SCAFFOLDING: ENGLISH FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GRADE 7 AS A COMMUNICATIVE COURSEBOOK

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ABSTRACT: This study is aimed to deeply examine whether or not the coursebook entitled *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Grade 7* is a good communicative coursebook as the coursebook is claimed to be communicative in its aims. The coursebook is examined from three aspects: design and content, communicative interaction, and style and appropriacy. The research design is descriptive-qualitative in analyzing the coursebook by picturing and reporting the quality of the coursebook descriptively. The research instrument is developed by the researcher by selecting and adapting criteria from the checklists proposed by some experts: Cunningsworth (1995), Sheldon (1988), Grant (1991), Mc Donough and Shaw (1993 in White 2001), and Ortega (2011). The result shows that *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Grade 7* is an excellent communicative coursebook although it still needs some betterment in some aspects.

Key words: Communicative Coursebook, *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Grade 7*, Coursebook Evaluation.

Teaching and learning English in Indonesia are inseparable from the material used in the teaching and learning process. The material plays a crucial role as one of many supporting factors to reach the teaching and learning goals. Coursebook is the most widely used material in teaching and learning process in Indonesia. Coursebook plays a crucial role as a structural guidance for teacher and students to achieve their goals in learning. As stated by Cunningsworth (1995) that coursebooks are best seen as a resource in achieving aims and objectives they have already been set in terms of learners’ need. Therefore, coursebook is one of the prominent factors that determines the successful learning.

Coursebook has a significant role as an instructional material to reach the success of teaching and learning process. Cunningsworth (1995) explains that the role of coursebook is to be at the service teachers and learners but not to be their master. It implies that not all parts of the coursebook can really suit the learners’ needs. Teachers as the ones who know the need of their students well have to play their roles to take action regarding the use of coursebook. In case, the teachers
find some parts of the coursebook which are not appropriate, they should decide what to do next. As pointed out by Harmer (2007) there are some alternatives that the teachers should do if they encounter any part of coursebook inappropriate such as adding, adapting and replacing. In short, evaluating a coursebook used in teaching and learning process is important to pursue the teaching and learning goal.

According to Grant (1991), there are two kinds of coursebooks: traditional coursebook and communicative coursebook. The traditional coursebook tries to get students to learn the language as a system. In contrast, communicative coursebook tries to create opportunities for the students to use the language in the classroom, as a sort of ‘halfway house’ before using it in real life. The communicative coursebook aims to develop students’ communicative competence by presenting real-life condition for the students to be learned. In other words, communicative coursebook will lead to a successful Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

Communicative coursebook is preferred as it highlights the students’ need to communicate effectively. Abbs and Freebrain (1990) cited in Cunningsworth (1995) stated that ‘Students need to know that the language they are going to learn will enable them to communicate their needs, ideas and opinions. It comes from knowing that language activities in the classroom are at all times meaningful and aimed at real-life communication. In other words, communicative coursebook will efficiently support the main goal of communicative language teaching. In reaching the goal, it needs a coursebook which is based on communicative approach. According to Woozley (2004), communicative approach in a coursebook is a coursebook which provides activities that are based on real-life communication because that is what we learn languages. Communicative coursebook is considered as important material which can make the students able to relate what they have learnt in the classroom and apply it to the real life situation. Knowing that it is important to learn English and how to reflect it to real life, it is true that the existence of communicative coursebook is a great help to fulfill the need of the language function of communication.
Nowadays, there are so many kinds of coursebook published by a large number of publishers. They compete to provide the best coursebook to be used in school. Even the government also provides what so called electronic book (e-book). One of them is *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Grade 7*. This book was chosen based on some considerations. First, the year 7 is chosen because it is the period when English subject is firstly taught intensively. Therefore it is expected that by selecting the best material to be delivered to 7 year students the result will be good as they have an excellent basis. Second, this book is claimed to develop four English skills through communicative approach, so it is necessary to deeply examine whether or not the coursebook really reflects its purpose. Third, since this e-book is freely accessible, then the possibility of the coursebook usage is quite high. Fourth, it seems that there is no previous study conducted on the series of *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Grade 7* in terms of its communicativeness.

