# A COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS FOR TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS 'BAHASA INGGRIS: WORK IN PROGRESS' AND 'ENGLISH IN MIND BOOK 3'

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**Abstract:** This study evaluates English textbooks used in Indonesian high schools to determine their alignment with curriculum standards and their effectiveness in supporting language acquisition. Using document analysis, textbooks were assessed based on key criteria, including aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills development, topics and cultural representation, and practical considerations. A Likert-scale rating (1–4) was applied to quantify evaluation results. The findings highlight strengths and weaknesses in locally produced textbooks compared to internationally published materials, emphasizing the need for improvements in cultural inclusivity, skills integration, and real-life applicability. The results provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in selecting and enhancing English learning resources. Additionally, the study serves as a reference for future research on textbook evaluation, particularly in adapting global materials to local educational contexts. By identifying gaps and providing recommendations, this research contributes to the continuous development of high-quality textbooks that align with national and international standards, ultimately improving English language education in Indonesia.
**Keywords:** *textbook evaluation; english language learning; curriculum alignment; language education; educational resources.*

## INTRODUCTION

Textbooks serve as essential resources in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, providing structured content that aligns with curriculum standards and learning objectives. They function as primary instructional tools that facilitate teachers in delivering lessons while guiding students in acquiring language skills. As emphasized by Marhamah (2024), a well-structured textbook ensures effective learning by presenting systematic, comprehensible, and engaging materials. However, the effectiveness of a textbook depends on multiple factors, including content quality, design, alignment with learning objectives, and accessibility to learners of diverse proficiency levels.

In Indonesia, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology regulates English language instruction in high schools through curriculum guidelines. The selection of

textbooks must align with national standards, ensuring that learning materials support students' cognitive, linguistic, and communicative competencies (Hidayah, 2020). However, the availability of various textbooks from both domestic and international publishers raises questions about their suitability for Indonesian learners. Consequently, comparative analyses are essential in evaluating how well textbooks meet the curriculum's objectives and facilitate effective English language acquisition.

Textbook evaluation has been widely discussed in the field of English language teaching, emphasizing various aspects such as content quality, alignment with curriculum standards, and language appropriateness. Previous studies have examined how textbooks serve as essential teaching tools in formal education settings and influence students' comprehension of key concepts (Ayu, 2020; Fitriyani et al., 2021; Alkin et al.,

2024; Mulyasa, 2023; Tomlinson, 2023). Some researchers have highlighted that textbooks play a crucial role in developing students' linguistic proficiency and cognitive skills by providing structured and systematic learning materials (Blair, 2023; Balmer & Richards, 2022; Li et al., 2020; Hidayat et al., 2024; Larasati, 2022). The importance of an effective textbook selection process, guided by established evaluation criteria, is also emphasized to ensure that the material meets students' learning needs and institutional objectives (Mustafa, 2021; Mithans & Grmek, 2020; Moris et al., 2020; Nartin et al., 2024; Alfarisy, 2021).

Several studies have compared different textbooks based on evaluation frameworks such as Cunningsworth's criteria and national curriculum guidelines. Research findings indicate that government-issued textbooks often emphasize national identity and cultural elements, whereas internationally published books incorporate a broader range of topics and methodologies (Nainggolan & Wirza, 2021; Ayu, 2020; Putri & Priyanti, 2023; Shi, 2024; Yonata & Yoniswan, 2021). In Indonesia, textbooks published by the Ministry of Education are often designed to align with national education goals, but they may lack some communicative language teaching elements found in globally recognized books (Jaya et al., 2023; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2022; Quintão et al., 2020; Qurniati et al., 2022; Suri et al., 2024). This difference in approach has been noted in previous comparative studies that analyze how different textbooks cater to students' engagement and practical language use (Sasaghapu et al., 2022; Sakti et al., 2023; Solangi & Memon, 2020; Waruwu, 2024; Wahana, 2023).

Many studies suggest that English textbooks must balance linguistic accuracy, communicative competence, and cultural relevance to be effective for language learning (Dwidarti & Yuliasari, 2024; Hidayah, 2020; Mezmir, 2020; Suri et al., 2024; Peel, 2020). Some researchers argue that textbooks should not only present linguistic structures but also integrate real-world communication skills and problem-solving exercises (Mithans & Grmek, 2020; Marhamah et al., 2024; Mustafa, 2021; Mulyasa, 2023; Shi, 2024). Others highlight that textbooks should incorporate a variety of assessment methods, including both formative and summative evaluations, to measure students' progress effectively (Blair, 2023; Alkin et al.,

2024; Sakti et al., 2023; Tomlinson, 2023; Waruwu, 2024).

