



## An Evaluation Of Reading Materials In Indonesia Vocational English Textbook

Dimas Andi Setiawan<sup>1</sup>, Yuna Tresna Wahyuna<sup>2</sup>, Mobit<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang

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### Abstract

*Textbooks are very influential for teachers and students in the learning process. This study aims to evaluate reading materials in textbooks. The researchers used an evaluation checklist framework developed by (Mohamed, 2013). The subject of this research is a textbook that uses an Merdeka curriculum. The result show that sufficient reading materials with a variety of texts is available in each chapter. Reading materials also helps students in reading comprehension. In addition to reading materials, it is also interesting and up-to-date by raising the latest issues. Then in terms of some reading, it is also easy with only a few paragraphs. In addition, the reading length corresponds to the textbook's grade level and uses several authentic materials. This means that this textbook is considered good in terms of reading materials. For the next research, can focus on other aspects such as speaking and listening materials.*

**Keywords:** *Textbook Evaluation, Reading Materials*

(\*) Corresponding Author: [1910631060011@student.unsika.ac.id](mailto:1910631060011@student.unsika.ac.id)

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## INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are the primary choice of teachers in Indonesia as a guide for learning activities. Ur (1996) believes that textbooks are essential for students and teachers because they provide stages of learning according to learning objectives. (Cunningsworth, 1996) argues that learning materials can be obtained from textbooks. Richards (2001) stated that textbook material has a role in language learning. Teachers and students can use these materials to be used in the learning process in class. Bola and Cohen (1996) added that what teachers and students do in learning is derived from teaching materials. Textbooks play a prominent role in the teaching learning process as they are the primary agents of conveying knowledge to learners (Mohamed, 2013).

In textbooks, there are reading materials that have several activities and assignments. Activities and tasks in the material must involve students' thinking skills (Hutchinson & Waters, 1986). In addition, the material must be designed according to the primary purpose of learning, namely the use of language. Suitable reading materials can help students develop cognitive abilities such as expanding vocabulary, improving writing skills, finding new information and others. Therefore, teachers and students need good textbook reading materials to help them improve their language skills. Textbooks from various publishers must be appropriate, and using textbooks that are not good will have fatal consequences for learning. Mukundan & Rezvani Kalajahi (2013) argues that good textbooks can

assist learning objectives. Knight (2015) Students need quality textbooks to get the appropriate material.

Mukundan et al (2011) stated that there are several reasons why textbooks need to be evaluated. First, textbooks can help inexperienced teachers so that the material presented meets the learning objectives. Second, if the teacher already knows the strengths and weaknesses of textbooks, the teacher can adapt according to class needs. Ur's (2016) argues that the fundamentals of teaching materials are textbooks. Therefore their use must be selective and critical, not just following them word for word, page by page, advantages and disadvantages of textbooks. Before using it in the classroom, the teacher must know whether the book suits students.

During the last few years, several empirical studies have been conducted to evaluate textbooks in English, such as evaluated reading materials based on Patel and Jain's theory (Kanina, 2016). Textbook evaluation is based on the teacher's perspective on layout, accessibility, activities and skills (Aljouei & Alsuhaibani, 2018). Rahayu (2021) evaluated a textbook for senior high schools focusing on the standards set by BNSP. Gu et al (2022) evaluated English textbooks for lectures focusing on computer-aided analysis corpus. Textbook evaluation based on vocabulary, exercises, illustration and cover (Endriani & Syathroh, 2022). In improving the quality of education, evaluation is very important in selecting books to ensure the book's eligibility (Mohamed, 2013). Although there has been research on textbook evaluation, there is a slight gap about it on curriculum Merdeka. To fill this gap, the researchers wants to evaluate a grade 10 Vocational high school book entitled "SPLASH".The researchers used an evaluation checklist developed by (Mohamed, 2013) to evaluate the book and focus on language skills. The topics are divided into several sections according to their respective classifications. However, the researchers only evaluates the textbook on reading materials.

## METHODS

In this study, the researchers used a qualitative method. Qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the big picture rather than breaking it down into variables (Ary et al., 2010). The technique used is content analysis or document analysis. This research technique is used to analyse and interpret qualitative data, such as text, images, audio, or video.

