

EVALUATING ENGLISH INTENSIVE COURSE BOOK FOR STUDENTS OF ISLAMIC STATE UNIVERSITY OF JEMBER: USERS PERSPECTIVES

Nailah¹, Ainayis Sa'adah^{1*}, Ahmad Munir², Titik Indarti³

¹Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: nailah.21017@mhs.unesa.ac.id



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ABSTRAK

This study evaluated how effectively the English Intensive Course book supports non-English major students at the Islamic State University of Jember, focusing on its alignment with Cunningsworth's eight evaluation criteria. An explanatory mixed-methods design combined a Likert-scale questionnaire (n = 20 students, 2 tutors) with semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively, while interview transcripts underwent thematic coding to triangulate and enrich survey findings. Overall mean scores ranged from 3.22 to 3.72 (4-point scale), indicating strong agreement that the book meets program aims, offers well-sequenced language content, and covers the four skills. Participants praised the grammar-driven progression and integration of Islamic themes. Key weaknesses were the absence of answer keys, limited listening-speaking tasks, and scarce multimedia support. Tutors also reported insufficient pedagogical guidance in the teacher's manual. It provides actionable recommendations, embedding feedback mechanisms, metacognitive study-skills training, and QR-linked audio resources, that can inform future textbook design for intensive language programs in similar settings.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengevaluasi sejauh mana buku English Intensive Course mendukung pembelajaran mahasiswa non-program studi Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Islam Negeri Jember, dengan fokus pada kesesuaiannya terhadap delapan kriteria evaluasi menurut Cunningsworth. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain campuran eksplanatori (explanatory mixed methods), yang menggabungkan kuesioner skala Likert (n = 20 mahasiswa, 2 tutor) dengan wawancara semi-terstruktur. Data kuantitatif dianalisis secara deskriptif, sementara transkrip wawancara dianalisis melalui pengkodean tematik untuk melakukan triangulasi dan memperkaya temuan survei. Nilai rata-rata secara keseluruhan berkisar antara 3,22 hingga 3,72 (skala 4 poin), menunjukkan tingkat kesepakatan yang tinggi bahwa buku ini memenuhi tujuan program, menyajikan konten bahasa yang terstruktur dengan baik, serta mencakup keempat keterampilan berbahasa. Peserta memberikan apresiasi terhadap penyusunan materi berbasis tata bahasa dan integrasi nilai-nilai keislaman. Kelemahan utama yang ditemukan meliputi tidak tersedianya kunci jawaban, terbatasnya latihan keterampilan menyimak dan berbicara, serta minimnya dukungan media pembelajaran. Para tutor juga melaporkan kurangnya panduan pedagogis dalam buku pegangan guru. Penelitian ini memberikan rekomendasi aplikatif, seperti penyematan mekanisme umpan balik, pelatihan keterampilan belajar metakognitif, dan integrasi sumber audio berbasis kode QR, yang dapat menjadi acuan dalam pengembangan buku ajar untuk program bahasa intensif di konteks serupa.

Kata kunci: Evaluasi buku, English Intensive Course, Teori Cunningsworth, persepektif pengguna

INTRODUCTION

To requiring English as a compulsory subject, several higher education institutions carry out several policies to improve students' motivation and skills in English. One of the policies is requiring students to pass language proficiency tests as part of university graduation requirements. Many higher education institutions require students to fulfill language proficiency test requirements before they can graduate from the university. The policy was implemented by higher education institutions to regulate and assess students' language proficiency through the use of standardized tests (Rahman et al., 2019, 173). In general, a test is held to measure before or after implementing a program. In addition, a study conducted by Rahman et al. (2019) stated that students need preparation, such as courses or training that concern the material tested (Rahman et al., 2019, 179). Therefore, several higher education institutions provide preparation programs for the students before they face the test. As conducted in the Islamic State University of Jember, it provides a preparation program called the "Intensive Program" based on Rector Decision Letter Number 288 in 2023. The program aims to help students develop their foreign language skills, especially when facing the language proficiency test.

