

## The Digital Shift in ELT: A Cunningsworth Model Analysis of Seventh-Grade Online English Textbook's Quality

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### ABSTRACT

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In the contemporary educational landscape, students are increasingly encouraged to exercise self regulation in online learning environments. A method to augment self-regulated learning in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction involves the strategic choice of textbook employed for seventh-grade students in government schools throughout Indonesia. The research was structured around a survey design, utilizing a web-based questionnaire completed by eight female educators who utilized this online textbook was also undertaken. The questionnaire was adapted based on Cunningsworth's six point criteria: the aim, approach, language skills, design or organization, language content, and topic. The findings indicated unanimous agreement among the teachers regarding these points, suggesting that the online textbook is well-suited for facilitating engaging instruction and enhancing students' English proficiency with ease.

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## INTRODUCTION

A textbook, in its essence, can be defined as a published work that is meticulously designed with the primary objective of assisting language learners in their journey towards improving their linguistic and communicative abilities (Macalister & Nation, 2019). This definition underscores the pivotal role that textbooks play in the realm of language learning, serving not only as repositories of knowledge but also as tools that facilitate the acquisition of language skills. A typical student's book is not a standalone resource. Instead, it is part of a larger, more comprehensive textbook package (Nilson, 2016).

This package often includes supplementary materials such as a workbook, which provides students with additional exercises for practice; a teacher's guide, which offers educators pedagogical advice and teaching tips; and even additional multimodal texts for reference, which cater to the diverse learning styles of students. The ultimate goal of these resources is to promote efficient and rapid language acquisition (Cunningsworth, 1995). By providing students with a structured learning environment and offering them ample opportunities for practice, these resources help students internalize the language skills they are learning, thereby accelerating their progress and enhancing their proficiency.

The criteria for a high quality textbook are multifaceted and complex (Grigoryeva & Uvarov, 2021). A paramount criterion is that the textbook should align with the objectives of the syllabus and curriculum. This alignment is crucial as it ensures that the content of the textbook is relevant and beneficial to the students' learning journey. Moreover, the textbook should be flexible enough to adapt to various teaching and learning situations and styles (Lau et al., 2018). This flexibility allows educators to tailor their instruction to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of their students, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of their teaching.

In addition to aligning with the curriculum and being adaptable, the material in the textbook should provide a pleasurable learning experience (López-Medina, 2014; Tomlinson, 2012). This can be achieved by presenting learning items in an engaging and innovative manner. By making the learning experience enjoyable, students are more likely to be motivated to learn and, consequently, more likely to retain the information presented.

### **The Role of Textbooks in Language Learning**

According to (Laabidi & Nfissi, 2016), a textbook can be deemed successful if all aspects of the textbook are taken into consideration. These aspects encompass the subject matter, vocabulary, structure, exercises, illustrations, and physical appearance. The subject matter should be relevant and engaging, sparking students' interest and curiosity. The vocabulary should be appropriate for the students' proficiency level, challenging them just enough to facilitate language growth without causing undue frustration. The structure of the textbook should be logical and intuitive, allowing students to easily navigate the material (Barros et al., 2014). Exercises should be varied and interactive, promoting active learning and reinforcing the concepts taught. Illustrations should be clear and relevant, aiding in the comprehension of the material. Lastly, the physical appearance of the textbook should be appealing and inviting, encouraging students to engage with the material.

### **Evaluation Practices for English Textbooks in Indonesia**

A scholarly investigation was conducted to evaluate English Electronic Books for Junior High Schools in Indonesia (Handayani, 2016). This study employed the Textbook Evaluation Checklist developed by Skierso and Cunningsworth. The findings indicated that the evaluated materials met the established criteria for English textbooks, both in terms of physical appearance and content. Subsequently, a separate study by (Ningrum et al., 2023) centered on a comparative analysis of 8th-grade textbooks in Indonesia, with a specific focus on the aspect of Communicative Course books (CC). The researcher utilized a self-assessment method and a checklist as the primary instruments for conducting the content analysis. The results demonstrated that the textbooks satisfied the aspects of CC to varying degrees, attributable to the differential fulfillment of each indicator. The final study under discussion pertains to the application of Brian Tomlinson's Perspective in the evaluation of an English textbook for the seventh grade of Junior High School (Syahid et al., 2024). The methodology employed for data collection in this study was a record analysis facilitated by a checklist. The findings indicated that each book possesses its unique strengths and weaknesses, excelling in certain criteria while falling short in others.