English textbook entitled "SPLASH" is the object of this research. This book has obtained permission from the Ministry of Education and is available in vocational high schools in Indonesia. In this study, the researchers used a checklist of evaluation books in reading materials developed by Mohamed (2013) as a research instrument. The researchers collected data through the technique used, namely documentation and observe the textbook and it is based on data sources derived from book. The information for this book is as follows.

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<b>Title</b>	<b>SPLASH “ Smart Path to Learning English”</b>
<b>Author</b>	Anik M. Indriastuti

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<b>Editor</b>	Mustika Busana K Dwi Wahyu P
<b>Publisher</b>	Erlangga
<b>Year of Publication</b>	2022
<b>ISBN</b>	9786232666290
<b>Design</b>	M. Nauval
<b>Pages</b>	214

Table 1 Textbook Information

Then the data obtained were analyzed based on Krippendorff (2004) such as : 1) unitizing: in this step, the researchers brought together the content to be studied as the first way to analyze the data. The focus was on examining content units, reading and writing materials and assignments. 2) Recording/Encoding: at the recording stage, the researchers took several steps, starting with reading the textbook contents, understood certain parts that focus on research objectives, recorded data, and entered data into the evaluation checklist used by the researcher. 3) Reducing: at this stage, the data collected by the researcher is simplified so that the unit/data collection results were concised, clear and in accordance with the indicators that have been determined in the research questions. 4) Inferring: at this stage, the researchers determined the data or findings as material for analysis to be narrated. 5) Narrating: in the last step, the researchers presents the findings that have been analysed as a narrative.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### *Results*

The researcher focused on reading material contained in textbooks. To Sobtain data, the researchers analyze textbooks that focus on assignments, materials, and texts. The criteria for good reading materials are sufficient reading materials, developing reading comprehension, up-to-date reading materials, easy reading materials, appropriate under grade and using authentic materials. Further details of the results are presented and discussed in the following sub-sections.

#### **1. Sufficient reading materials**

This criterion relates to the availability of various reading materials in sufficient amounts of text in textbooks. With the availability of sufficient reading material, learning to read will be efficient. In this textbook, there are six chapters with the distribution of the amount of text shown in the following table.

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Total Text</b>
<b>1</b>	What fables do you like to read?	10
<b>2</b>	What is it?	8
<b>3</b>	Could you show me how to operate It?	8
<b>4</b>	Which issues do you agree with me?	7

5	Share your story	3
6	How do we write report texts?	6

Tabel 2. Distributions of the text in each chapter

Tabel 1.1, shows in textbook that most are in the first chapter with ten texts about a narrative text, while in chapter 2, there are eight texts about descriptive text. In Chapter 3, there are eight texts about procedure teks. In Chapter 4, there are seven texts about exposition text, and in Chapter 5, there are three texts about recount text. In the last chapter, there are six texts about report texts. There are texts with familiar themes in the textbook interested by students. For example, the second chapter discusses the Borobudur temple on page 41 and the text describing Cristiano Ronaldo on page 51.

## 2. Develop reading comprehension

Content in textbook should develop students' reading comprehension. The purpose is for students to understand what is read in a text. There are several ways to develop students' reading comprehension as shown through the following figure.

