001) emphasizes that using textbooks saves the teacher a great deal of time. Teachers can use the time for teaching instead of producing materials themselves.

A textbook helps teachers and students in some ways. For teachers, the textbook helps them in preparing and developing the teaching material that are going to be taught. As for the students, it helps them to maintain and trace back their input in learning. According to Cunnigsworth (1995) textbook is an effective resource for self-directed learning an effective source for presentational material, a source of idea activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who are yet to gain confidences. Without textbooks, teaching and learning process will not have impacts, thus, they provide the standards in instruction.

Based on researcher's observation, the school is using textbook of 2013 curriculum in learning English. In English textbook, there are some tasks prepared to acquire students' knowledge about material that the teacher has given to students in learning process. Mileff (2009) states that tasks have some kinds of focus: skill focus, structure focus and notional focus. From the theory above, the researcher decided to find out focus of the tasks in English textbook of 2013 curriculum based on the school which implemented it as source of materials. The English textbooks of 2013 curriculum have different writer and publisher. In this study, the researcher used four books of 2013 curriculum of grade VII Junior High School to find focus of the tasks. Using those books, the researcher wanted to look and found each books have same or different focus of the tasks for example, when the books of 2013 curriculum only have skill focus of the tasks. It meant that the writer who wrote the book only focused on skill focus such as listening, reading, speaking and writing for students. So, the other focus of tasks were not prepared by the writers who wrote the book. It would be better if tasks of the English textbooks had three focus of the tasks based on the theory above to acquire students' knowledge about materials in skill focus (listening, speaking, writing and reading), structure focus (vocabulary, syntactic, and morphological structure) and conceptual focus (the capacity to maintain a discourse in English or any other L2 about current events and popular themes. Preparing three focuses of the tasks above would be better to students and also to the teacher who taught students in learning process.

Thus, the researcher needed to conduct a research based on the task in English textbooks of 2013 curriculum. Therefore, English textbooks of 2013 curriculum need to be analyzed to find out and describe focus of the tasks.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 The Nature of Task

Robert (2009) states that task is an allocation of work; typically, an allotted item of work that must be completed within a specific time frame.

Nunan (2004) states that tasks are defined in terms of what the students will do in class rather than in the real world. As a result, task is supposed to refer to a collection of work plans with the general goal of supporting language learning, ranging from simple and brief exercises to more sophisticated and time-consuming activities like group problem-solving, simulations, and decision making. A task is an activity or action that is carried out as a result of language processing or comprehension. Tasks include things like creating a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction, and carrying out a command. The task may or may not need language production. In most cases, the teacher must describe what constitutes effective completion of the work. Language education is thought to be more communicative when a variety of various types of tasks are used.

2.1.1 Writing Task

Tasks are activities in which learners utilize the target language for a communicative purpose or goal in order to obtain an outcome as defined by Nunan (2004). Nunan (2004) presents a graphic guideline that identifies goals, input and procedure.

2.1.1.1 Task and Goal

A goal is something that the process aims to achieve. The process of learning in this case is to create a communicative engagement between the teacher and the learners. Goals might refer to a variety of outcomes (communicative, affective, or cognitive) or they can define teacher or student behavior directly. The behavior is classified as competence, and its achievement can be assessed using a measurement indicator (2013 curriculum).

2.1.1.2 Task and Input

The verbal, written, and visual material that learners use to complete tasks is referred to as input. A teacher or other sources of information can supply data. Letters (formal and informal), newspaper extracts, picture stories, telecom account, driver's license, missing person's declaration form, social security form, business cards, memo note, photographs, family tree, drawings, shopping list, invoices, postcards, hotel brochures, passport photos are all possible sources of information.

2.1.1.3 Task and Procedure

Procedure specifies what learners will actually do with the input that forms the point of departure for the learning task.

2.2. Characteristics of Task

Nunan (2004) puts that the characteristics of task are:

1. The importance of meaning is paramount
2. Learners are not given the meaning of other people's words to regurgitate
3. There is some form of link to similar real-world activity
4. The completion of a task is a priority
5. The task is evaluated in terms of its outcome.

2.3. Focus of the Task

According to Mileff (2009), the most important way of stating language objectives is in of the tasks. Consider three examples which by no means exhaust all possible objectives a teacher might expect to find. The first example has a skill focus. Here, students will be able to answer factual questions including in their answers levels of probability in listening, speaking, writing and reading. The second example has a structure focus in which students should be able to answer correctly multiple-choice items related to vocabulary, syntactic, structure, and morphological structure. The third example notional focus, where students should have the ability to sustain a conversation in English or any L2 for that matter about every day affairs and popular topics.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative design. Maxwell (1996) states that descriptive qualitative design is a design of research that attempt to describe and interpret the objects in accordance with reality. Descriptive qualitative design is scientific design that describes about event, phenomena or fact systematically dealing with certain area or population. In this study, the researcher described the focus of the tasks in English Textbooks of 2013 Curriculum.

