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Enhancing English Learning for Young Learners: A Content Analysis of English Textbook "My Next Words" Grade 1

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Abstract

English communication skills are essential for primary school pupils in the worldwide world of today. Nonetheless, fulfilling the many learning demands of kids can be difficult in typical classroom environments. The purpose of this study is to investigate the efficacy of textbooks for primary school students and determine whether or not they may be combined with additional media to improve English language learning. Using a qualitative research method, data were gathered through content analysis and teacher interviews. Results showed that the textbook is inclusive, has clear concepts, and supports 21st-century abilities. It also satisfies curriculum goals. It does, however, require updates, better teacher support, and improved language features and pronunciation drills. Although the design is attractive, it calls for additional resources and better materials. Pedagogically, instructors should fill in gaps in the textbook by adding current resources and a variety of exercises. Along with ideas for future study paths, recommendations are given for improving English learning through the integration of textbooks and supplemental media. Its ultimate goal is to improve primary students' English language competency in a globalized world. Future studies should examine the effects of additional resources on student outcomes using bigger sample sizes.

Keywords: Content Analysis; English Textbook; Young Learners; TEYL; My Next Words

INTRODUCTION

English stands as the predominant and globally utilized language in contemporary society. It is the most influential language across diverse industries such as trade, business, and travel, where it serves as a universal means of communication (Geckinli & Yılmaz, 2020). English mastery results in enhancing one's life including academic achievement, better job opportunities, advanced career, and social networking (Nishanthi, 2018). The blooming necessity to acquire proficiency in English is a direct effect of this pervasive influence. Notably, many parents aspire for their children to attain fluency in English from an early

age (Prihatin et al., 2021; Rich, 2014).

In the context of commencing English language learning at an early stage, experts widely concur that "the earlier the better". Cammeron (2001) suggests that starting to learn a foreign language at an earlier age result in benefits to some areas of language skills, i.e. listening comprehension and pronunciation. Additionally, the cognitive abilities of students aged three to twelve are deemed optimal for language acquisition, constituting the so-called "golden age" (Copland et al., 2014). It is the moment when the human brain works like a sponge that can absorb many things easily including language development (Rich, 2014). At this age, people may pick up language skills quickly (Amin et al., 2023; Copland & Garton, 2014).

However, given the non-daily use of English, creating an environment conducive to foreign language learning presents challenges for parents and teachers. Effective collaboration between home-based upbringing and classroom instruction is essential to support children's language acquisition (Pujiani, Aini, et al., 2022). Yet, teaching English to young learners poses additional challenges.

Numerous challenges arise in the EYL learning process, encompassing cognitive developmental variations, students' limited self-control, motivation gaps for daily English use, and insufficient parental support (Anggraini, 2018; Rich, 2014). Teachers, often without formal English education backgrounds, struggle to provide effective instruction, pronunciation examples, and an immersive English learning environment. Consequently, the prevalent teaching method relies heavily on translation, emphasizing vocabulary and written language within the constraints of the provided textbooks (Anggraini, 2018).

An essential part of the teaching and learning process is the textbook. It can be often utilized as a teaching and learning tool by educators and students. To educate effectively, teachers frequently use textbooks as their primary teaching resources. Additionally, it aids in the pupils' comprehension of the teacher's information. In certain circumstances, it provides the foundation for pupils' language input and classroom language practice. In other circumstances, it offers a precise framework so that both the instructor and the pupils are aware of their direction and the next steps. Additionally, it offers pre-written texts and assignments that may be modified to fit the proficiency level of the pupils, saving teachers time (Suryani, 2018).

Additionally, high-quality textbooks are required for pupils to be able to comprehend the materials. The teacher needs to take certain factors into account while selecting a suitable textbook. The criteria for evaluating textbooks were also determined by the Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP). First of all, the pupils find the language use to be appealing, natural, and suitable. Next, terminology, sentences, paragraphs, and discourse that are appropriate for the students' level should be included in the textbook (Ulumudin et al., 2017). A textbook has to be appropriate for the students, teacher, and curriculum. To put it another way, the textbook should represent the curriculum, the instructor, and the students in order to guarantee that the learning process' goals may be met. Therefore, it's imperative to make sure the textbook aligns with the curriculum, the teacher, and the pupils (Byrd, 2001).

