

# THE EVALUATION OF THE PRESENT FRENCH TEXTBOOK USED IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN SEMARANG AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Sri Rejeki Urip, Astini Su'udi, Mursid Saleh  
Semarang State University

## ABSTRACT

School Based Curriculum (SBC) as one of the decentralization in education authorizes teachers to develop their own teaching materials. The fact shows that the teacher is still minimal in writing, including writing textbooks. To facilitate French teachers in writing a French textbook, a guideline is needed. In Exploration Phase of Research and Development, one of the objectives is to find out the quality of French textbook used today. Knowing its strengths and weaknesses is useful because the information can be used as data for developing a guideline for writing a better French textbook. To collect the data, the methods used were (1) Document Analysis, (2) In-depth interviews, (3) Questionnaires, and (4) Focus Group Discussion. To analyze the data, the Constant Comparative Method was utilized. For the trustworthiness of the data, Triangulation, Member-checking were applied. By using the French textbook evaluation instrument set by BSNP and equipped with Cunningsworth criteria, the six volumes of *Bonjour Chers Amis* were evaluated. There are four components to be evaluated: Feasibility of Contents, Feasibility of Presentation, Feasibility of Language, and Practical considerations. The findings reveal that the criteria of French textbook evaluation of BSNP has not been implemented optimally. These findings provide the information of the quality of the French textbook currently used in Semarang and its surroundings. The information can be used as an overview what things are to be followed and avoided in developing a guideline for writing a French textbook integrating SBC and CEFRL.

**Key Words:** French textbook, content feasibility, presentation feasibility, language feasibility, practical considerations.

## INTRODUCTION

Decentralization of education has produced some policies. One of them is School Based Management. This policy gives wider autonomy to schools and supports them to take participative decision involving all of schools' elements: teachers, students, principals, staffs, parents, and community to develop and to improve the quality of school based on national education policy. (MPMBS, 2001: 3).

Another policy related with School Based Management is the existence of School Based Curriculum. Ministry of National Education defines curriculum as a set of plans and regulations of objectives, contents, and teaching learning materials, also the ways used as guideline to organize teaching learning activities to achieve certain objectives of education (BNSP 2006:5). School Based Curriculum (SBC) is an operational curriculum which is

developed and implemented at every level of schools. SBC consists of the objective of school, structure and content, academic calendar, and syllabus. SBC offers more opportunities to teachers to develop teaching materials particularly textbooks. Teachers can create their own textbook that can be more appropriate with the competence and the need of students.

The reality shows that there are not many teachers writing a book or a textbook (Swisma 2009). There are many reasons why teachers do not create their own textbook, among others (1) They think that they are not competent to write a textbook, (2) There is no guideline that can be used to help teachers to write textbooks. From the identifications of the problems above, it can be concluded that the empowerment of teachers in developing textbook is needed by creating a guideline that can be used to help French teachers to write a textbook. For producing a guideline, a research and development is required. Before developing a guideline, the evaluation of the existing French textbook will be done to find out its strengths and weaknesses.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

In this part, some theories related with language teaching materials are presented.

### **Language Material Development**

Teaching materials are anything which are used to help to teach language to learners. (Tomlinson 1998:viii-xiii). Most people

associate the term 'teaching materials' with coursebooks or textbook. The two terms: 'materials' and 'coursebook' are often used interchangeably. According to Tomlinson, a coursebook is a textbook which provides the core materials for a course. It aims to provide as much as possible in one book and it is designed so that it could serve as the only book which the learners necessarily use during a course. Such a book usually includes work on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, function and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking

Tomlinson states that language learning materials refers to anything which is used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of language. However, Tomlinson (1998:2) mentions some types of teaching materials as follows: (1) a textbook, (2) a workbook, (3) a cassette, (4) a CD-Rom, (5) a video, (6) a photocopied handout, (7) a newspaper, (8) a paragraph written on a whiteboard. In brief, anything that presents or informs about the language being learned.

### **The Roles of Teaching Materials in Foreign Language Teaching**

Teaching materials are a key component in most language programs (Richards 2001:251). Teaching materials have multiple roles in foreign language teaching. Cunningsworth (1995: 7) states that coursebook can serve as (a) a resource for presentation material (spoken and written), (b) a source of activities for

learner practice and communicative interaction, (c) a reference source for learner on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, (d) a source of stimulation and ideas for classroom language activities, (e) syllabus (where they reflect learning objectives that already have been determined), (f) a support for less experienced teachers who have yet gain in confidence. The important role of teaching materials demands the teachers to pay attention to select carefully teaching materials that they will use in their teaching learning process.