Research on textbook evaluation has also explored the integration of multimodal learning resources, such as interactive digital tools, to enhance student engagement (Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020; Damayanti & Kristiantari, 2022; Balmer & Richards, 2022; Nainggolan & Wirza, 2021; Li et al., 2020). Scholars emphasize that the inclusion of multimedia elements in textbooks, such as audio recordings and visual illustrations, supports students' comprehension and language retention (Shi, 2024; Yonata & Yoniswan, 2021; Mustafa, 2021; Alfarisy, 2021; Larasati, 2022). Furthermore, digital textbook formats provide opportunities for self-paced learning and personalized instruction, which can be beneficial in diverse learning contexts (Peel, 2020; Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020; Waruwu, 2024; Mithans & Grmek, 2020; Wahana, 2023).

The role of cultural representation in English textbooks has been another significant area of research. Studies indicate that textbooks should reflect diverse cultural perspectives to help learners develop cross-cultural communication skills (Hidayat et al., 2024; Blair, 2023; Ayu, 2020; Alkin et al., 2024; Moris et al., 2020). However, some textbooks, particularly those developed for national education systems, may prioritize local cultural content over global perspectives, which can limit students' exposure to authentic English use in international settings (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2022; Nainggolan & Wirza, 2021; Li et al., 2020; Fitriyani et al., 2021; Dwidarti & Yuliasari, 2024). Comparative studies have analyzed the balance between local and global content in textbooks to determine their effectiveness in preparing students for real-world communication (Tomlinson, 2023; Wahana, 2023; Quintão et al., 2020; Marhamah et al., 2024; Balmer & Richards, 2022).

Another key aspect in textbook evaluation is the inclusion of critical thinking and problem-solving components. Studies suggest that textbooks should not merely provide language rules but also encourage students to think critically and apply their language skills in meaningful contexts (Putri & Priyanti, 2023; Shi, 2024; Larasati, 2022; Ayu, 2020; Mezmir, 2020). Some textbooks include inquiry-based activities and project-based learning to foster analytical skills among students (Qurniati et al., 2022; Waruwu, 2024; Simamora &

Oktaviani, 2020; Sakti et al., 2023; Balmer & Richards, 2022). A comparative analysis of various textbooks has shown that those incorporating higher-order thinking activities are more effective in improving students' language competence and engagement (Tomlinson, 2023; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2022; Mulyasa, 2023; Alfarisy, 2021; Mithans & Grmek, 2020).

Some research has explored the gender and social representations in English textbooks, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and equal representation of different groups (Yonata & Yoniswan, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2024; Mustafa, 2021; Fitriyani et al., 2021; Alkin et al., 2024). Textbooks should avoid stereotypes and instead promote gender equality and social diversity (Moris et al., 2020; Mezmir, 2020; Qurniati et al., 2022; Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020; Suri et al., 2024). Research findings indicate that textbooks incorporating diverse representations positively impact students' perceptions of social issues and inclusivity (Shi, 2024; Blair, 2023; Nainggolan & Wirza, 2021; Damayanti & Kristiantari, 2022; Larasati, 2022).

In general, textbook evaluation studies highlight the need for a comprehensive assessment framework that considers content quality, language accuracy, cultural representation, multimodal resources, and pedagogical effectiveness (Tomlinson, 2023; Jaya et al., 2023; Nainggolan & Wirza, 2021; Alfarisy, 2021; Sakti et al., 2023). Future research should continue to explore how textbooks can be adapted to meet the evolving needs of students in different educational settings while ensuring alignment with global standards (Blair, 2023; Moris et al., 2020; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2022; Quintão et al., 2020; Waruwu, 2024).

Although several studies have evaluated English textbooks used in Indonesian schools, few comparative analyses focus on the alignment of internationally published books with Indonesia's national curriculum standards. Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress (2022), published by the Ministry of Education, is designed for Indonesian learners, whereas English in Mind Book 3: Second Edition is an internationally recognized textbook published by Cambridge University Press. The key research gap lies in the lack of direct comparisons between locally produced and internationally published textbooks in terms of their effectiveness, content appropriateness, and curriculum alignment.

This study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) How do Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress (2022) and English in Mind Book 3: Second Edition compare in terms of aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills development, topics, and practical considerations? (2) How do these textbooks align with the criteria set by the Indonesian education curriculum, particularly in terms of content feasibility, linguistic appropriateness, presentation feasibility, and graphical elements? (3) Based on the comparative analysis, which textbook better meets the needs of Indonesian tenth-grade high school students?