An online textbook, accessible at a specific web address, was developed by an Indonesian researcher to address the challenges faced by students and teachers. The copyright for this resource is held by the creators, namely <https://www.myenglishstep.com/>. The model for textbook evaluation utilized in this study was derived from Nur (Nur et al., 2022) and adapted from Cunningsworth's six-point checklist. This checklist scrutinizes various aspects of the textbook, including the aim, approach, language skills, design or organization, language content, and topic..

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH**

This study was structured within the framework of a cross-sectional survey design, a research methodology that involves the collection of data at a specific point in time (Geys, 2023). The data collection process was facilitated through quantitative survey interviews, a method that allows for the systematic collection of standardized information from participants. The survey interviews consisted predominantly of closed-ended questions, which are questions that limit respondents to a set of predefined responses. This type of question is particularly useful in quantitative research as it allows for easy comparison and analysis of responses. The survey was administered through a web-based questionnaire, a digital tool for data collection that is accessible online (Creswell, 2012; Nazar et al., 2025).

Web-based questionnaires offer several advantages over traditional paper-based questionnaires (Tella, 2015; Oladokun et al., 2025). They can be distributed and completed electronically, eliminating the need for physical distribution and collection. They also allow for real-time data collection and automatic data entry, reducing the potential for human error and speeding up the data analysis process. The participants of this study were English teachers who utilized the textbook during online learning. The choice of participants was intentional, as these

individuals are the primary users of the textbook and are therefore best positioned to provide insights into its effectiveness as a teaching resource.

The textbook under investigation is available for three grade levels: VII, VIII, and IX. However, the focus of this study was specifically on the seventh-grade textbook. This focus was chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, the seventh grade marks the transition from elementary to middle school, a critical period in a student's educational journey. Secondly, the seventh-grade curriculum often serves as the foundation for subsequent grades, making it a crucial area of focus. Lastly, focusing on a single grade level allows for a more in-depth analysis, as it enables the researchers to delve deeper into the specific content and structure of the textbook.

The web-based questionnaire, featuring closed-ended questions, was adapted from the six-point framework proposed by Cunningham and Ariebowo. This framework encompasses the aim of the textbook, the textbook's approach, its design or organization, the content it contains, the language skills it targets, and the topics it covers. Participants were required to respond to a total of 44 evaluative statements about the textbook, selecting from four options: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. These responses were assigned a numerical weight on a scale of one to five (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). The mean score of the responses was calculated for each item. A mean score exceeding 3 indicated agreement with the statement among the respondents, typically the teachers. Conversely, a mean score less than 3 suggested disagreement with the statement. To ensure precision in the presentation of the data, the researchers reported the mean scores to two decimal places. This level of detail allowed for a more nuanced comparison of the scores across different items.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Data for this study were collected through an online survey involving teachers and students who used the seventh-grade English textbook. The results are presented through tables and descriptive analyses that reflect evaluations across six key aspects of the textbook. Each finding is discussed in depth to demonstrate its alignment with relevant theories and previous research.

### **Teacher Evaluation of the Textbooks**

Eight female educators, who utilized this online textbook across various regions in Indonesia, participated in this study. These educators were from the following schools: SMP Negeri 2 Mimika in Papua, SMP Negeri 13 Bandung, SMP Negeri 8 in Semarang, SMP Negeri 25 Padang, SMP Negeri 3 Tangerang, SMP Negeri 8 Bogor Kota, SMP Negeri 2 Kei Kecil Maluku Tenggara, and SMPN 1 Tulangan Sidoarjo. They successfully completed the online survey, which encompassed six key aspects of textbook evaluation: the aim of the textbook, the textbook's approach, its design or organization, the content it contains, the language skills it targets, and the topics it covers.

In addition to the teachers, feedback was also solicited from students who had used the textbook for their studies. Specifically, two students from SMP Negeri 13 Bandung and one student from SMP Negeri 2 Kei Kecil Maluku Tenggara provided their perspectives after studying with this book online. The results of the

survey, including the feedback from both teachers and students, were compiled and presented in tabular form for ease of analysis and interpretation.

Table 1 The Aim of Textbook

No	Points	Strongly Agree	Agree
1.	The aims of the textbook correspond closely with the aim of curriculum.	6	2
2.	The aims of the textbook correspond to the core of the competence.	6	2
3.	The aims of the textbook correspond closely with the aim of the teaching program	7	1
4.	The aims of the textbook correspond closely with the needs of learners.	6	2
		Mean 4.78	

The study revealed a unanimous agreement among all participating teachers regarding the aim of the textbook. This consensus was quantitatively represented by a high mean score of 4.78, indicating a strong positive response. The textbook was found to align seamlessly with the objectives of the curriculum, demonstrating congruence with the core competencies that form the foundation of the educational program.