Some criteria of a good communicative coursebook have been proposed by some experts. Every expert has her or his own consideration in formulating a checklist. Sheldon (1988) formulated a checklist for evaluating EFL material. Grant (1991) also created a checklist for choosing a good communicative coursebook. White (2001) used the checklist proposed by Mc Donough and Shaw (1993). Cunningsworth (1995) formulated a checklist particularly for communicative coursebook in terms of design and content, communicative interaction, style and appropriacy. The most recent one, Ortega (2011) develops a checklist on analyzing the speaking practice as an insight to communicative coursebook.

As stated by Cunningsworth (1995), the selection procedure is intended as a “framework not a straitjacket,” and any procedure should be modified to suit personal circumstances. In addition, Sheldon (1988) also pointed out that “coursebook assessment is fundamentally a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity, and that no neat formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick”. Hence, the researcher decided to formulate a new checklist by adapting and selecting the points which meet the communicative coursebook criteria from the experts above. The new checklist is then called a communicative coursebook checklist. It will be
formulated in terms of design and content, communicative interaction, and the last is style and appropriacy as pointed out by Cunningsworth (1995) that those three are important points to be considered for a communicative coursebook.

In this study, the researcher analyzed how *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Grade 7* meets the criteria as a good communicative coursebook in a more detail way. The coursebook was seen from three points: design and content, communicative interaction and style and appropriacy. Based on the data which were collected, she analyzed and explained which points that really suit the criteria to determine the quality of *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Grade 7* as a communicative coursebook.

**METHOD**

This study is intended to find out whether or not *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School grade 7* is a good communicative coursebook. This study is claimed to be qualitative as it aims at examining the quality of the coursebook in terms of its communicativeness. The data collected are in the form of descriptions of the coursebook based on the criteria of good communicative coursebook. Dornyei (2007) stated that qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily open-ended, non-numerical data which are then analyzed primarily by non-statistical method. The data obtained are the findings from each point of communicative coursebook criteria in the form of research instrument which are reported descriptively. Although numerical things in the form of rating scale are used, it is only the way to show the quality of the coursebook in the form of score interpretation. Thus, it is asserted that the design of this study be descriptive-qualitative.

The data were collected from a coursebook entitled *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School grade 7* the data were gathered by using instrument called communicative coursebook checklist containing 22 points. The procedure of data collection consisted of two steps. Firstly, the researcher got the coursebook to be analyzed. Secondly, the researcher read each description for each point, then deeply examined in the coursebook to decide what score is given for each point.
The research instrument utilized in this study is called communicative coursebook checklist containing three criteria: design and content, communicative interaction and style and appropriacy. Those three criteria contain some points to be analyzed deeply to determine the quality of Scaffolding: English for Junior High School grade 7 as a communicative coursebook by referring to the description of each point. The checklist was developed by the researcher by adapting from the checklist proposed by Cunningsworth (1995), Sheldon (1988), Grant (1991) Mc Donough and Shaw (1993 in White 2001), and Ortega (2011). The researcher formulated the checklist by choosing some criteria from those five experts by referring to communicative approach. The researcher chose the criteria which suit the needs of the researcher in analyzing the coursebook. In case the researcher found some similarities between those five, she would take one as the representative. Therefore, the checklist containing 22 points to be analyzed appears as the result of the adaptation.

The score ranges from 1 to 4 were given to represent the fulfillment of the book to the description of each point. If none of the description was fulfilled by the book, then 0 score would be given and 4 score was given when all the descriptions were fulfilled. According to Sugiono (2010) the interval for the 4 point rating scale can be categorized that the score 1 means poor, 2 means fair, 3 means good, and 4 means excellent. The average score of all the descriptions would be a final score for each point. Thus, the researcher was able to reach a conclusion about the level of fulfillment of Scaffolding: English for Junior High School grade 7 based on the total score gained from each criterion. The design and content contains 11 points. The total score those 11 points would show the level of fulfillment of the coursebook in terms of design and content. Then, for the second criterion, the total score for 6 points would determine the level of fulfillment of the communicative coursebook in terms of its communicative interaction. The last criterion contains 5 points to indicate the level of fulfillment of the coursebook in terms of style and appropriacy based on the total score gained from all points. The total score then was analyzed by using formula of the level of fulfillment. The total score fulfilled by each point was divided by the maximum score if all the descriptions were fulfilled. The level of fulfillment,
then, was expressed as a score ranging from 0 to 4 to indicate the level of fulfillment of a coursebook based on those three criteria.