### **The Criteria of Good Language Teaching Materials**

There are many criteria that can be used to evaluate coursebooks. Cunningsworth (1995:2- 4) uses a checklist for evaluation and selection of coursebooks. There are (1) Aims and approaches, (2) Design and organization, (3) Language content, (4) Skills, (5) Topic, (6) Methodology, (7) Teachers' books, (8) Practical consideration.

The Board of Education National Standard have released criteria for evaluating French textbooks in the end of 2009. The criteria is classified in three groups: (1) Feasibility of Contents, (2) Feasibility of Presentation, (3) Feasibility of Language. For the Feasibility of Contents, there are six sub-components, namely (1) The suitability of teaching materials with the competence standard and basic competence, (2) The accuracy of the material, (3) The currentness of materials,

(4) The implicitness of pragmatic rules, (5) Attractiveness, and (6) Skills.

Feasibility of Presentation consists of three subcomponents, namely (1) The Techniques of Presentation, (2) The Support of Presentation, and (3) The Presentation of learning. In the subcomponent of "The Technique of Presentation", there are six elements that are evaluated, (a) The consistency of the systematization of the book, (b) The systematization of chapter, (c) The proportion between chapters, (d) The gradation and development, (e) The Variety of the exercises, and (f) The Consistency in commands and instructions. In the subcomponent of "The support of the Presentation", there are seven elements evaluated. There are (a) The self-assessment of learners, and *Bilan*, (b) The table of conjugation, (c) Glossary, (d) Index, , (e) Bibliography, and (f) Audio Material. In the subcomponent of "The presentation of Learning", there are four elements assessed, namely (a) Involvement of Learners, (b) Communicative Approach, (c) Gender, (d) Cross cultural understanding.

In Feasibility of Language, there are two subcomponents (1) The accuracy of using the Indonesian language, and (2) Communicative. In subcomponent of "The accuracy of using the Indonesian language", three elements assessed. They are (a) The accuracy of the Indonesian structure sentence, (b) The effectiveness of Indonesian sentence, and (c) The

accuracy of Indonesian spelling. In Communicative subcomponent, there are four elements to evaluate, namely (a) Legibility, (b) Technical words, (c) The suitability of the intellectual development of learners, and (d) The suitability with the socio-emotional development of learners.

From the two criteria used to evaluate the textbooks above, substantially, both of these criteria have the same elements, except the Practical Consideration. In this component, Cunningsworth (1995:4) groups it in four sub-components, namely (a) The price of book is appropriate with the quality of the book, (b) The book is bounded strongly and long lasting, (c) The cover of the book is interesting, and (d) The book is easy to obtain.

There are many reasons for materials evaluation activities. Cunningsworth (1995:14) says that the intention to adopt new coursebook is a major and frequent reason for evaluation. Another reason is to identify particular strengths and weaknesses in coursebook already in use. He also states that different criteria will be applied in different circumstances (1995:2). In line with Cunningsworth (1995), Tomlinson (1998:5) says that the systematic procedures of materials evaluation can be used as a means of informing materials development.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The objective of this research is to describe the quality of the present French

textbooks used in Senior High Schools in Semarang and its surroundings.

The approach used in this phase is qualitative approach. Qualitative approach is a research of which the objective is to describe and to analyze phenomenon, social activities, perception, thinking, situation (Sukmadinata 2008: 60, Saleh 2008: 3). By using the criteria of textbook evaluation from BSNP equipped by the criteria of other expert, the French textbook *Bonjour Chers Amis* has been analyzed.

The data gathered is the quality of the present French textbook used in Senior High Schools in Semarang and its surroundings. The source of data is French textbook actually used in Senior High Schools in Semarang and its surroundings. This book is "*Bonjour Chers Amis*". There are 6 volumes, Volume XA, XB, XI A, XI B, XII A, and XII B. One volume is used for one semester, and (2) The teachers opinion about the French textbook *Bonjour Chers Amis*.

There are four techniques of collecting data used in this phase. Technique of document analysis has been carried out to analyze the present French textbooks used in Senior High Schools. For analyzing the 6 volumes of '*Bonjour Chers Amis*', the instrument of French textbook evaluation published by BSNP and equipped with the Cunningsworth criteria was used. Technique of in-depth interview, questionnaire, and Focuss Group Discussion were used to get some

information about the quality of French textbook "*Bonjour Chers Amis*

Constant Comparative method was used to analyze the data in this research. (Cohen and Crabtree 2006 in <http://www.qualres.org/HomeCons-3824.html>).