Moreover, the teachers expressed agreement that the textbook was in alignment with the objectives of the teaching program. They also affirmed that it effectively met the needs of the learners. These findings suggest that the textbook is not merely an instructional tool, but a valuable resource that supports both teachers in their instructional roles and learners in their educational journey.

The online textbook under study was found to place significant emphasis on English competence. It was designed with a focus on the success of the teaching program and the needs of the learners, demonstrating a learner-centered approach. This focus is critical in today's educational landscape, where individual learner needs are increasingly being recognized and addressed (Alam, 2023; Goldie, 2016).

A student testimonial provided further insight into the effectiveness of the textbook. The student, identified by the initial R and hailing from Bandung, shared her personal experience with the book. She reported that the instructional materials included in the textbook were comprehensive. The explanations provided were clear and straightforward, making the content easily understandable. This ease of understanding is a crucial factor in learner engagement and retention, further underscoring the value of the textbook as a learning resource (Barkley & Major, 2020).

Table 2 The Approach of Textbook

No	Poins	Strongly Agree	Agree
1.	The textbook suites to the learning situation	6	2
2.	The textbook suites to the teaching situation.	6	2
3.	The textbook covers most of all student needs.	7	1

4.	The textbook is good resource for students.	6	2
5.	The textbook is good resource for teachers.	6	2
6.	The textbook is flexible so it allows various teaching styles.	5	3
7.	The textbook is flexible so it allows learning styles.	6	2
		Mean 4.68	

In alignment with the primary objective of the textbook, a unanimous consensus among all educators emerged, highlighting a remarkable endorsement of the textbook's instructional approach. This overwhelming support was substantiated by a notable mean score of 4.68, underscoring the collective affirmation of its efficacy. The textbook, it was observed, seamlessly integrated into the teaching and learning milieu, adeptly catering to the diverse needs of all students (Misnar et al., 2025). Noteworthy was its recognition as an invaluable asset, esteemed by both students and teachers alike.

The textbook's adaptability shone through, accommodating a spectrum of teaching and learning styles with finesse. Substantiating this adaptability, compelling evidence surfaced indicating that students not only found the process of learning English with this textbook to be enjoyable but also reported an enriching and supportive atmosphere during instructional sessions, as noted by educators. Moreover, a poignant testament to the textbook's impact came from a student in Bandung, denoted by the initial T, who articulated that the online textbook played a pivotal role in enhancing her learning experience. She attested that the learning journey became not only amusing but also inherently interesting, attributing the effectiveness of the online resource to this positive transformation.

Table 3 The Design or Organization of Textbook

No	Points	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1.	The textbook is supported with media such as CD, workbook, and teacher's manual.	4	3	1	
2.	The organization of the textbook is right for the teacher	7	1		
3.	The organization of the textbook is right for the learner.	7	1		
4.	The content is well sequenced on the basis of complexity	6	2		
5.	The content is well sequenced on the basis of learnability	6	2		
6.	The content is well sequenced on the basis of usefulness.	6	2		
7.	There is an adequate recycling.	6	2		
8.	There is adequate review	5	3		
9.	There is reference section of grammar in the book.	6	2		
10.	The materials promote individual	6	1		

	study.		
11	It is easy for learners to find their way around the textbook.	4	4
12	It is easy for teacher to find his/her way around the textbook.	4	4
13	The textbook has good layout	7	1
		Mean 4.63	

The design and organization of the textbook were evaluated by the teachers, resulting in a mean score of 4.63. This score indicates a broad consensus of approval among the teachers, suggesting that the textbook's design and organization effectively support the teaching and learning process. While one teacher expressed neutrality regarding the supplementary materials such as CDs, workbooks, and teacher's manuals, the majority agreed that these additional resources significantly enhance the textbook's utility. These supplementary materials provide additional avenues for practice and reinforcement, thereby enriching the learning experience (Ferri et al., 2020).