Numerous specialists have presented many criteria that can be employed in textbook analysis. Many EFL textbook evaluation specialists, including Sheldon, Grant, Cunningsworth, and Harmer, introduce those criteria. Every expert has a different opinion regarding the standards for evaluating textbooks. According to Cunningsworth (1995), a textbook assessor should establish their own goals and create a checklist based on their own priorities, adding to the criteria listed in one book and utilizing some criteria from another. As a result, the Cunningsworth, Byrd, and BSNP textbook evaluation criteria were modified to take into account four factors: (1) Objective, (2) Content, (3) Language skills, and (4) Design.

The textbooks used in elementary school are a book series entitled "My Next Words" published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. These book series was created based on Independent Curriculum for Grade 1-6 of Elementary Students. Several studies have evaluated these textbooks. For example, Aprilia, et. al (2023), they analyzed the fourth-grade English textbook based on BSNP's criteria. The result shows that based on the content, this book meets all the aspects of the criteria. However, there are still some parts that need to be improved, such as the quality of the book, the accuracy of the material, and other learning support activities. These results are in line with the other similar research by Sarifah (2023) and Millah, et.al (2024). Yet, Sarifah found a mistyping or incorrect spelling in one of the book page and Millah suggests for teachers' improvement in managing the class. The other research analysed this book which is for grade 5. The first research by Novianti and Ambarwati (2023) indicated the needs for supplementary materials to support the learning process, especially for speaking skill. Then, the other research by Amaliawati, et al. (2024) revealed that there is an insufficient material for speaking so that they recommends for improvement in the speaking skill.

Some previous research above proved that there is not a perfect textbook as a single

media for a course. An evaluation is still needed to address the problems and the potential for supplementary material development. As there has been no research on books for grade 1, this study focused on the evaluation of a textbook used to teach English for first graders, namely "My Next Words Grade 1". This study aims to explore the effectiveness of this textbook to find out the potential of integrating it with supplementary media in order to enhance English language learning. This research contributes to the literature by providing valuable insights into the role of supplementary media in elementary English education, ultimately aiming to enhance the English language proficiency of elementary students in an increasingly interconnected world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a theoretical framework for this study. In analyzing the textbook, this paper used theoretical framework from Cunningsworth (1995), Byrd (2001), Ulumudin et al. (2017). According to Cunningsworth, evaluating a textbook is essential since the textbook itself is somehow becomes the heart of the learning process. Textbooks are best seen as a source in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner needs. It is generally accepted that the role of the textbook is to be at the service of

teachers and learners but not to be their master. The common approach used to evaluate a textbook is called impressionistic overview. It is when the reviewer form a general impression of a textbook fairly quickly, just by looking through it and getting an overview of its possibilities and its strengths and weaknesses, noting significant features which stand out (Cunningsworth, 1995). This kind of approach is usually used at the beginning of the course when the teacher is looking for the learning sources for the upcoming course. Nevertheless, there is not any best textbook for all courses in which each class has different needs and characteristics. Therefore, a careful analysis if required in selecting the learning sources.

There are two types of materials evaluation. The first is in-use evaluation. It refers to textbook evaluation whilst the material is in use, for example when a newly introduced textbook is being monitored or when a well-established but ageing textbook is being assessed to see whether it should be considered for replacement. The second, is post-use evaluation. It provides retrospective assessment of a textbook's performance and can be useful for identifying strengths and weaknesses which emerge over a period of continuous use (Cunningsworth, 1995). Meanwhile, the purpose of evaluating a textbook can be for potential or for suitability. Evaluation for potential is when we want to evaluate textbooks in general, without having particular classes or learners in mind. Evaluation for suitability means matching the textbook against a specific requirement including the learners' objective, the learners' background, the resources available, etc (Cunningsworth, 1995). Based on the background of this research, current study belongs to in-use evaluation with evaluating purpose for potential.

Several aspects to be taken into account when selecting a textbook are the course objectives, the learning situation, the teacher, and the learners. These are the framework of the course, so what to put in mind is that we find the best textbook for the course, not creating the course based on the book. Then, the steps of evaluating a textbook include analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and selection. According to Cunningsworth (1995), the criteria for evaluating textbooks are the course objectives, the situation in which the learners use the language/learning situation, books organization/how the materials presented, and how the textbook support the learning process such as the types of exercises, the teaching methodology, and the availability of supporting materials.