Strauss and Corbin describe the steps for coding that they call (1) Open Coding, (2) Axial Coding, (3) Selective Coding (Strauss and Corbin 2007, Dornyei 2007).

The term 'Trustworthiness' is established by Lincoln and Guba. This term is used to substitute the concept of reliability and validity in qualitative research (Morse et al 2002 in [http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/1\\_2Final/pdf/morseetal.pdf](http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/1_2Final/pdf/morseetal.pdf)). In this research, the technique of (1) Triangulation, and (2) Member-checking were implemented. Two types of triangulation were applied in this research: (a) Technique of collecting data triangulation. This type was used to check out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection. The techniques of in-depth interview, questionnaire, and Focus Group Discussion were used in this research to reveal the consistency of findings. (b) Triangulation of source. This type of triangulation is used to examine the consistency of data gathered from different sources. In this research, the data related with the quality of French textbook was obtained from the analysis of French textbook "*Bonjour Chers Amis*" and from respondents (French teachers)

Member-checking is described by Lincoln and Guba as "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility in a study. It consists of taking data and interpretation back to the participants in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account (in Creswell and Miller 2006: 127). The Focus Group Discussion organized in this exploration phase has given the opportunity to the participants to give the credible information or data. Every member of participant could check the information from others about the subject discussed during the FGD.

The significance of the study is that this result can be used as data for researcher to create a guideline for developing a French textbook integrating School Based Curriculum and the Common European Framework of Reference for Language for senior high school Students that will be done in the following phase of Research and Development.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the profile of French Textbook *Bonjour Chers Amis* and the analysis of this book are discussed

### **The Profile of French Textbook *Bonjour Chers Amis***

French textbook currently used in senior high schools in Semarang and its surroundings is *Bonjours Chers Amis*. The book was written by a team of five members of the Association of French

teachers (MGMP) in Semarang, and is published every year. The profile of *Bonjour Chers Amis* can be seen from the following tables. Table 1 shows the six volumes of *Bonjour Chers Amis* which are used to class one to class three, the

number of pages of each volume, the number of units, the number of pages of each unit. From the second table, we can get the information about the theme and sub-themes of each volume.

Table 1  
The six volumes of *Bonjour Chers Amis*

	Book X A	Book X B	Book XI A	Book XI B	Book XII A	Book XII B
Class	X	X	XI	XI	XII	XII
Number of Pages	56	72	67	70	64	58
Number of Units/Leçons	2	4	4	4	4	3
Number of Pages of Unit/Leçon	L 1 : 8 L 2 : 25	L 1: 12 L 2: 16 L 3: 17 L 4: 14	L 1: 15 L 2 : 14 L 3: 15 L 4 : 12	L 1: 15 L 2 : 17 L 3: 12 L 4 : 14	L 1: 13 L 2 : 12 L 3: 14 L 4 : 12	L 1: 13 L 2 : 12 L 3: 13

### The Analysis of French Textbook *Bonjour Chers Amis*

The six volumes of *Bonjour Chers Amis* were analyzed by using the evaluation criteria of French textbook created by the The Board of National Education Standard and some of Cunningsworth's criteria. There are four main components to be assessed (1) Feasibility of Contents, (2) Feasibility of Presentation, (3) Feasibility of Language, (4) Practical Considerations. The following are the results of the analysis.

#### **Feasibility of Contents**

For the suitability of teaching materials with the competence standard and basic standard, there are several elements to be evaluated. For the elements of completeness of the materials, the six volumes present the materials that reflect the competence standard, and basic competence. For example in Book X B, for listening skills, students are asked to listen to and imitate the dialogue read by the teacher (Exercise 7, page 9). Furthermore, students are asked to identify the new vocabulary that they get from the dialogue that they listen (Exercise 8, page 10). In the next exercise, students were asked to

answer several questions related to the dialogue.