All teachers concurred that the textbook's organization was appropriate for both educators and learners. They appreciated the logical sequencing of the content, which was based on factors such as complexity, learnability, and usefulness. This well-sequenced structure facilitates progressive learning, allowing students to build on their knowledge as they progress through the textbook (Acosta & Cajas, 2018; Syahid et al., 2024). The teachers also agreed that the textbook provided an adequate review and recycling mechanism. This mechanism allows students to revisit and reinforce their understanding of previously learned concepts, promoting long-term retention of knowledge. The textbook also features a comprehensive grammatical section, providing students with a solid foundation in English grammar.

However, one teacher expressed disagreement regarding the textbook's promotion of individual study materials. Despite this, the majority of teachers strongly agreed that the textbook exhibited a commendable layout and was straightforward to use. This ease of use enhances the user experience for both teachers and students, making the textbook an effective tool for English language instruction.

The layout of this online textbook, which includes contemporary features such as live worksheets, games, and supportive lesson conclusions, was found to be highly motivating. These interactive and engaging features cater to the diverse learning preferences of students, making learning an enjoyable experience. By alleviating boredom and promoting active engagement, these features enhance the effectiveness of the learning process (Al & Alanazi, 2025). Consequently, it was concluded that the students derived satisfaction from completing the exercises. This sense of satisfaction not only boosts the students' confidence but also motivates them to continue learning.

Table 4 The Content of Textbook

No	Points	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral
1.	The textbook covers the main grammar item	5	3	

2.	Material for vocabulary teaching is adequate in terms of quantity.	4	4	
3.	Material for vocabulary teaching is adequate in terms of range of vocabulary.	5	3	
4.	The textbook includes the material for pronunciation work.	2	5	1
5.	The material pronunciation covers individual sounds.	2	5	1
6.	The material for pronunciation work covers word stress	2	5	1
7.	The material for pronunciation work covers intonation.	2	5	1
		Mean 4.32		

The teachers' perspectives on the content of the textbook were largely positive, as indicated by a mean score of 4.32. They collectively agreed that the textbook effectively addresses the primary grammar items, which form the backbone of language learning. Additionally, they acknowledged that the textbook provides a substantial amount of material for teaching vocabulary. This material spans a wide range, catering to the diverse vocabulary needs of the students, and is presented in sufficient quantity to allow for thorough practice and reinforcement (Ordóñez Procel et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, the teachers' opinions diverged when it came to the inclusion of pronunciation, individual sounds, word stress, and intonation in the book. While the majority of teachers agreed that these elements were adequately covered, one teacher expressed neutrality. This divergence of opinion underscores the subjective nature of textbook evaluation and the importance of considering multiple perspectives.

When it came to the phonology enhancement materials in the online book, the teachers' opinions were less favorable compared to their views on other aspects of the textbook. The primary reason for this was one teacher's neutrality regarding the inclusion of materials for pronunciation work, individual sounds, word stress, and intonation in the textbook. This neutrality suggests that there may be room for improvement in this area of the textbook.

Despite this, it was suggested that students could enhance their pronunciation skills using Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), as proposed by (Rajendran & Md Yunus, 2021). MALL is a modern approach to language learning that leverages mobile technology to facilitate language practice anytime, anywhere. This approach can be particularly effective for improving pronunciation skills, as it allows students to listen to and practice pronunciation in a flexible and convenient manner.

Table 5 Language Skills

No	Points	Strongly Agree	Agree
1.	The textbook covers reading skills.	5	3
2.	The textbook covers writing skills.	5	3
3.	The textbook covers listening skills.	6	2
4.	The textbook covers speaking skills.	4	4
		Mean 4.63	

### Students Feedback and Textbooks Topic

The study revealed a unanimous agreement among all participating teachers that the textbook effectively addresses the four fundamental skills in English: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This consensus was quantitatively represented by a high mean score of 4.63, indicating a strong positive response. The textbook was found to align seamlessly with the objectives of the curriculum, demonstrating congruence with the core competencies that form the foundation of the educational program.

Moreover, the teachers expressed agreement that the textbook was in alignment with the objectives of the teaching program. They also affirmed that it effectively met the needs of the learners. These findings suggest that the textbook is not merely an instructional tool, but a valuable resource that supports both teachers in their instructional roles and learners in their educational journey.

The textbook demonstrated flexibility in accommodating various teaching and learning styles. This flexibility is crucial in today's diverse educational landscape, where students have unique learning styles and preferences. By catering to these diverse styles, the textbook enhances the learning experience and ensures that all students can engage with the material in a way that suits them best.