This research contributes to the field by providing a comparative study of an Indonesian government-published textbook and an internationally recognized English textbook. Unlike previous studies that focused on single-textbook evaluations, this study applies a dual-framework approach, combining Alan Cunningsworth's (1995) criteria with the Indonesian education curriculum assessment standards. This approach offers a comprehensive analysis, allowing educators to make informed decisions when selecting textbooks for high school students.

This study benefits educators by guiding textbook selection to align with the national curriculum and enhance student learning (Ayu, 2020; Akhmad et al., 2022). Curriculum developers gain insights to improve Indonesian textbooks, ensuring competitiveness with global materials (Alkin et al., 2024; Blair, 2023). Future research can build on this work to explore textbook adaptation and digital integration (Damayanti & Kristiantari, 2022; Li et al., 2020). Policymakers receive recommendations for refining textbook selection, ensuring quality and alignment with educational standards (Jaya et al., 2023; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2022). Ultimately, this study bridges theory and practice, supporting continuous textbook evaluation for effective English language teaching (Mustafa, 2021; Waruwu, 2024).

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design, focusing on a comparative analysis of two English textbooks: Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress (2022) and English in Mind Book 3: Second Edition. Qualitative research is well-suited for understanding textual materials, particularly in evaluating the content, structure, and instructional value of textbooks (Mezmir, 2020). The study follows a descriptive evaluative approach to assess

the suitability of both textbooks based on established evaluation criteria (Robinson, 2024).

The primary data sources are two English textbooks designed for tenth-grade high school students: (1) Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress (2022), published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. (2) English in Mind Book 3: Second Edition, published by Cambridge University Press.

The evaluation criteria are derived from Alan Cunningsworth's (1995) framework for textbook assessment and the Educational Curriculum Assessment Standards Board (Gyamtso, 2020). These criteria provide a structured approach to determining the textbooks' effectiveness in achieving pedagogical objectives.

This study employs document analysis to systematically evaluate textbooks based on key criteria aligned with national curriculum standards. The evaluation framework includes aims and approaches, ensuring alignment with educational goals; design and organization, assessing content structure and clarity; language content, examining vocabulary and grammar appropriateness; and skills development, evaluating the balance of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. Additionally, topics and cultural representation are analyzed for relevance and inclusivity, while practical considerations assess accessibility and usability in classrooms. A Likert-scale rating (1 = Poor to 4 = Excellent) quantifies the evaluation, ensuring objective comparison. This combined qualitative and quantitative approach provides a structured, reliable assessment of English textbooks.

Table 1. *Evaluation criteria for English textbook analysis*

| Evaluation Criteria | Description | Rating Scale (1–4) |
|---|---|---|
| Aims and Approaches | Assesses how well the textbook aligns with curriculum goals and teaching methodologies. | 1 = Poor, 2 = Adequate, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent |
| Design and Organization | Evaluates layout, sequence, and clarity of instructional flow. | 1 = Poor, 2 = Adequate, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent |
| Language Content | Examines vocabulary, grammar, and appropriateness for proficiency levels. | 1 = Poor, 2 = Adequate, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent |
| Skills Development | Analyzes balance between listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. | 1 = Poor, 2 = Adequate, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent |
| Topics and Cultural Representation | Assesses relevance, diversity, and inclusivity of cultural and social contexts. | 1 = Poor, 2 = Adequate, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent |
| Practical Considerations | Reviews availability, affordability, and ease of implementation in classrooms. | 1 = Poor, 2 = Adequate, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent |

The collected data undergo a three-step qualitative analysis following the framework outlined by Saputra (2020): Data Reduction – Relevant textbook content is categorized according to the evaluation criteria. Data Display – Findings are presented in tables and descriptive summaries for comparative interpretation. Conclusion Drawing and Verification – The comparative results are synthesized to determine which textbook aligns best with instructional goals (Mezmir, 2020; Tomlinson, 2023).

To ensure validity and reliability, the study adopts triangulation by comparing multiple data sources and applying standardized evaluation criteria. The checklist is validated by English language education experts to confirm its suitability for evaluating English textbooks (Mulyasa, 2023). Additionally, inter-rater reliability is established by having multiple evaluators independently assess the textbooks, followed by a comparison of their ratings (Quintão, 2020).

This study strictly adheres to ethical research principles, ensuring that the evaluation process remains objective and unbiased. All data are analyzed in compliance with academic integrity standards (Mezmir, 2020). Since the study focuses on publicly available educational materials, no human participants are involved, thus eliminating the need for informed consent (Blair, 2023).