Table 2  
The theme and sub-themes of each volume of the Books

	Book X A	Book X B	Book XI A	Book XI B	Book XII A	Book XII B
<b>Thème:</b>	<b>Identité :</b>	<b>Vie Scolaire</b>	<b>Vie Familiale</b>	<b>Vie Quotidienne</b>	<b>Loisirs</b>	<b>Vacances</b>
<b>Sub thème</b>	Salutation  Présentation	Classe  Bibliothèque  Leçon Supplémentaire  Amitié	Relations Familiales. Maison, Pièce, Appartement Rendre visite à quelqu'un Lettre	Activités de Famille Repas  Télévisions Vêtements	Sport et Passe Temps Musique et Danse Lire Faire des Courses	Week end  Endroits Touristique Service Publics

For speaking skill, in Exercise 2 page 6, students play the role about the activities happened in the classroom. This material is appropriate with the competence standard and basic competence for speaking skill. In Exercise 6 on page 54, the students answer the questions related to the provided documents. This is suitable with competence standard and basic competence for reading skill. For writing skill, in Exercise 20 on page 14, the students are asked to write their e-mail address. This is related with the standard of competence and basic competence for writing skill.

On the element of the vastness of materials, the six volumes of *Bonjour Chers Amis* present the descriptions that support the achievement of basic competence. The examples can be seen

from the variations in practice. For the element of the depth of the material, Students are not trained in listening skill optimally. For example in the Book XI A with the theme of *Vie Familiale*, and which is broken down in 4 *Unités*, namely : *Relations familiales; Maison, Pièce, Appartement; Rendre visite à quelqu'un; and Lettre*, the researcher found only seven exercises for listening skills.

For the Accuracy of Materials, there are some sentences that are not commonly used by the French, for example *Super ta chambre* (Book XI A, Exercise 11 page 23). The French uses *Ta chambre est super*.

For the accuracy of the grammatical rules, there are some inaccurate sentences in using the rules of language . For example in Book XA : (1) *Observez les dessins et écoutez les dialogues et jouer*

*le role devant la classe* (page 14), (2) *Bonne nuit, ma petite, dormez bien!* (Page 18).

From the evaluation of the elements of simple sentence pattern, it is concluded that some compound sentences are used. It is also revealed from the result of interviews with the teachers that some sentences used in the book *Bonjours Chers Amis* are compound sentences. Students are still difficult to study the compound sentences. Most of the compound sentences are found in the instructions, for example (1) *Complétez le au desous avec les mots ce que vous écoutez!* (Exercice 2, page 8 books X B).

The grammar used is appropriate with the theme. The tenses used are *le Présent, le Futur Simple, le Passé Composé*. For the Recency of materials, some of the materials used are the newest material, such as the names of French used in the present (page 20 books XA).

In the implicitness of pragmatic rules, on element of "Language used is appropriate with the social situation", there is a structure of language that does not match with the variety of language, for example *Bonne nuit, ma petite, dormez bien!* (Page 18 ,Book X A). In this sentence, the structure of a far social distance is used for a context of close social distance.

In attractiveness, the element of Indonesian culture has not been discussed. But in the book used in a higher class, little by little this element is

discussed. The authentic texts have not been used in Book X. At higher grade, authentic texts are used. The texts are taken from Wikipidia and Sport magazine.

### **Feasibility of Presentation**

In the Technique of Presentation", there are six elements that are evaluated, (a) The consistency of the systematization of the book , (b) The systematization of chapter, (c) The proportion between chapters, (d) The gradation and development, (e) The Variety of the exercises, and (f) Consistency in commands and instructions.

It can be concluded that from the six volumes of *Bonjour Chers Amis*, Volume 1 does not have the same organization as the other five volumes. In each chapter, there are exercises for all four skills, although these four skills are not proportionately explored.

Some teaching materials presented in the six volumes have not followed the criteria of evaluation set out by BSNP, that the verb is presented from simple to difficult, from the regular verbs into irregular verbs, and verbs of high frequency to low-frequency verbs. In *Bonjour Chers Amis*, the verbs used are adapted to the theme. The six volumes do not contain the self-assessment of learners. The Examples of self-assessment of learners are: *I can introduce myself in French. Yes / No / Hesitate. I could expose my family. Yes / No / Hesitate.*

The books do not provide Glossary, Index, or audio material. In this book, the

exercises involve students, such as playing a role in greeting and introducing themselves. This book does not fully use the communicative approach, because some exercises still emphasize the grammar. Not all of the volumes presents women and men equally. This means that the concept of equality is not presented intentionally.

