A Descriptive Qualitative Summary Analysis of an Important Correlation among Factors in Textbook Selection

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Abstract
Selecting the proper textbook to be used during the teaching-learning process is a quite complicated process. The selection process is taken not only by teachers but also by other possible people, for instance the government or the curriculum committee of the education institution. Therefore, whoever finalize the decision on choosing the textbook, then its selection process must acquire the fit or the balance correlation between the textbooks and these three factors: the students, the teachers, and the curriculum. In this paper, the author will focus on describing the important correlation between these three factors with the textbook during the textbook selection process. Shortly, this descriptive qualitative analysis summary article may also help the teachers or the educators, especially, to give full attention to these factors to select the perfect textbooks to be used as the sources during the teaching-learning processes. In addition, it is also hoped that the students will be eased and have a better understanding of the lesson material and the source of information when the teachers succeed in selecting the textbooks by keeping these three factors in mind.

Keywords: Textbooks, Selection of Textbook, Teaching-Learning Sources.

1. INTRODUCTION

A textbook in the teaching and learning process is one of the essential tools for teachers and students. In real learning processes, there are a few teachers enter the class without bringing or using textbooks and also it is a rare sight when the students study the lesson without any references, especially a textbook. Most teachers will teach in the class with the textbooks as one of their sources of references. Most of the students rely on textbooks as one of their sources of information whenever they need to look up a better understanding of the lesson material and the additional information mentioned by the teachers.

In many circumstances, there are at least three different situations when the teachers finally use particular textbooks (Marrianne Celce, 2001). To begin with, in many countries, the textbooks are used because they are according to the requirement sources set by the government or the staff of education ministry. This situation actually brings equality or parity to all the schools within the country itself. Further, more likely, there will be no big gap in education in terms of textbooks between the schools in the city and rural areas because all schools use the same textbooks. Then, second scenario or situation is when each school has the authority to decide the textbooks to be used in their teaching-learning process according to their regulated curriculum. In this kind of situation, the final decision in choosing a certain textbook to be used by the school is on the curriculum staff or committee of the school which has been approved by the institute’s stakeholders which is the school. Moreover, the third situation is when the teachers have the authority and right in selecting and deciding the textbook that will be used during their teaching and learning processes. This situation is applied when the schools and the government give the teachers full access to set their curriculum.

Then, each situation results in the advantages and disadvantages impacts on the teachers, students, and the schools. In the first situation, when the government has its full authority, it brings equality across the education institution within the country. However, the teachers must need legal approval
whenever they need to add different textbooks as supplement references. Therefore, the students as individual learners who implement many different ways of studies are forced to use the same learning sources. Meanwhile, the second situation, more likely brings the competitiveness among the educational institutes or schools. The hotter the competition is the better. The schools will try to implement the best curriculum and over to use the best textbooks for the teacher and the students. Nevertheless, most of these situations happen to force the students to buy the textbooks required by school. Thus, the price is considerably high. Even though it is affordable, however, there is a possibility that the textbook does not fit the needs of the teachers. The last situation encourages the teachers to apply their abilities of class analysis to list their needs and their creativity in creating and setting their own curriculum in the class. On the other hand, it brings a lot of difficulties and complexities to the teacher as well. The teachers are insisted on preparing the lesson sources, then, teaching, observing and evaluating the students’ progress from scratch at the same time. An individual teacher will be swamped, especially if that teacher teaches a large population in the class and also cross-level within the school. Moreover, all the teachers across the countries teach not only one class at one level. Hence, to avoid the teaching-learning process is not an easy duty. It is relatively complicated. The process of selecting the textbook in whichever scenario applied must be able to fit the correlation between the textbook and these three factors: the students, the teachers, and the curriculum.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Fit between Text and Curriculum

A curriculum is defined as any document or plan that exists in a school or school system that defines the teachers’ work, at least to the extent of identifying the content to be taught to children and the possible methods to be used in the process (English, 2000). Hence, to avoid the teaching-learning material that straddles the fence, the curriculum must be based on the blueprint to create and produce the material of textbooks. Furthermore, each of three situations need different approaches between the fit of the textbook selection and the curriculum.

First, for a larger educational system, the government is in charge of creating, designing, and publishing the curriculum. The teachers are forced to teach the students according to the required curriculum released by the government. In this larger educational system, the government have already planned and set the required curriculum and also managed the whole process of textbook selection, they also have chosen particular publishers to proceed with the textbook mass production. Moreover, these publishers also create lesson materials in the textbook based on published curriculum statements released by the government. Hence, in this situation, three important roles must find success in coexistence: the chosen publishers, the government education ministry, and the curriculum content.

Second, for the middle educational system, the institution committees created and choose the curriculum. The teachers teach their students based on the required curriculum released by their school curriculum committee. In this educational system where purchasing power and various method for control of content are considerable, the fit between the curriculum and the textbook is assumed to be a reasonable and achievable goal. In fact, it is actually almost the same as the larger educational system where the government already assigned certain publishers to create the textbooks. In addition, in this system, each educational institution has the authority and right to assign its favourite publisher to create the textbooks according to the curriculum that has been set by the institution’s committee. Consequently, in this type of situation, three other important roles must find the success coexistence among them, which are, the selected publishers, the responsible institutions’ committees, and the curriculum content they had created.