**FINDINGS**

The research findings were gathered from the result of evaluation on *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Grade 7* based on three criteria: design and content, communicative interaction, and style and appropriacy.

In terms of design and content, the researcher examined *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Students Grade 7* based on 11 points, which were: the claim of the coursebook, the indication of specific aims and objectives, the syllabus, the presentation of the skills, the textbook organization, evidence of communicative design, the emphasis of the coursebook, realistic language exercise, attractive visual materials, reference to communicative methodology, and the authentic materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score for Each Point (Ranged from 1 to 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The claim of the coursebook to be communicative</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The indication of specific communicative aims and objectives</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The syllabus base</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The presentation of the skills in the materials</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The effective organization of the coursebook</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Evidence of communicative design</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The emphasis of the coursebook</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Realistic language exercise</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Attractive visual material</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Reference to communicative methodology</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The authentic materials</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **Total Score**: 41.3

Referring to Table 1.1, the level of fulfillment of *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Grade 7* in terms of design and content is 3.8 of the 0-4 score range which can be categorized *excellent*. The author clearly states on the preface that the coursebook is designed based on the communicative approach to develop communicative competence. The objectives are also mentioned in every unit, but they are not specifically stated as they are presented in the form of question about what the students are going to learn. The syllabus base can be categorized as functional syllabus as the units in the coursebook is organize based on the
language function that the students are going to learn. In addition, the four language skills are presented in balance. In every unit the tasks are divided into two learning cycles: oral cycle gives the opportunities for the students to develop their listening and speaking skills and written cycle to help the students develop their reading and writing skills.

The coursebook is organized effectively into 10 units. Each unit has separate sections which can be followed by both teachers and students easily. They are: “Lead in”, “Lesson Proper”, “Homework”, “Evaluation”, “Reflection”, “Summary”, ”Vocabulary List”, and “Fun Space”. The periodic evaluation is also given in every semester. More communicative activities are presented in the coursebook. In every task students are expected to be able to use the language to communicate (See Figure 1.1). The activities are designed to be done individually, in pair or even in group. However, not all materials are authentic. Many of them are semi/non authentic as they are not taken or imitated from real life although they are likely to occur in real-life situation. Next, the emphasis of the coursebook is on the language function rather than language form, the students are led to study the use of the language rather than study the language itself. The fluency is given more attention rather than the accuracy. Furthermore, the exercises given in the coursebook are based on commonly occurring real-life situation. Most of the task are set in such a realistic situation.

![Image](Picture 7.23)

**Figure 1.1 The Example of Communicative Activities Called Completion-Task in the Form of Map Reading**
The visual materials are presented in such an excellent way. All pictures are colorful and if they are presented as the material to support certain text, they are really integrated and appropriate to the text (See Figure 1.2). They are also appropriate in terms of the student’s conceptual level and maturity. The available references are grammar and vocabulary while the skill reference is not available. Not all texts have references and they do not have specific pointers to lead the students to the text references such as grammar point or vocabulary. There are around 17 main texts included in the coursebook but only 3 of them are genuine which are procedure texts. The recording for listening material consisted of 10 conversations and 6 monologues.