To analyze the data, the researcher referred to a model of Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014). In this model consists of three steps, namely data condensation, data display and drawing and verifying conclusion.

1. Data Condensation

The process of selecting, concentrating, simplifying and modifying the data that appear in the whole corpus was referred to as data reduction. In this study, the researcher used data from tasks of 2013 English textbooks for first grade Junior High School.

2. Data Display

Data display could be defined as an organized assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action taking. In this research, the researcher found and arranged the information about focus of the tasks in English textbooks of 2013 curriculum for first grade of Junior High School.

3. Drawing and Verifying Conclusion

Drawing and verifying conclusion was the step of analyzing data that can be done through deciding what the data means of data finding after reading the display. It is about making the conclusion of the information about focus of the tasks that got by researcher in data display.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Findings

1. The Focus of the Tasks in English Textbooks

Theoretically, the focus of the tasks are : (1) skill focus (2) Structure focus and (3) notional focus (Mileff, 2009). Skill focus is skill that students will be able to answer factual questions including in their answers levels of probability in listening, speaking, writing and reading. Moreover, structure focus is skill that students should be able to answer correctly multiple-choice items related to vocabulary, syntactic, structure, and morphological structure. The last, notional focus is skill that students should have the ability to sustain a conversation in English or any L2 for that matter about everyday affairs and popular topics. By using this theory as the base of category in the data analysis to tasks in the four English textbooks, the researcher found that there is only one types of focus used in the tasks, namely skill focus. Listening skill, the researcher found out intensive listening. Reading skill, the researcher found literal reading

comprehension. Speaking skill, the researcher found responsive speaking and writing skill, the researcher found descriptive writing.

2. The Reasons Underlying the Focus of the Task

In the English textbooks, each of textbook has specific focus of the tasks. Based on the first problem, the researcher found four kinds of task in the English textbooks. There are intensive listening, literal reading, responsive speaking and descriptive writing. The reasons why these kinds of task were used in the English textbooks were found according to the theory of each task.

Based on the display of data in the English textbooks, the reason why focused on intensive listening was to get more detail understanding of the text, such as cloze (inserting words into blank spaces in a passage), the second reason focused on literal reading was to make student be able retelling and recalling the information presented in a text. The students could get information directly from the text, the third reason focused on responsive speaking was to develop an appropriate short response of the students and the fourth reason focused on descriptive writing was to help students' writing full of details and also it can help students clarify their understanding of new subject matter material.

Discussions

Based on theory, there are focus of the task stated by Mileff (2009) namely skill focus, structure focus and notional focus. The result of this research, the researcher only founded one focus of the task that is skill focus (listening, reading,

speaking and writing) in English textbooks of 2013 curriculum for grade VII of Junior High School. In listening, the researcher found out intensive listening. There were 22 intensive listening used in the tasks. In reading, the researcher found literal reading comprehension. There were 22 literal reading used in the tasks. In speaking, the researcher found responsive speaking. There were 14 responsive speaking used in the tasks. In writing, the researcher found descriptive writing. There were 19 descriptive writing used in the tasks.

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CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

1. Based on the findings, the researcher only found one focus of the tasks. That is skill focus. In skill focus, there are listening, reading, speaking and

writing. In listening, It was focused on intensive listening. In reading, it was focused on literal reading. On speaking, it was focused on responsive speaking. In writing, it was focused on descriptive writing. The researcher used 4 books. Namely, Learning More English 1, Bahasa Inggris: A Meaningful Journey Begins with English, Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings a Bell and English in Context.

2. The reasons why the tasks focused on intensive listening were to get more detail understanding of the text. The second reason focused on literal reading was to make student be able retelling and recalling the information presented in a text. The students can get information directly from the text. The third reason focused on responsive speaking was to develop an appropriate short response of the students and the last reason focused on descriptive writing was to help students' writing more full of details and also it can help students clarify their understanding of new subject matter material.

Suggestions

In this study, the tasks only focused on skill focus for instance listening, reading, speaking and writing. Consequently, the task only developed students' knowledge based on skill focus. Structure and notional focus are not used in the tasks of the English textbooks. It will be better if the task of the English textbooks of 2013 curriculum used three focus of the tasks such as skill focus, structure focus and notional focus.

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