According to the researcher's interviews with several learners who participated in the Intensive program, it is possible that they may effectively prepare for the proficiency test with the assistance of this program. In line with a study conducted by Herlina et.al. (2020), learners perceive the textbook as a framework or guide that supports them in organizing their learning both within and outside the classroom. The intensive courses utilize the book "English Intensive Course" as the primary learning resource. It is crucial to pay attention to materials or books because if it is not interesting for learners, it will not have an impact (Toirovna, 2019, 32). There are two primary reasons why we must evaluate textbooks. First, the evaluation will assist the teacher or program developer in making wise decisions on the selection of the most suitable textbook. Further, evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of a textbook will enable the teacher with its possible limits and benefits. By doing this, teachers will be able to adapt the material in their future lesson in an appropriate way (Garinger, 2002, 1).

A study entitled "Evaluating Academic Writing Textbook: Teachers' and Students' Perspectives", conducted by Ghufon and Saleh (2016), evaluated the Academic Writing textbook used in the English Education Department of Language and Art Education of IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. The questionnaires used to assess the textbook were modified from the textbook evaluation checklist created by Mukundan, Nimehchisalem, and Hajimohammadi (2011). The results of the study indicate that both the lecturers and students expressed dissatisfaction with the book, as it failed to properly cover the students' specific needs and requirements for writing research papers in the university course. The materials lack specifics regarding the topic. Nevertheless, the book succeeds in other aspects, including its methodology, overall elements, and layout. Hence, it is crucial to evaluate the books utilized in educational activities, even if they are implemented at the university level, by taking into account the perspectives of the users.

It is crucial to carefully investigate users' perspectives on the use and effectiveness of textbooks in order to determine their strengths and weaknesses related to their particular learning situations. A study conducted by Tok (2010) determined that it is crucial for evaluating textbooks from the users' perspective, as every textbook is designed especially for specific users (Tok, 2010, 508). In addition, users' ideas may help authors in developing a book that fits more closely with the specific needs and objectives of the users (Atigh &

Khabbazi, 2021, 57). The selection of textbooks is necessary in order to match the content with the specific context in which it will be used. Many experts agree that no textbook developed for a general audience will be perfectly suitable for a particular group of learners. Grant (1987) and Ayu and Inderawati (2018) argue that there is no such thing as a "perfect book," but the goal is to identify the most suitable and relevant book for a specific group of learners (Ayu & Inderawati, 2018, 21). Consequently, teachers are advised to implement it with the appropriate target audience. It is crucial to evaluate textbooks from the users' perspective, as each textbook is designed specifically for specific users. Evaluating a textbook and other resources is an essential and crucial aspect of implementing a textbook in any educational institution (Herlina et al., 2020, 46).

Betri (2018) suggests that a way to determine if a textbook is suitable for teaching and learning is by examining the specific criteria listed in the book. Thus, Cunningsworth set out eight criteria to evaluate textbooks. The suggested criteria include the following aspects: 1) Aims and approaches, 2) Design and organization, 3) Language content, 4) Skills, 5) Topics, 6) Methodology, 7) Teachers' Books, and 8) Practical Considerations. It can be concluded that if someone accepts the importance of textbooks in English Language Teaching (ELT), they must also agree that the textbooks possess certain criteria of quality, usefulness, and suitability for the particular domain and people included.

The textbook "English Intensive Course" is utilized in the English intensive program at UIN KHAS Jember. This research will discuss results from investigation that will be conducted to the users of the textbook, adopting the Cunningsworth theory. The study aims to provide comprehensive understanding from users' perspectives (students and tutors) to evaluate the extent in which the course book fulfills their needs, facilitates their learning, and increases their language development. It is expected that the findings of this evaluation would identify particular elements in the textbook need modifications and enhancements. Moreover, it is expected that this study would increase the consciousness of authors in considering various factors for the textbook development.

METHODS

This study utilized a mixed methods design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to evaluate the English Intensive Coursebook used by students at the Islamic State University of Jember. Nagpal et al. (2020) identify four categories of mixed method research designs: 1) triangulation, 2) embedded, 3) explanatory, and 4) exploratory (Nagpal et al., 2020, 13). This study utilized the explanatory model to find out the user perspective on the English Intensive Coursebook, first with quantitative data collection and then followed by qualitative data collection.