In terms of communicative interaction, the researcher examined the coursebook based on 7 points of analysis namely: Element of genuine communication, the suitability of the practice material for different learning styles, the reflection of the material to the nature of communicative interaction, the speaking practice and its capability to give opportunities to develop communicative competence, the materials’ help in the skill of turn-taking, adjacency pairs, and example of preferred sequence.
Table 2.2 The Score for Each Point in Terms of Communicative Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score for Each Point (Ranged from 1 to 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Element of Genuine Communication</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Suitability of the Practice Material for Different Learning Styles.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Reflection of Material to the Nature of Communicative Interaction</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Opportunities to Develop Communicative Competence through the Speaking Practice</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The Materials to Help the Skill of Turn-taking</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The Adjacency Pairs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The Total Score:</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the reference to Table 1.2, the level of fulfillment for the criteria of communicative interaction is 3.5 of the 0-4 score range. The score is lower than the previous criterion. However, the score still can be interpreted excellent. There is almost no element of unpredictability included in the 11 model dialogues of speaking, and 10 dialogues for listening and dialogue exercises in the coursebook as the dialogues are entirely predetermined and the students activities related to the dialogue are preordained. Then, most exercises are set in various learning style. Individual, pair or group work is used as an effective way to make the students able to use the language for communication. The 11 dialogue models present appropriate discourse in interaction and the right complexity level for the 7 graders. However, some signs of natural conversation such as fillers and incomplete sentence can not be found in almost all dialogue models. Most exercises allow the students to develop their communicative competence. They are given previous input and stimulus to be processed and shared in pair or group work. In addition, more activities are set to let the students experience real world to create their spontaneity and creativity. The dialogues presented in the coursebook include some features of the strategy to develop the skill of turn-taking in organizing conversation such as time to interrupt other speaker, time to nominate the next speaker and the use of combination linguistic and kinetic cues to have conversation. The adjacency pairs in the 11 dialogues presented in the coursebook are question-answer, asking-giving, offer-acceptance, and request-compliance.

In terms of style and appropriacy, the researcher analyzed the coursebook based on 5 points which are: material for sensitizing to formality, the level of
formality related to speech situation, practice in using different level of formality, the ability of the material to hold the learners’ attention and the maturity and conceptual level.

Table 1.3 The Score for Each Point in Terms of Style and Appropriacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score for Each Point (Ranged from 1 to 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Materials for Sensitizing to Formality</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Level of Formality Related to the Speech Situation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Practice in Using Different Level of Formality</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Ability of the Material to Hold the Learners Attention</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The Maturity and Conceptual Level</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Total Score : 12.5

Based on Table 1.3, the level of fulfillment for the criteria of Style and appropriacy is 2.5 of the 0-4 score range. The score is the lowest among all criteria. It can be interpreted as good. First, there are only a few materials and exercises which sensitize the learners to formal and informal language. There are 2 units containing the feature of formal language. Most spoken material is only given in single context so that the learners will not be able to differentiate between formal and informal speech. Second, the level of formality is only presented in a limited purpose which is for the communicative goals to use the language in such a more formal way. It is not related to any setting and social roles of the participants. It only shows the short explanation about the use of the word “please” for the use of formal language. Third, it is given some examples but there is no reason to help the students understand more about formal language. Fourth, the material and topic presented in the coursebook are interesting such as the material about occupation. The topic is quite up-to-date but they are not really challenging as there are no topics such as the Internet, science and global warming. However, they can still make the students able to be more motivated in learning the language. Last, the material presented in the coursebook is appropriate in terms of their conceptual level. The topic and materials cover things related to their closest environment such as family, school, occupation, etc.
DISCUSSION

The aims of communicative approach in language teaching according to Richards and Rodgers (1986) are twofold: to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and to develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. The design and content of the coursebook really reflects the aims of successful communicative language teaching. In addition, a communicative coursebook should have specific aims and objectives either in general or in connection to every unit to make the students able to use the language in real-life situation (Cunningsworth: 1995). The coursebook has specific aims to help the students use the language not only in the classroom but also in real-life.

Moreover, some important aspects such as the way the coursebook acknowledges the interdependence of four language skills and the organization of the coursebook are key points to state that a coursebook is the communicative one. One point which is not fully fulfilled by the coursebook is about its authenticity. It is very important for a communicative coursebook to concern more on the authenticity of the material as it is the reflection of what they will deal in their real life. Nunan (1999:212) stated that the use of authentic sources leads to greater interest and variety in the material that learners deal with in the classroom. This authentic material helps bring the contact to life, and ultimately makes learning and using language more meaningful, and easy for students”. It means that it is important for the communicative coursebook to present authentic materials to help the students bridge the gap between the language they study in the classroom and the real condition they find in reality.