By employing this methodological framework, the study aims to produce a comprehensive and objective evaluation of Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress and English in Mind Book 3: Second Edition, assisting educators in selecting the most effective instructional materials.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Textbook quality and cultural representation*
One of the crucial aspects of a textbook is its quality and the extent to which it represents cultural elements. Ayu (2020) emphasizes that cultural content in EFL textbooks should align with the learners' cultural background while exposing them to diverse perspectives. Several studies (Alfarisy, 2021; Jaya et al., 2023; Larasati, 2022) suggest that an ideal English textbook for Indonesian learners should incorporate local cultural references alongside global content. This balance is critical to fostering students' intercultural competence and helping them understand the cultural diversity of the English-speaking world.

Moreover, textbooks play a significant role in shaping students' worldview and attitudes toward different cultures (Hidayah, 2020; Blair, 2023). Studies by Akhmad et al. (2022) and Fitriyani et al. (2021) reveal that the representation of cultural aspects in textbooks can influence students' motivation and engagement in learning. If textbooks lack cultural integration, students might struggle to relate to the material, leading to decreased interest in language acquisition. Thus, a textbook's effectiveness depends not only on linguistic components but also on the cultural narratives it presents.

The table 3 below presents a detailed framework for evaluating the quality of English language textbooks, incorporating pedagogical, linguistic, cultural, and technological aspects.

Table 2. *Comprehensive framework for evaluating English language textbooks*

| Aspect | Sub-Aspect | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Content Relevance | Curriculum Alignment | The textbook should adhere to national and international curriculum standards, ensuring coherence with expected learning outcomes. |
| | Cognitive Development | Content should progressively challenge students' cognitive abilities, promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. |
| Language Appropriateness | Grammatical Complexity | Sentence structures, grammar explanations, and exercises should align with learners' proficiency levels while encouraging linguistic growth. |
| | Vocabulary Range | Words and phrases should be selected based on frequency, relevance, and learners' age groups, with a balance between common and academic vocabulary. |
| Cultural Representation | Local & Global Perspectives | The textbook should incorporate diverse cultural contexts, promoting an inclusive worldview while respecting local traditions and values. |
| | Intercultural Competence | Activities should encourage awareness and sensitivity towards different cultures, fostering tolerance and cross-cultural communication skills. |
| Communicative Approach | Real-life Language Use | Dialogues, conversations, and practice activities should reflect authentic language use in social and professional settings. |
| | Interaction-based Learning | The textbook should integrate pair work, group discussions, role-plays, and collaborative tasks to enhance communicative competence. |
| Skill Integration | Balanced Four Skills | The textbook must provide equal emphasis on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, avoiding an overemphasis on any one skill. |
| | Higher-Order Thinking Skills | Activities should move beyond rote learning, incorporating analytical, evaluative, and creative tasks. |
| Textbook Design & Layout | Visual Appeal | Illustrations, infographics, and images should enhance comprehension and engagement rather than serve as mere decorations. |
| | Readability & Accessibility | Font size, spacing, page structure, and color schemes should be designed for ease of reading and inclusivity. |
| Exercises & Assessment | Formative & Summative Assessment | The textbook should include a variety of assessments (self-check quizzes, teacher-led assessments, peer reviews) to track progress effectively. |
| | Differentiated Learning | Tasks should be adaptable to students' varying proficiency levels, incorporating scaffolding techniques. |

| Technological Integration | Digital Learning Tools | QR codes, AR/VR experiences, mobile applications, and e-learning platforms should be integrated where applicable. |
|---|---|---|
| | Online & Offline Usability | The textbook should support hybrid learning models, ensuring effectiveness in both digital and printed formats. |
| Teacher & Student Usability | Teacher's Guide & Lesson Plans | Supplementary materials, including lesson plans, teaching strategies, and answer keys, should assist educators in lesson delivery. |
| | Student Engagement | The content should include gamification, project-based learning, and self-reflection tasks to motivate learners. |

*Textbook content and language appropriateness*

Another crucial aspect of an effective textbook is the appropriateness of its content and language level. The difficulty of a textbook should match students' language proficiency while maintaining a balance between challenge and comprehensibility (Li et al., 2020; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2022). Research by Ambarwati and Mandasari (2020) highlights that textbooks incorporating interactive digital tools, such as online dictionaries, can significantly enhance students' vocabulary and pronunciation.