### ***Feasibility of Language***

In subcomponent of “The accuracy of using the Indonesian language”, three elements assessed. They are (a) The accuracy of the Indonesian structure sentence, (b) The effectiveness of Indonesian sentence, and (c) The accuracy of Indonesian spelling. The six volumes do not contain these components, because *Bonjour Chers Amis* does not use Indonesian for the commands or instructions, so there is no evaluation for these components.

The sentences used in *Bonjour Chers Amis*, especially in the instructions, are not simple sentences. Similarly, some texts taken from magazines, Internet, or other textbooks published in France do not use the simple sentences. Indonesian is not used in this book, thus the elements Technical words, The suitability of the intellectual development of learners, and the suitability with the socio-emotional development of learners can not be evaluated.

### ***Practical Considerations***

In the component of Practical Considerations, there are four elements assessed, namely (a) The price of book is appropriate with the quality of the book, (b) The book is bounded strongly and long lasting, (c) The cover of the book is interesting, and (d) The book is easy to obtain. The four elements are met in the six volumes of the book.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that (1) Some criteria of evaluation of French textbook from BSNP have not been optimally fulfilled in the French textbook *Bonjour Chers Amis*, (2) The book *Bonjour Chers Amis* is not equipped with (a) Introduction, (b) Table of Content, (c) Glossary, (d) Index, (e) Audio Transcription, (f) Bilan, (g) The Student Self-Assessment. (3) The research results will be used to conduct the following phase of the Research and Development.

### **REFERENCES**

- Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan.2006. *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan Jenjang Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah*. Jakarta : BSNP
- Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan dan Pusat Perbukuan Depdiknas. 2009.*Instrumen 1 dan Deskripsi Penilaian Buku Teks Pelajaran Bahasa Prancis*. Jakarta.
- Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan dan Pusat Perbukuan Depdiknas. 2009. *Instrumen 2 dan Deskripsi Penilaian*

- Buku Teks Pelajaran Bahasa Prancis*. Jakarta.
- Cohen, D and Crabtree, B.2006. "Lincoln and Guba's Evaluative Criteria" in *Qualitative Research Guideline Project*. July 2006. In <http://www.qualres.org/HomeLinc-3684.html> [Accessed 19/5/2011]
- Creswell, John W., and Miller, Dana L. 2006. "Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry" in *Theory into Practice*. Volume 39, Number 3, Summer 2000. College of Education. The Ohio State University in <http://web.media.mit.edu/~kbrennan/mas790/04/Creswell,%20Determining%20validity%20in%20qualitative%20inquiry.pdf> [Accessed 26/5/2011]
- Cunningsworth, Alan. 1995. *Choosing Your Coursebook*. Great Britain: Heinemann English Language Teaching.
- Depdiknas. 2001. *Manajemen Peningkatan Mutu Berbasis Sekolah. Buku 1 Konsep dan Pelaksanaan*. Jakarta.
- Dornyei, Zoltan. 2007. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lincoln and Guba's Evaluative Criteria in Cohen D, Crabtree B.2006. *Qualitative Research Guideline Project*. July 2006. In <http://www.qualres.org/HomeLinc-3684.html> [Accessed 19/5/2011].
- Morse, J.M., Barrett,M., Mayan,M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. 2002. "Verification Strategies for Establishing Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research". *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 1 (2), article 2, in <http://www.ualberta.ca/~ijqm/> [Accessed 24/5/2011]
- Richards, Jack C.2006. *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Saleh, Mursid. 2008. *Enam Tradisi Besar Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa*. Semarang: UNNES Press.
- Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin.2007. *Dasar-dasar Penelitian Kualitatif.Tatalangkah dan Teknik-teknik Teoritisasi Data*.Terj. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Sukmadinata, Nana Syaodih.2008. *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Bandung: Program Pascasarjana Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia dengan PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Swisma. 2009. *Guru dan Dosen Minim Menulis*. [http://www.harianglobal.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=26543:guru-dan-dosen-inim-menulis-buku-teks-&catid=56:edukasi&Itemid=63](http://www.harianglobal.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=26543:guru-dan-dosen-inim-menulis-buku-teks-&catid=56:edukasi&Itemid=63)[Accessed 29 January 2010]
- The Constant Comparative Method in* [www.health.herts.ac.uk/.../constant\\_comparative\\_method.htm](http://www.health.herts.ac.uk/.../constant_comparative_method.htm) [Accessed 4/5/2011]
- Tomlinson, Brian. 1998. *Materials Development in Language Teaching*10<sup>th</sup> printing 2007. United Kingdom: Cambridge University.