Lastly, for the smaller programs or the individual teachers, it needs more efforts to achieve. Where, at least, there are two possible explanations to be considered. First, there are too many programs which do not have articulated or eloquent curriculum statements. It means there is no main curriculum to be followed and it always shifts depending on the lesson material discussed at the moment. For instance, there are groups of students who want to learn English but the program lacks a general statement of purposes and methods to be conducted by the teachers. Second, when the curriculum statement for a smaller program or an individual class is available, it may have features that are unique to that certain program which means that the curriculum set by the teachers is based on the real situation and the needs of students in the class. Nonetheless, the publishers found it quite difficult to be followed. The reason is because the scope of the curriculum is not large enough for a publisher to provide textbooks based on its curriculum statement. One of the main reasons is actually that all the publishers also run their businesses by producing mass textbook material. It is definitely cost lots of fortune to just only create and produce a dozen textbooks based on the only
curriculum within an area. So, finding the fit between the mass production of the textbook within the individual teacher’s range and the curriculum will be hard to succeed unless the individual teacher is allowed to spend a quiet amount of money on his or her textbooks.

2.2. The Fit between Text and Students

Students are one of the important figures in the teaching and learning processes (English, 2000). Whole textbook selection process is actually aimed to ease the students afford their lesson material.

The production and selection of textbooks must afford this correlation between the material contained in the textbook and its applicable usage for students. In the larger area of an educational system where the teachers just implement the textbooks material based on the curriculum created and released by the government. The textbooks made for students are meant that they must have the communication skills content. These skills are also insisted by the curriculum and it must fit the needs of the students as the English learners. Tomlinson (2012) in Mulyaningsih (2019) emphasized that a textbook should be both informative and instructional. This means that it should not only provide learners with information about the target language, but also guide them in practical exercises that facilitate language acquisition.

Therefore, in another area of the educational system, the proper textbooks must make up of three major elements in it which are the content and interpretations, the illustrations, and finally the exercise and the tasks. These elements are not only implemented in the middle educational system where the curriculum is created and decided by the institution’s committee but also to the other two areas. The students will acquire their understanding related to the topic materials easily by possessing the textbooks that provide all of those elements. In addition, it helps the students to practice their understanding through the exercise and the task elements. Lastly, during the selection process evaluation, the person or the teams who involved in the selection and evaluation process must know about the students and their needs. These people have to see it from the student's point of view when finalizing the textbooks’ lesson materials. Thus, the possibility of the successful usage of the textbooks by the students will be higher.

2.3. The Fit between Text and Teachers

The person who uses the textbook during the learning process is not only the students but also the teachers. Which is why one of the actual reasons for the evaluation and selection process of textbooks is for the teachers’ favours. The same elements which must be provided in the textbooks in order to fit the important relationship between the texts and the students also apply to the fit between the textbook and the teachers. The textbooks made for teachers must have these elements which are the content and its descriptions, the illustrations, and the assignment and tasks that the teachers can use to assign and assess the students’ understanding regarding to the material. Therefore, the whole process of selection evaluation needs to seek whether the textbooks can be used effectively by the teachers to whom these will be assigned. Hence, in order to find its fit relation between the needs of teachers and the textbook content, the people in charge to create and produce the textbooks must be able to answer these questions during the textbook mass production, whether the teacher can handle this material or not, and, whether the teachers will find the textbooks meet their needs and preferences for teaching materials or not (English, 2000).

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this article is the descriptive qualitative summary analysis method. According to Nassaji (2015), the terms of qualitative research and descriptive research are sometimes used interchangeably, nevertheless, both terms have the same characteristic which involves the naturalistic data. Furthermore, descriptive research is focused on describing the characteristics of a phenomenon (Nassaji, 2015). Thus, the author decided to choose implementing this method aiming to describe one thing, the importance of the balance correlation between the textbook selection and the teachers, the students, and, of course, the curriculum.

4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Overall this article explains clearly that there are three factors which find the end meets during the textbook selection and the production process which are the fit between the textbooks and the teachers, the curriculum, and the students. Textbooks will be very effective and successful if the people and teams involved in the process of selecting and producing textbooks can find a match between these three coexistences. If one of the factors is ignored then the result is likely to be bad. Whether the unsuccessful reachable curriculum target during the teaching-learning process is because of, first, the weaknesses found in the textbook or, second, the students who find the textbooks hard to be understood and not practicable or, third, the teachers who find the textbook is not applicable to be used as the source during the teaching-learning process. These three
factors cannot be separated and they have to work alongside coexistent factors. The responsibility to pay attention to these three factors is not only on the publishers but also on the government educational ministry staff, the schools’ curriculum committee or curriculum teams, and the teachers especially.

5. REFERENCES


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