In line, Byrd (2001) states that evaluation and selection of textbooks is a complex process that is carried out in many different ways. In a few settings, teachers decide on the books that they want to use in their classes. In many other settings, such text selections are made by administrators or by committees of teacher. The issues that must be addressed in a textbook evaluation system are the fit between the materials and (1) the curriculum, (2) the students, and (3) the teachers.

To be more relevant with Indonesian context, this book also applied the criteria of good textbook from *Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (BSNP)/ Education National Standard Agency. According to book published by the Ministry of Education and Culture entitled "*Buku Teks dan Buku Pengayaan*", textbooks are defined as compulsory books used in primary and secondary education units or universities in accordance with the applicable curriculum as the main medium in the learning process (Ulumudin et al., 2017). Based on

the Government Regulation Number 32 of 2013, it is stated that to be selected as a compulsory textbook, a book must be reviewed and assessed by a team made by the Minister called Education National Standard Agency/ Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP).

In assessing the textbooks, there are several principled that must be taken into account. They are accountability, responsibility, gradation, diversity in unity, non-discriminatory, nonpartisan, impersonal, almost zero error, accuracy, and reasonability. Based on the regulation of Minister of Education and Culture No 8 of 2016 on Books Used by Education Units, the aspects assessed are the content, the language, the material presentation, and the graphic (Ulumudin et al., 2017).

In accordance these three theories, this study analyzed the textbook used for teaching English to primary students grade I entitled "My Next Words" within the criteria of content, language, learning activities, and design.

METHOD

This research was a content analysis with qualitative descriptive approach. Descriptive study is a study used to describe condition, phenomenon, event, activity, and so on with the source of data are from many sources such as documents, audio-video recordings, transcripts, words, photographs, etc. and the result will be explained in the form of report (Fuyudloturromaniyyah, 2015; Novianti & Ambarwati, 2023). Content analysis is an indirect method of analyzing human communication. This means that it examines indirect communication produced by humans like written communication including essays, novels, magazines, music, textbooks, and newspapers, among many other types of written works (Suryani, 2018). Since the main source of the data in this research was students' textbook, the best design for this research is content analysis with qualitative descriptive approach.

The object of this research is the 1st graders' English textbook entitled "My Next Words". The data for this research was collected from a content analysis checklist adopted from the criteria of textbook proposed by Byrd, Cunningsworth, and BSNP (Byrd, 2001; Cunningsworth, 1995; Ulumudin et al., 2017). This checklist contains some categories such as content, language, learning activities, and design. Here, the researcher also invited two elementary teachers and two TEYL experts to participate in evaluating this book. The involvement of the teachers and experts in this research is for the benefit of strengthening and enriching the data obtained from the analysis (Dharma & Aristo, 2018). Then, the data collected was analyzed qualitatively by classifying them based on the categories above.

FINDINGS

This section elaborates the result of content analysis checklist filled by the researchers, experts and the primary school teachers. As mentioned on the methodology above, the analysis is categorized into 4 parts: content feasibility, language, learning activities, and design. Each part consists of 20 statements and is scored by using scale from 1-5 with 1 is

strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

Content Feasibility

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The content feasibility of "My Next Words" is evaluated based on 20 criteria, reflecting its alignment with curriculum goals and appropriateness for first-grade learners (table 1). The highest scores (4.5) indicate the book excels in presenting clear concepts, valuing diversity, and supporting 21st-century skills like critical thinking and problem-solving. Areas needing improvement include presenting accurate, up-to-date information and providing adequate teacher support, with lower scores around 3-4. Overall, the average score is 3.65, suggesting the book mostly meets content feasibility standards but has room for enhancement in specific areas.