The communicative interaction in a communicative coursebook is a prominent element. The communicative interaction criterion deals with some important elements of the coursebook in building-up the ability of the students to interact and communicate including communication practice, the reflection of the material in natural conversation and organizing conversation. The goal of Communicative Language Teaching is to make the students able to express their feeling, ideas and opinion naturally in such a meaningful interaction. The coursebook has adequate chance and opportunities for the students to develop
their skill in communication through realistic spoken exercise, pair or group performance, and the chance to organize a conversation. However, there is one point that is still neglected which is about the element of genuine communication (e.g. the element of unpredictability and natural conversation). Cunningsworth (1995) stated that the language practice cannot be called as communicative if it does not have the element of unpredictability as a central feature of communicative interaction. In other words, communicative interaction contains unpredictable elements, every question may have many possible answers, and every response depends on the speakers’ background knowledge. The conversation models presented in the coursebook are merely predetermined and preordained which make the students only follow the guidance. In fact, they will face different condition in real life where the conversation is very unpredictable. In addition, the conversation are considered less natural as they do not contains the element of natural conversation such as hesitation, time-filler, and repetition.

The last, style and appropriacy is a significant aspect to be included in a coursebook which is claimed to be communicative. They relate to the sensitivity of the material in perceiving the social situation in which language is being used and select and use the style (formal, informal, etc) appropriate to each particular situation to. According to Cunningsworth (1995), there should be an awareness of and sensitivity to differences between informal, neutral and formal language. They should be linked to recognition of speech situation in which language is being used with appropriate style (formal and informal). The coursebook only presents limited amount of formal and informal sensitivity. The material is mostly given in a single context without a wide variation of formal or informal speech situation. Meanwhile, it is so important for the students to know and practice in using the language with different contexts. The coursebook does not really show the significant elements that come into play in the speech situation as pointed out by Cunningsworth (1995), i.e. the physical context, the social role of the participant in that context, and the goals of the participants. The dialogues presented are merely presented in a single context without any sign of sensitivity to the level of formality based on the social role such as the dialogues between sons or daughters and their parents, friends with friends. The features of formal
and informal language are not specifically defined and presented while actually they are considered as crucial elements to develop communication skills.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

There are three conclusions which can be drawn based on the findings and discussion.

First, the level of fulfillment of *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School 7* in terms of its design and content is 3.8 of the 0-4 score range. It shows the *excellent* quality of the coursebook in the way it is designed based on communicative approach. In addition the content is also appropriate for the learners to build their communicative competence in order to use the language in real life. Some aspects which still need betterment are in the form of the authenticity of the material as there are only limited amount of material which is genuinely taken from real-life sources.

Second, the level of fulfillment of *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School 7* in terms of its communicative interaction is 3.5 of the 0-4 score range. It can be interpreted as *excellent* although there are still some aspects which still need to be improved such as in terms of the elements of genuine communication to show the way and give chances for the students to communicate in real world naturally.

Third, the level of fulfillment of *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School 7* in terms of its style and appropriacy is 2.5 of the 0-4 score range which means *good*. Some aspects still need betterment, for instance the material for the students to sensitize different levels of formality. The material still lacks variety of style like informal, neutral or formal English while in real world the students have to face wide varieties of written and spoken English.

In short, it can be inferred that the overall fulfillment of *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Student Grade 7* is 3.3 of the 0-4 score range. Therefore, it can be stated that it is a *very good* communicative coursebook. Although it still needs some betterment in certain aspects, the coursebook can still be considered to be an appropriate coursebook to help the students learn how to use the language to communicate in real life.
Suggestions

With the afore-mentioned conclusions, there are some suggestions from the researcher after conducting the study about the communicativeness of “Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Grade 7” that can be presented. Firstly, for the teachers who use the coursebook as the instructional material, they should be more selective in choosing the good parts of the coursebook for the students. The coursebook should meet the learners’ needs and help them to be able in using the language not only in the classroom but also in real life.

Secondly, for coursebook writers, they should be more concerned about providing useful material for the students to develop their communicative competence; especially when the coursebook is claimed to be based on communicative approach, they should pay more attention to the important elements of communicative coursebook such as the wide variety of material and activities to give the chances for the students to use the language not only studying the language. In addition, it should portray the real-world communication including different styles of language such as formality and informality, so that the students can learn more about different uses of the language based on different situations.

The last but not least, for future researchers who will conduct studies related to coursebook evaluation, they can provide different criteria to evaluate this coursebook. It depends on the need of the researchers to see, i.e. in which points they want to analyze the coursebook. The more aspects they want to examine, the more comprehensive and credible the result will be.

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