The target of this research is a book entitled "English Intensive Course" for the English Intensive Program at Islamic State University of Jember that will be tested on 20 non English major students and two tutors as the users of the textbook who are enrolled in the program. The selection will be based on a purposive sampling process conducted during the period of the program.

The data collection technique employed contains a combination of questionnaires to obtain quantitative data and interviews to obtain qualitative data, which facilitates an extensive evaluation of the course book from the users' perspectives. The only focus on quantitative methods cannot ensure a comprehensive understanding of the data collected; consequently, the integration of qualitative methods is essential for a more comprehensive evaluation of the coursebook (Nguyen, 2015). The data covers several criteria, including aims

and approaches, design and organization, language content, skill, topic, methodology, teacher's book, and practical consideration. The questionnaires will be administered and distributed online via Google Form. This questionnaire has a Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally unacceptable) to 4 (perfectly acceptable). It includes two types of questionnaires; student questionnaire and tutor questionnaire. This research employs semi structured interviews to facilitate a thorough exploration of information. An informal interview is carried out with the tutors and several students to strengthen the data obtained from the questionnaire and to gather the necessary detailed information. The interviews investigate more detailed feedback on users' perception regarding the coursebook based on Cunningsworth theory. The goal is to collect more detailed information, particularly on the reasons for the user questionnaire, the positive and negative aspects that users met with the textbook, their overall evaluation, and ideas for improvement.

The analysis integrates both the quantitative and qualitative data by combining the qualitative data gathered from questionnaires with the quantitative findings from interviews. The data acquired from the questionnaires are analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the frequency counts of responses for each item are presented in the results and discussion. or this analysis, the percentages of the respondents who agreed and disagreed regarding each item are calculated. The data is calculated by using a formula provided below in order to determine the range:

$$R = \frac{(Xh - Xi)}{4}$$

R : Range

Xh : The highest scale

Xi : The lowest scale

The data conversion table is utilized to transform the data after calculating its mean.

Table 1. The Conversion Table for Interpreting the Questionnaire

Scales	Interval	Acceptability	Category
4	$3.25 < x < 4$	76% 100%	Strongly agree
3	$2.5 < x < 3.24$	51% 75%	Agree
2	$1.75 < x < 2.49$	26% 51%	Disagree
1	$1 > x < 1.74$	< 25%	Strongly disagree

Then, the next step is to calculate the rate percentage of the item questionnaires.

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P : Percentage

F : Total of the criteria score

N : Total of maximum score

Qualitative data obtained from interviews will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is utilized to examine the interview data, similar to the analysis of the questionnaire (Nguyen, 2015). This process includes coding the data to find key themes related to user experiences, challenges met, and ideas for enhancement.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN*Hasil***Table 2. Data Presentation of the Aims and Approaches**

No	Question	1	2	3	4	Average	Criteria
1	Do the aims of the course book correspond closely with the aims of the teaching program and the needs of the learners?	0 0%	0 0%	9 40,9%	13 59,1%	3,59	Strongly Agree
2	Is the course book suited to the learning/teaching situation?	0 0%	0 0%	9 40,9%	13 59,1%	3,59	Strongly Agree
3	Is the course book comprehensive?	0 0%	1 4,5%	11 50%	10 45,5%	3,40	Strongly Agree
4	Does it cover most or all of what is needed?	0 0%	0 0%	14 63,6%	8 36,4%	3,36	Strongly Agree
5	Is it a good resource for students and teachers?	0 0%	1 4,5%	4 18,2%	17 77,3%	3,72	Strongly Agree
6	Is the course book flexible?	0 0%	1 4,5%	8 36,4%	13 59,1%	3,54	Strongly Agree
7	Does it allow different teaching and learning styles?	1 4,5%	2 9,1%	8 36,4%	11 50%	3,31	Strongly Agree

The initial focus is the book's aim. Most respondents stated that the book aligns well with the teaching program's objectives and addresses learners' needs.