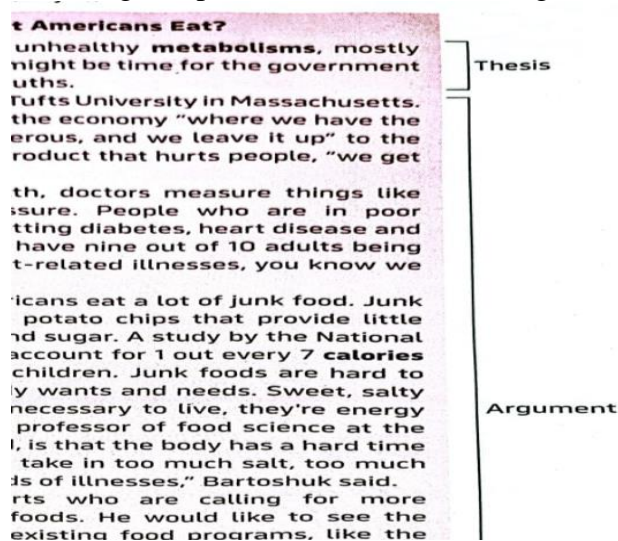


Figure 1.1 Exampe of reading materials

As seen in Figure 1.1, pictures show that on the right side of the text, there is a sign about the structure of the exposition text, namely thesis, argument, and reiteration. This makes it easier for students to understand what they read. Another example is on page 147 in chapter 5, making a sign on the left side about the structural text about recount text; on the right side, there are language features. Another way to build reading comprehension is the textbook uses visualization to build an understanding of what will be read. For example, on page 84, in the third chapter about text procedures, we can see the visualization of the final result of making the food.

## 3. Up-to-date, interesting, and meaningful

Reading textbook must be up to date to provide the most up-to-date information to students. The goal is to provide up-to-date information about what is happening now. Some texts that meet these criteria was shown through the following figure.

The following text is for questions 1 to 5.

**How to use Google Forms**

We can use Google Forms to create online surveys, quizzes, seminar or workshop registration, attendance or anything else and send them to other people. There are some steps to use Google forms.

The first step is setting up a new form or quiz. To do this, you should go to forms.google.com, then click Blank. After you do this, a new form will open.

You can also create a form from Google Drive. You only need to go to drive.google.com then in the top left, click New Google Forms.

Another way is creating a form in Google Sheets. To create in Google Sheets, open a spread sheet at sheets.google.com then Click Insert Form.


Secondly, edit and format a form or quiz. The last step is sending your form for people to fill out. When you are ready, you can send your form to others and collect their responses

Figure 2 Example reading materials

As seen in Figure 2, which discusses “How to use Google Forms?” as we know, technological development in education is rapidly increasing. Using Google Forms is very useful for students to make things easier, for example, sending documents, attendance, etc. Another example is the reading material on page 197 in chapter six discusses allergens in cosmetics. As we know, cosmetics are used by the public, especially students. This issue is very current and meaningful for students about the use of cosmetics and the dangers they cause. Meanwhile, the text that must be updated is the fifth chapter on page 137 which tells a biography of the American president in 1889, which students may not be familiar with.

#### 4. Some reading passages are easy for students

Some text reading should be easy for students, and they understand enough of the story so that most know what they are reading. Many of the stories are short and it make easier for them to understand as shown through the following figure:

 **Reading Section**

**Activity 5**

**Read the text below and find the meaning of the words in the column.**

**The Ants and the Grasshopper**

One bright day in late autumn, a family of Ants were bustling about in the warm sunshine, drying out the grain they had stored up during the summer, when a starving Grasshopper, his fiddle under his arm, came up and humbly begged for a bite to eat.

“What!” cried the Ants in surprise, “haven’t you stored anything away for the winter? What in the world were you doing all last summer?”

“I didn’t have time to store up any food,” whined the Grasshopper; “I was so busy making music that before I knew it the summer was gone.”

The Ants shrugged their shoulders in disgust.

“Making music, were you?” they cried. “Very well; now dance!” And they turned their backs on the Grasshopper and went on with their work.

Source: <http://read.gov/aesop/052.html>

Figure 3 Example of reading materials

Figure 3 shown that text is easy for students. Especially in the first chapter, lots of reading material with few paragraphs, and students understand enough of the story to understand what they read. For example, the figure above tells about Ants and Grasshoppers with few paragraphs and is familiar to students. Another example of a text in chapter 2, page 41, describes the Borobudur temple, which is very familiar to students. Another example is in chapter 2, page 61, which represents the natural beauty of Indonesia, namely "Pink Beach.

#### 5. The length of the reading texts is appropriate

Readability tests are used to determine the appropriateness of the text. The researcher uses two tests: Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level.