No.	Statements	Average Score
1	This book is in line with the goals and objectives of the curriculum.	4
2	The sequence of teaching materials is organized by topic/theme logically.	2.5
3	This book has a clear concept.	4.5
The	emes/topics are organized according to students' needs and development.	4
Lea	rning objectives, topics, and content are appropriate.	3.5
Thi	sbook presents accurate and up-to-date data/information.	3
7	This book is bold, straightforward and unbiased.	4
8	It is objective and values diversity (gender, religion, ethnicity, occupation, disability, etc.).	4.5
9	The topics in this book broaden students' knowledge and enrich their experience.	3.5
10	This book presents moral values, national character and insight.	4.5
11	This book supports 21st century learning: critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, communication skills.	4
12	The book interests and motivates students to learn.	4.5
13	The materials in this book are organized based on adequate difficulty and complexity.	3.5
14	This book can support/relate to other subjects.	3

Table 1. The Content Feasibility Checklist
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15	The explanations in this book are easy for students to understand and use.	3.5
16	This book contains examples that are easy for students to understand and use.	3.5
17	There are sufficient exercises to deepen students' understanding.	4
18	There is an evaluation sheet that measures the level of student achievement.	3
19	This book provides everything a teacher needs to teach.	3
20	This book uses accurate, valid, and up to date references.	2.5
	Average Score	3.65

Language Feasibility

Language feasibility for "My Next Words" is assessed through 20 statements focusing on language appropriateness for young learners, language accuracy, and the thoroughness of the language skills development (table 2). High scores (4.5) were awarded for not conflicting with social norms and motivating students. However, terms and grammar points, as well as pronunciation and intonation exercises, scored lower, indicating potential areas for linguistic enhancement. The average score stands at 3.55, showing that while the language used is generally effective and appropriate, there are specific areas, like term precision and systematic vocabulary gradation, that could be improved.

No.	Statements	Average Score
1	The language used is effective (short, precise, clear)	3.5
2	The language used is appropriate for the developmental level of the students.	3.5
3	The language used attracts students to read it.	3.5
4	The sentences used motivate and inspire students.	3.5
5	The language used does not conflict with values, norms, racial and ethnic groups (SARA), and applicable regulations.	4.5
6	The terms used are precise.	3
7	The vocabulary used in each topic is appropriate for the students' level.	4
}	The vocabulary used is controlled to ensure a systematic gradation from simple to complex items.	2.5

Table 2. The Language Feasibility Checklist

16	The readings and related activities are appropriate to the level and interests of your students.	3.5
17	Reading materials are well recorded, as authentic as possible, with background information, questions, and activities that aid comprehension.	3.5
18	The spoken English materials (dialogs, role plays, etc.) are well designed to equip learners for real-life interactions.	4
19	Writing activities are appropriate in terms of the amount of guidance/control, level of accuracy, organization of longer pieces of writing (e.g. paragraph generation) and use of	4
	appropriate style.	
20	Grammar points are appropriate to the learning objectives	4

Learning Activities

The learning activities in "My Next Words" are evaluated on their suitability for student development and effectiveness in meeting learning objectives. It also consists of 20 statements (table 3). High scores (4.5) were given for presenting diverse and useful activities and developing language skills. However, lower scores (3-4) highlight a need for more engaging activities and better support for critical thinking and problem-solving. With an average score of 3.55, the book provides generally suitable activities but could enhance student engagement and higher-order thinking skills.

Table 3. Learning Activities Checklist
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No.	Statements	Average Score
1	The learning activities in this book are suitable for students' development.	3.5
2	The activities in this book are appropriate to the social and cultural background of the students.	3.5
3	The activities in this book accommodate students' diverse learning styles.	3.5
4	The activities in this book support the achievement of learning objectives.	3.5
5	This book presents diverse and useful learning activities.	4.5
6	Through this book, students are given the opportunity to be actively involved in the learning process.	3
7	The activities in this book can grab students' attention and keep them focused on learning.	4
8	The activities in this book correspond to the teacher's teaching method.	2.5
9	The book contains activities that develop language skills (vocabulary, reading, listening, speaking and writing) in a balanced and adequate manner.	4
10	The activities in this book develop students' communicative skills.	3.5
11	There is adequate and balanced individual and group activity.	4
12	The activities in this book stimulate critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration.	3
13	There are activities that involve interaction between students and between students and teachers.	4
14	There are activities that stimulate cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities in a balanced way.	3
15	The activities in this book are organized in such a way that they range from those that are passive to those that require active students such as production	3
16	The activities in this book are logically organized from simple to complex	3.5
17	This book contains appropriate activities to facilitate assessment for learning and assessment of learning outcomes.	3.5