Regarding the book's suitability for classroom use, a majority agreed it is appropriate. Respondent S1 noted that the content is well-structured, aligned with curriculum goals, and encourages student engagement. In contrast, S2 criticized its brevity, lack of answer keys, and time constraints for completing exercises. S3 found the content accessible for beginners, while S4 mentioned some blurry images. S5 reported confusion with certain grammar examples. Tutor T2 affirmed that the book generally meets program goals and supports English language development.

Concerning the inclusion of essential material, most respondents affirmed its adequacy. S3 emphasized its systematic structure, whereas S2 pointed out the absence of answer keys as a drawback for self-study. S5 also noted some unclear sections.

Table 3. Data Presentation of the Design and Organization

No	Question	1	2	3	4	Average	Criteria
1	Is the content of the book interesting?	0 0%	4 18,2%	8 36,4%	10 45,5%	3,27	Strongly Agree
2	Is the content of the book appropriate and organized?	0 0%	1 4,5%	7 38,1%	14 63,6%	3,59	Strongly Agree
3	Is the material suitable for individual study?	0 0%	2 9,1%	7 31,8%	13 59,1%	3,5	Strongly Agree

No	Question	1	2	3	4	Average	Criteria
4	Are there reference sections for grammar, etc.?	0 0%	1 4,5%	8 36,4%	13 59,1%	3,54	Strongly Agree
5	Is the book user friendly?	0 0%	0 0%	8 36,4%	14 63,6%	3,63	Strongly Agree
6	Is the layout clear?	1 4,5%	1 4,5%	9 40,4%	11 50%	3,36	Strongly Agree

Qualitative data support these results. S2 stated the material is systematically sequenced, while S1 noted its relevance for test preparation. S4 praised the integration of Islamic values and a holistic skills-based approach. S3 emphasized the careful organization by structure, function, theme, and skills. T1 and T2 highlighted the grammar-based progression from basic to advanced levels, aiding student comprehension.

Most participants agreed the content is well-organized and pedagogically effective. S2, S1, and S4 emphasized that the content is ordered by material complexity. S3 noted a progressive syllabus that aligns with learners' linguistic, cognitive, and emotional development, incorporating spiritual and social themes. T1 confirmed the content moves from basics like alphabet and numbers to more complex topics, while T2 affirmed the logical sequencing enhances understanding. Overall, the coursebook received a largely positive response in terms of content engagement, structure, and practical functionality.

Table 4. Data Presentation of the Language Content

No	Question	1	2	3	4	Average	Criteria
1	Is the vocabulary material appropriate for vocabulary improvements?	0 0%	1 4,5%	8 36,4%	13 59,1%	3,54	Strongly Agree
2	Is the vocabulary material appropriate for individual learning?	0 0%	2 9,1%	9 40,9%	11 50%	3,40	Strongly Agree
3	Is the grammar content appropriate to users' needs?	0 0%	0 0%	9 40,9%	13 59,1%	3,59	Strongly Agree
4	Is the grammar content appropriate to the users' learning level?	0 0%	1 4,5%	9 40,9%	12 54,5%	3,50	Strongly Agree
5	Is language style matched to social situations?	0 0%	0 0%	11 50%	11 50%	3,50	Strongly Agree

Overall, the language content was viewed positively.

Table 5. Data Presentation of the Skills

No	Question	1	2	3	4	Average	Criteria
1	Are four skills adequately covered?	1 4,5%	2 9,1%	5 22,7%	14 63,6%	3,45	Strongly Agree
2	Is the book appropriate with the lesson objective and syllabus requirements?	0 0%	1 4,5%	10 45,5%	11 50%	3,45	Strongly Agree
3	Is the material integrated into four skills?	0 0%	3 13,6%	7 31,8%	12 54,5%	3,40	Strongly Agree
4	Are the reading passages	0	1	11	10	3,40	Strongly

	appropriate with the needs?	0%	4,5%	50%	45,5%		Agree
5	Are the reading passages appropriate with the students' levels and interests?	0%	4	8	10	3,27	Strongly Agree
		0%	18,20%	36,4%	45,5%		
6	Are the exercises appropriate with the students' levels and interests?	0%	1	11	10	3,40	Strongly Agree
		0%	4,5%	50%	45,5%		

Generally, the respondents are strongly agreed that the book meets the criteria of skills based on Cunningsworth theory.