Meanwhile, The Flesch Kincaid Grade Level is a widely used readability formula that assesses the approximate reading level of a text. The first is for reading ease used to rate text on a 100-point scale. The point is that the smaller the score, the more complex the text. Meanwhile, Flesch Kincaid Grade Level is a widely used readability formula that assesses a text's approximate reading grade level. The two texts with the most extended text in this textbook are evaluated using a readability test.

Based on result from the Reading Ease test, it is classified as complex with the text entitled "The Tsunami Museum" on page 60 in chapter 2. The score on the text is from Reading Ease was 50.2. Then in the Flesch Kincaid Grade level test, the score was 9.4. Meanwhile, the text entitled "Could the Us Regulate What Americans Eat ?" on page 109 in chapter 4it is classified as complex with a score of 52.9 in Reading Ease and the score of Flesch Kincaid Grade was 10.4.

## 6. Authentic materials

Using authentic materials in reading material aims to "express" students to the real world. Authentic materials was shown through the following figure:

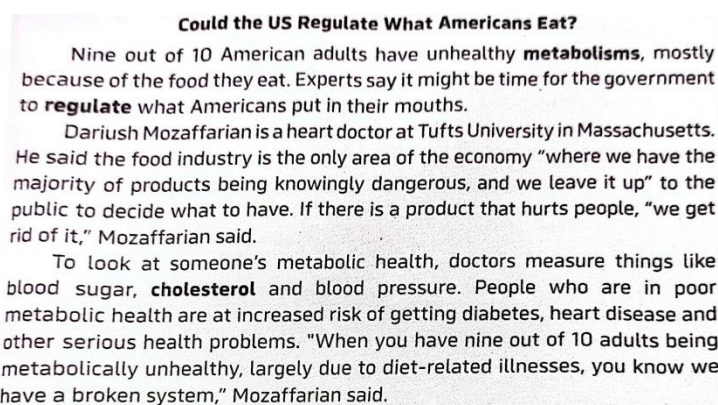


Figure 4 Example of authentic materials

As seen in Figure 4 , tells about the phenomenon of teenagers in America who have unhealthy eating patterns. That text tells about a phenomenon that is happening at the moment. Next is the text on page 184, which describes an earthquake. The text explains how earthquakes can occur according to scientists, and as we know, Indonesia is a country of rings of fire where earthquakes often occur in several areas. Another example is usually authentic material on chapter 5, page 157, which discusses the recount text about the 23rd former president of America, Benjamin Harrison.

## Discussion

Based on the findings of reading materials, textbook are considered good, contain adequate reading sources and vary in various chapters. In addition, some of the texts also have themes that are familiar to students, making it easier for them to understand what the text means (Aljouei & Alsuhaibani, 2018). To develop reading comprehension, this book uses visualization and making connections. This is in line with McKown & Cynthia L. Barnett (2007) stated that there are several ways to improve reading comprehension in textbooks, namely by making connections and visualizing. In addition, this textbook displays some of the latest texts so that students can understand the text. This is in line with Patel & Jain (2008) opinion

that textbooks must provide up-to-date information for students. Besides that, this book also has short readings so students can easily understand it. In addition, to find texts that match the difficulty level based on class, the researchers used the Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch Kincaid Grade readability tests on the two texts with the most extended paragraphs. The results is appropriate to grade 10 in a vocational high school. Some readings also use authentic materials taken from outside sources to appropriately encourage students to do extensive reading (Aljouei & Alsuhaibani, 2018). In general, this textbook is a good reading material for students.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion is that evaluating reading materials in the Merdeka Curriculum textbook entitled "SPLASH" is good based on Mohamed (2013) checklist criteria. Based on the finding, the reading material textbook have sufficient reading material with several texts in each chapter so that students can choose the text according to their needs. Besides that, visualization and making connections in this textbook also help students improve their reading comprehension skills. Most of the reading materials are also up to date, but some readings are taken from old sources that need updating. Reading materials are also adjusted according to the level of difficulty and grade based on readability rest using the Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch Kincaid Grade Level, and the results are according to the level of difficulty and grade level. This book's authentic material aims to get information about what is happening now. In addition, ther researchers acknowledge the limitations of this study, such as only evaluate aspects of reading materials to be analyzed due to space limitations.

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