18	There are sufficient exercises for each material presented	4
19	There is congruence between learning objectives, topics and learning activities	4
20	There are activities that support autonomous learning	4
	Average Score	3.55

Design

The design of "My Next Words" is analyzed based on visual appeal and functional aspects like durability and clarity of illustrations which are described in 20 statements (table 4). High scores (4.5) indicate that the cover is interesting, graphics are appropriate, and color selection is appealing. However, lower scores (3-4) point to areas such as the presence of supporting materials and print quality that could be improved. The average score is 3.62, suggesting that while the book's design is largely effective, there are specific areas, particularly in terms of additional materials and overall durability, that could be enhanced to better support student learning.

No.	Statements	Average Score
1	The cover of this book is interesting.	4.5
2	The book cover is durable enough to be used.	3.5
3	The use of pictures and other graphic illustrations can facilitate student learning.	4.5
4	The use of pictures and other graphic illustrations is appropriate to the students' development.	4.5
5	The use of pictures and other graphic illustrations encourages students to explore nationalistic insights.	3.5
6	The illustrations are clear, simple, and free of unnecessary details that could confuse learners.	3.5
7	The text is attractive (i.e. cover, page appearance, binding).	2.5
B	The font size and type are appropriate.	4.5
9	The layout of text and images is neat and easy to understand the flow.	3.5
10	Color selection (paper background, illustrations, and text) is appropriate.	4.5

Table 4. Design Checklist

	and/or logical themes	
12	This book has the following components: front cover, editorial page, preface, table of contents, list of competencies, syllabus, topics, vocabulary list, linguistic aspects, exercises, evaluation/production, self-evaluation sheet, bibliography, back cover	3
13	There are supporting materials such as: teacher guides, exercise books, cassettes/audio files, videos, etc.	2.5
14	The book is the right size and shape.	4
15	Paper quality is good.	3
16	The print quality is good.	3
17	The book binding is strong.	3.5
18	The price is affordable.	4
19	This book is easily available.	4
20	Additional facilities to support this book are adequate (Audio/video player, LCD, speakers, laboratory, etc.)	2.5
	Average Score	3.62

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the English textbook "My Next Words" for first graders reveals a generally positive assessment with specific areas for improvement across four key categories: content feasibility, language feasibility, learning activities, and design.

For the content feasibility, the textbook aligns well with curriculum goals and supports 21st-century skills, scoring highly in presenting clear concepts and valuing diversity. The concept of this textbook is clearly illustrated in the unity of the entire content of this book in which this textbook describes the daily life of a group of primary school students in a school called *SD Bhineka*. The characters in this textbook each represent a particular culture that illustrates the value of diversity in Indonesia. The main characters in this textbook are Cici (representing Chinese culture), Aisyah (representing Muslim culture), Made (representing Balinese culture with its majority Hindu religion), Joshua (representing eastern Indonesian tribes and Christianity), Mr. Togar (representing the Batak tribe), Miss Rahma and Miss Nina (depicting the figure of teachers who wear hijab and do not wear hijab representing religious tolerance). In addition, this book also instills the values of togetherness regardless of physicality with the presence of a disabled character named Bagas. Although some of the activities in this textbook are dominated by the female gender, this textbook teaches equality regardless of gender. Overall, this textbook contains good concept and moral values.

However, it needs improvement in providing up-to-date information and adequate teacher support. This book does not provide a bibliography page, which means

that the entire content of this book is the original work of the author. Therefore, content validity testing is needed, for example by involving TEYL experts as well as user feedback. In addition, the suitability of the topic and the content of the material needs to be reviewed because there is material content that overlaps between one topic and another, for example in unit 11 (Aisyah's Family) there is a listening activity that contains fruit and numbers, it has nothing to do with family.

The overall average score is 3.65 out of 5. This score indicates that, overall, the content of this textbook is good. This is in line with the findings in Aprilia and Ambarwati's (2023) research which proves that the content of the "My Next Words" textbook is pretty good. Although they analyze different books, these books are still in the same series with similar characteristics, which means there is consistency in the series.