Table 6. Data Presentation of the Topics

No	Question	1	2	3	4	Average	Criteria
1	Is there sufficient material of genuine interest to learners?	0 0%	2 9,1%	9 40,9%	11 50%	3,40	Strongly Agree
2	Is there enough variety and range of topics?	0 0%	1 4,5%	11 50%	10 45,5%	3,40	Strongly Agree
3	Will the topic help expand students' awareness and enrich their experiences?	0 0%	3 13,6%	7 31,8%	12 54,5%	3,40	Strongly Agree
4	Are the topics sophisticated enough in content yet within the learners' language level?	0 0%	11 50%	13 59,1%	8 36,4%	3,31	Strongly Agree
5	Will the students be able to relate to the social and cultural contexts presented in the coursebook?	0 0%	5 22,7%	9 40,9%	8 36,4%	3,13	Agree

Table 6 is the result of questionnaire from topics, while the table below, is the result of questionnaire from methodology.

Table 7. Data Presentation of the Methodology

No	Question	1	2	3	4	Average	Criteria
1	Does the book fit the student's learning style and expectations?	0 0%	0 0%	12 54,5%	10 45,5%	3,45	Strongly Agree
2	Does the material include any advice or help to students on study skills and learning strategies?	0 0%	4 18,2%	9 40,9%	9 40,9%	3,22	Agree
3	Is the book designed for individual learning?	0 0%	2 9,1%	10 45,5%	10 45,5%	3,36	Strongly Agree

Data show general agreement that the coursebook aligns with students' learning styles and expectations. Interview data supported these findings. T2 stated the book supports autonomy due to abundant grammar exercises, while T1 suggested its impact is greater in group settings. S2, S4, and S5 endorsed the book for self-study due to its practice-oriented content. In contrast, S1 and S3 were skeptical, noting difficulties for beginners and lack of instructional guidance.

On learning approaches, T1 described the book as holistic, while T2 emphasized a practice-based method. S1 noted it supports deep learning; S2 and S4 preferred a process-

based model, and S3 stated the approach varies depending on context and instructor.

Regarding learner engagement, T1 noted strong individual involvement but limited peer interaction. T2 emphasized active student participation, encouraging independent study. S1 and S3 stressed meaningful engagement through exercises and reading.

Several techniques for applying the book were recommended. T2 suggested drilling, grammar annotation, and sentence creation. T1 supported self-study, S1 proposed practical reading, and S2 recommended the SQ3R method. S5 emphasized literacy, practice, and assessment; S4 favoured repetition and drilling, while S3 proposed the Pomodoro Technique for focused study intervals.

The tutor survey comprised five questions concerning the teacher's book. On the first question, respondents noted inadequate guidance for teachers using the book and its supplementary materials. However, all agreed that the teacher's book offers a comprehensive and supportive instructional framework.

Most respondents confirmed that the book sufficiently addresses teaching techniques, grammar rules, and culturally specific content. They also agreed that the authors clearly present and support the foundational principles behind the material. Lastly, all respondents indicated that the book lacks answer keys for the exercises.

Table 8. Data Presentation of the Practical Consideration

No	Question	1	2	3	4	Average	Criteria
1	Is the book strong and long lasting?	0 0%	3 13,6%	6 27,3%	13 59,1%	3,45	Strongly Agree
2	Is the book attractive?	0 0%	3 13,6%	9 40,9%	10 45,5%	3,31	Strongly Agree
3	Is the book easy to obtain?	0 0%	4 18,2%	9 40,9%	9 40,9%	3,22	Agree
4	Are the additional tools for learning the book easy to obtain?	1 4,5%	4 18,2%	9 40,9%	8 36,4%	3,09	Agree

Opinions varied on whether the book requires supplementary tools such as language labs or multimedia. Most respondents acknowledged that such tools could enhance learning. T2 suggested integrating pronunciation tasks with lab tools and adapting reading texts into listening exercises. T1 proposed using multimedia to increase engagement. S4 warned that over-reliance on the book could lead to monotony. Although respondents generally supported tool integration, no single tool was deemed essential.