Evidence suggested that students found learning English with this textbook to be an enjoyable experience. This is a significant finding, as enjoyment is a key factor in motivation, which in turn is crucial for effective learning. When students enjoy what they are learning, they are more likely to engage deeply with the material, leading to better understanding and retention of knowledge. As proposed by (Chisunum & Nwadiokwu, 2024), teachers could employ specific teaching techniques to improve students' speaking skills, such as managing their self-confidence levels. This approach recognizes that language learning is not just about acquiring knowledge, but also about building confidence to use the language in real-world contexts. Moreover, learning styles can exert an influence on narrative writing skills due to the interplay between learning models, learning styles, and narrative writing skills (Moosavi et al., 2024). This finding underscores the importance of adopting a learner-centered approach in language teaching, where instruction is tailored to the individual learning styles of the students.

A student from Maluku Tenggara provided a testimonial about her experience with the book. She reported that the instructional materials were comprehensive, with explanations that were clear and straightforward, enabling her to understand the content with ease. This feedback from a student user of the textbook provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the textbook from a learner's perspective.

Table 6 Topic

No	Points	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral
1	There is sufficient material of genuine interest to learners.	6	2	
2	There is enough variety of topics	6	2	
3	The topic presented is content-wise enough for learner's language level.	6	2	
4	The students are able to relate the social culture context presented in the textbook to the use of English in real life.	7	1	
5	Female is portrayed equally with male.	7	1	
6	The characters in the textbook represent people from different region in Indonesia.	7	1	
7	Different ethnic groups are well represented.	5	3	
8	Different groups of occupation are well represented	4	4	
9	Other group such as disability is also represented in the textbook.	2	3	3
		Mean 4.65		

The cohesion among educators regarding the contents of the textbook was not only palpable but resoundingly evident, manifesting in a unanimous agreement that underscored their endorsement of the presented topics. This resounding consensus was quantified by an impressive mean score of 4.65, attesting to the teachers' collective approval of the material's alignment with students' interests and its apt presentation of a diverse array of topics tailored to the learners' language proficiency.

Integral to the teachers' acclaim was the acknowledgment that the online textbook served as a dynamic tool for students to connect with socio-cultural contexts presented within its pages. This facet was particularly appreciated for its contribution to effective communication skills, thereby enhancing the overall language learning experience. Notably, educators expressed admiration for the textbook's commitment to inclusivity, emphasizing the equal representation of both genders and the portrayal of characters hailing from diverse regions across Indonesia. The textbook's inclusivity extended beyond regional diversity, encapsulating various occupational groups and demographics, including individuals with disabilities (Ciuffetelli Parker & Conversano, 2021).

However, amidst the overwhelmingly positive response, it is crucial to highlight a nuanced perspective. Three teachers, in particular, expressed a neutral stance on the representation of individuals with disabilities in the textbook. This neutrality, though a minority view, offers valuable insights into the varied perspectives within the teaching cohort. The majority, nonetheless, voiced agreement with and appreciation for the inclusive approach, showcasing the textbook's commendable efforts in presenting a diverse and representative array of characters and scenarios.

## CONCLUSION

The majority of teachers who utilized the online textbook for instruction in grade VII expressed their agreement with respect to various aspects of the textbook. These aspects include the textbook's aim, approach, design or organization, content, language skills, and topic. This consensus among teachers was quantitatively substantiated by the fact that the mean score for each point exceeded 3. This suggests that the online textbook is not only suitable but also effective in enhancing students' competence in English. Specifically, this online textbook is highly recommended for educators. It provides them with a comprehensive set of resources and a structured framework that can guide their teaching methods. Moreover, the textbook offers a variety of lesson materials that teachers can use to diversify their instruction, cater to different learning styles, and keep students engaged.

The study also revealed certain limitations of the online textbook. One teacher disagreed with the assertion that the textbook materials promote individual study. This suggests that the textbook may need to include more self-study resources or activities that students can undertake independently. Additionally, one teacher expressed neutrality regarding the enhancement of phonology, which includes the study of individual sounds, word stress, and intonation. This indicates that while the textbook may cover these aspects, there may be room for improvement in how these elements are presented or practiced in the textbook. Furthermore, three teachers remained neutral on the representation of other groups, such as individuals with disabilities, in the textbook. This suggests that the textbook could benefit from a more inclusive representation of diverse groups to provide a more holistic and realistic view of society. In light of these findings, while the online textbook is largely effective and well-received, there are areas where it could be improved. These improvements could make the textbook an even more valuable resource for both English language teachers and learners, further enhancing the teaching and learning experience.

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