In terms of language feasibility, the language used is generally effective and appropriate for young learners, motivating students and respecting social norms. The advantage of this book is that it carefully considers the developmental stages of its target users, namely children, so that the word selection and language structure are made very simple and relate to everyday life. In addition, there are no elements of racial discrimination (SARA) and hate speech against certain groups. Moreover, this textbook provide enough balanced activities for the development of language as a unit (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) although it is lack of pronunciation practices and native listening activities. In contrast to the research from Novianti (2023) and Amaliawati (2024) which suggests mining speaking activities, this textbook is recommended to add listening activities sourced from native speakers.

Nonetheless, the textbook could benefit from more precise terms and better systematic vocabulary gradation. There are at least 14 errors in this textbook related to word spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. In addition, there are also about 12 errors related to diction and language accuracy. These results confirm the findings from Sarifah and Ambarwati's (2023) research where "My Next words" textbook for grade 4 also has a lot of mistyping. The average score of 3.55, means that in spite of its weaknesses, the language components of this textbook also have advantages.

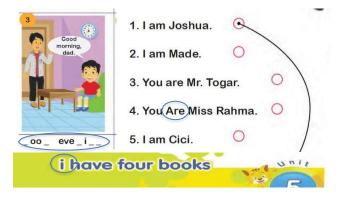


Figure 1. Examples of Mistakes in the Textbook

In regard to learning activities, the activities are suitable for student development and meet learning objectives, particularly in presenting diverse and useful exercises. This textbook facilitates teachers with diverse learning activities in both written activities and activities that involve psychomotor skills, such as throwing a ball. This variety allows students to learn according to their learning style. Moreover, the authors completed this textbook with some games like boardgame and word chain, coloring and singing. In with Alrasid (2015) who proposed learning in fun and interesting ways for young learners.

However, more engaging activities and support for critical thinking are needed. Indeed, the activities in this textbook were designed in simple ways considering the target audiences are young learners who just start to learn English. Thus, most of the activities are less of critical thinking and problem solving. The other drawbacks of this textbook is in the lack of native sources like in the listening, speaking, or reading activities do not involve content from the target language with which it can promote intercultural communication. The average score is 3.55. It means the activities provided are adequate for a good textbook for young learners.

In case of the design, the textbook is visually appealing with appropriate and clear illustrations. Visual elements are dominated the content of the textbook rather than the verbal ones in which they are very simple and short. The illustrations are in the form of cartoon, the layouts are neat and colorful, and also the size and shape of the textbook are appropriate for children. Therefore, it can be inferred that this textbook was designed carefully by considering the children's characteristics who tends to be imaginative, like something colorful, and cheerful (Pujiani, Harsiwi, et al., 2022).

While the design is effective, there is room for improvement in areas like supporting materials and overall print quality. The teachers stated that this textbook has students' book and teacher's book. These two books are used as the primary source of teaching English in the classroom. This textbook is not completed with any supplementary materials like audio, audiovisual, or any other form of separated media. Thus, any additional facilities like audio/ video player, LCD, or speaker are not needed. The average score is 3.62. It indicates that the design of this textbook is good for children. However, the incorporation of digital media like audio, audiovisual, or online-based media may enhance the effectiveness of the textbook.

Overall, with the total average score is 3.59, "My Next Words" for grade 1 is a wellrounded textbook with strong alignment to educational standards and engaging design, though enhancements in up-to-date content, linguistic precision, critical thinking activities, and supporting materials could further improve its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The content analysis of "My Next Words Grade 1" reveals that the textbook is generally effective but requires improvements. This textbook generally supports 21^{st-}century abilities and matches well with curriculum goals, especially when it comes to appreciating diversity and providing clear concepts. Although the language is feasible, there is room for improvement in several areas, such as the pronunciation and language

accuracy including the diction, spelling, capitalization and punctuation. For contextuality, nevertheless, updates are needed, as is improved instructor assistance. The textbook has an overall rating of 3.59, which indicates that it is successful but may be improved in a few areas. Some overlapping content and the absence of supplemental materials are limitations. Integrating supplemental media is recommended for pedagogical implications in order to fill up these gaps and promote all-encompassing language development. More studies should examine more varied teaching approaches and assess the long-term efficacy of these integrations.

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