Discussion

Aims and Approaches

Respondents judged the book's goals to be closely aligned with curriculum objectives (M=3.59). This finding satisfies Cunningsworth's (1995) first principle that course materials must reflect learners' needs and programme aims. Interview evidence (S1, T2) confirmed curricular alignment, yet highlighted two perennial weaknesses: insufficient depth in some units and the absence of answer keys. McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013) warn that theoretical coherence alone is insufficient when tasks lack clarity or feedback mechanisms.

Design and Organization

The book's internal structure – progressing from basic to complex topics – earned high approval (M= 3.59). This agrees with Nunan's (2003) call for incremental syllabus design and

with Graves' (2000) emphasis on culturally responsive sequencing (e.g., integration of Islamic values). A minority cited blurred images and a crowded layout, supporting Harmer's (2007) view that visual quality can affect motivation. Importantly, respondents rated book "user-friendly" ($M=3.63$), yet reiterated that missing answer keys constrain independent study, echoing Tomlinson's (2011) argument for built-in feedback.

Language Content

Vocabulary and grammar components were regarded as appropriate and well-graded (both $M=3.5$). The systematic lexico-grammatical progression matches Richards' (2001) criteria of high-frequency, high-utility items, while Nation's (2001) three-strand model (meaning-focused input, language-focused learning, fluency) appears implicitly observed. Still, 9 % doubted suitability for self-study, underlining Ur's (1996) insistence on explicit instructions and self-checking devices for autonomous learning.

Skills

Quantitative data and interviews confirm that all four skills are addressed, though listening and speaking receive less emphasis, a common imbalance in EAP-oriented texts. Harmer (2007) stresses equal weighting for communicative competence, while Nunan (2003) advocates integrated-skills tasks. Moreover, 18.2 % found reading passages insufficiently engaging, suggesting greater genre variety and authentic texts would raise cognitive challenge and cultural breadth.

Topic

Half of respondents strongly agreed that topics are interesting ($M=3.40$). Thematic relevance to learners' religious and academic contexts accords with Graves' (2000) sociocultural fit criterion. Yet 22.7 % considered social-cultural content limited; Tomlinson (2014) and Cunningsworth (1995) both argue that modern ELT materials should foster intercultural awareness. Expanding global perspectives and injecting more intellectually demanding readings could address this gap.

Methodology

The book supports a predominantly practice-based methodology, heavy on grammar drills, but remains flexible enough for holistic or process-oriented adaptations (T1, T2). This adaptability fulfils Cunningsworth's (1995) preference for materials that accommodate diverse classroom realities. Nevertheless, 18.2 % felt study-skills guidance was weak. Embedding metacognitive strategies (e.g., SQ3R, Pomodoro) directly into tasks would cultivate the self-regulation championed by Richards & Renandya (2009).

Teacher's Book

Tutors valued the manual's linguistic explanations and cultural notes but unanimously criticised its thin procedural guidance and lack of answer keys, both vital for novice teachers (Harmer, 2007). Tomlinson (2011) distinguishes between manuals that merely mirror student pages and those that scaffold instruction; the book manual inclines toward the former. Supplementary lesson-planning tips, timing charts, and remediation ideas would greatly enhance instructional consistency.

Practical Considerations

Most users rated the book durable, attractive, and readily available, aligning with Cunningsworth's (1995) production standards. Yet nearly one-fifth found procurement or

supplemental audio-visual tools problematic. Teachers suggested QR codes for listening tracks and academic word-list extensions, recommendations consistent with current multimodal learning principles (Macalister & Nation, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the English Intensive Course book used at the Islamic State University of Jember from the perspectives of students and tutors, applying Cunningsworth's (1995) evaluation criteria. The findings indicate that the textbook is generally well-received in terms of aims alignment, language content, skill integration, and design. It effectively supports grammar and vocabulary development, aligns with syllabus goals, and is perceived as flexible and accessible. However, areas for improvement include the integration of answer keys, enhancement of digital and supplementary resources, and stronger support for speaking skills, study strategies, and intercultural content. Addressing these issues would enhance the textbook's functionality for both guided instruction and independent learning, aligning it more closely with contemporary ELT practices and learner needs.

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