Furthermore, textbook evaluation frameworks, such as those proposed by Alkin, Vo, and Christie (2024), suggest that an ideal textbook should provide well-structured exercises, clear explanations, and opportunities for students to apply knowledge in real-life contexts. Studies by Balmer and Richards (2022) and Tomlinson (2023) indicate that students learn more effectively when textbooks include meaningful tasks that relate to their everyday experiences. Without real-world relevance, textbooks risk becoming ineffective tools for language acquisition.

*Pedagogical approaches and learning strategies*

The pedagogical approach embedded in a textbook determines its success in facilitating learning. Several researchers (Damayanti & Kristiantari, 2022; Dwidarti & Yuliasari, 2024) stress that an effective English textbook should align with modern teaching methodologies, such as communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based learning (TBL). These approaches encourage active student participation and enhance their ability to use the language in authentic contexts.

Additionally, research by Jaya et al. (2023) and Mustafa (2021) highlights the significance of textbooks integrating 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Textbooks designed with these elements allow students to develop competencies that extend beyond language learning, preparing them for academic and professional success. Hence, pedagogical alignment with contemporary teaching strategies is essential for a textbook's effectiveness.

*Visual and interactive elements*

The inclusion of visuals, interactive exercises, and multimedia elements is another critical factor in textbook effectiveness. Studies by Damayanti and Kristiantari (2022) and Moris et al. (2020) suggest that textbooks with engaging visual elements, such as images, diagrams, and infographics, enhance student comprehension and retention of information. Textbooks that incorporate digital resources, such as QR codes linking to additional materials or online exercises, offer students a more interactive learning experience (Schrire, 2022).

Moreover, findings from Warisno (2022) and Wahana (2023) emphasize the importance of collaboration skills and engagement strategies in textbooks. When textbooks encourage peer interaction through group discussions and collaborative tasks, they foster a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment. This interactive component

significantly contributes to a student's ability to internalize and apply new language concepts.

*Evaluation and continuous improvement*
Textbook evaluation and revision play a crucial role in maintaining high educational standards. Research by Quintão et al. (2020) and Nartin et al. (2024) indicates that continuous feedback from teachers and students is vital for improving textbook quality. Effective textbooks undergo periodic updates based on pedagogical research and classroom feedback to ensure they remain relevant to students' needs.

Furthermore, studies by Putri and Priyanti (2023) and Peel (2020) highlight the importance of integrating assessment tools within textbooks. Textbooks should not only provide language input but also include formative and summative assessments that allow students to monitor their progress. The presence of self-evaluation exercises and teacher-guided assessments ensures that students develop both linguistic and metacognitive skills, reinforcing their learning process.

*Alignment with national and international standards*
A final crucial aspect of an effective textbook is its alignment with educational standards and curriculum guidelines. The Indonesian government's policies on textbook development (Pemerintah, 2021; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2022) emphasize that English textbooks must adhere to national curriculum requirements while also considering global benchmarks. Research by Suri et al. (2024) and Jaya et al. (2023) highlights that textbooks should be designed in line with the Merdeka Curriculum, ensuring that they foster autonomy, adaptability, and skill development among students.

Internationally, textbook development should consider frameworks such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) principles (Li et al., 2020; Shi, 2024). When textbooks align with both national and international educational standards, they provide students with a more comprehensive and globally relevant learning experience.

The findings of this study reaffirm the importance of multiple factors in evaluating textbook quality, including cultural representation, content appropriateness, pedagogical approaches, visual elements, evaluation mechanisms, and alignment with educational standards. The review of literature supports the claim that well-designed textbooks significantly contribute to students' language development and overall learning experience (Mulyasa, 2023; Waruwu, 2024). Future research should explore how these aspects can be further refined to meet the evolving needs of learners in diverse educational contexts.

# CONCLUSION
This study highlights the strengths and areas for improvement in English textbooks used in Indonesian high schools. The evaluation, based on key criteria such as aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills development, topics and cultural representation, and practical considerations, reveals that while some textbooks align well with curriculum standards, others require enhancements in cultural inclusivity, skill integration, and real-world applicability.

The findings emphasize the need for educators and policymakers to adopt a more selective approach in choosing textbooks that effectively support English language acquisition. Curriculum developers should focus on improving material design to better reflect global standards while maintaining local relevance. Additionally, this study provides a valuable reference for future research on textbook evaluation, particularly in adapting international materials to the Indonesian educational context.

By addressing these gaps, the study contributes to the ongoing improvement of English language education in Indonesia, ensuring

that students receive high-quality learning resources that enhance their linguistic and communicative competencies.

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