AN EVALUATION OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOK USED AT SENIOR AND VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS ORIENTED TO THE CURRICULUM 2013

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ABSTRACT

This paper documents the revelation of a post-evaluation of an English textbook. It mainly deals with analyzing the nature of the English textbook of Grade X of semester 1 which is nationally developed under the scheme of the 2013 curriculum and recommended to be nationally used by students of senior and vocational high schools in Indonesia including Yogyakarta Special Province. Six indicators were employed as the basis of the analysis of the English textbook: (1) the suitability of basic and core competence in reference to the content, (2) the English textbook organization and language skill areas, (3) the contextualization of tasks, (4) critical thinking skill enhancement, (5) the integration of culture, and (6) learner-characteristic-accommodation. Note-taking and questionnaire were employed to gathered data. Descriptive qualitative was utilized to analyze data. In reference to the data analysis, six findings are revealed as explored in the findings and discussion.

Keywords: English textbook, decontextualization, contextualization, lower and higher order thinking skills

INTRODUCTION:

The existence of English textbooks in the process of English language teaching and learning at all levels of education, including Senior and Vocational High Schools (SVHSs for short) is a must. This relies on fact that English textbooks provide Second Language Teachers (SLTs) and Learners (SLLs) with a guideline of how they are engaged in developing the ability to deconstruct and construct English texts as the main target of learning English as a second language (L2). This statement is supported by a large number of experts (Matthews, 1985; Sheldon, 1988; Rea-Dickens & Germaine, 1994; Cunningsworth, 1995; Ur, 1996; *Tomlinson,* Dat, Masuhara, & Rubdy, 2001; Tomlinson, 2001; Riasati & Zare, 2010; Birjandi & Alizadeh, 2012; Azizifar & Baghelani, 2014, Nazeer, Shah, & Sarwat, 2015), who claim that English textbooks are of great importance for both SLTs and SLLs because they provide a guideline for any ELT (English Language Teaching) program. Sheldon (1988) highly states that English textbooks could be a device to relieve pressures on the part of SLLs in language learning practices.

In support of the above statements, Hutchinson & Torres (1994) strongly urge that any textbook serves as a tremendous role in Second Language Teaching and Learning (ELTL) as textbooks confer necessary input for SLLs to deal with classroom practices and reading activities. Hashemi & Borhani (2015:47) add that English textbooks play a very crucial role in educational contexts as the existence of English textbooks is badly required in the process of English language teaching and learning. Richards (2001) strongly urges that the use of English textbooks convincingly perform a positive impact on the success of L2 learning. Added to this, Garinger (2002) adds that English textbooks can be a core resource which serves as a supplementary material to inspire SLTs and their students to be engaged in educational practices. In summary, the existence of English textbooks in second language teaching and learning is vital in nature.

With regard to the importance of English textbooks, the ministry of education and culture in Indonesia via the centre for curriculum and textbook development write English textbooks and other textbooks under the issue of the new curriculum called the '2013 curriculum'. This curriculum gives emphasis on some streams such as the high-order-thinking-skills-based development, contextualization – based and learner–characteristic – accommodation. These streams should be the basis of developing English textbooks which are projected to facilitate students at any level of education to succeed in second language learning. In lieu with this, the development of the English textbooks should rely on the above streams in order to enhance SLLs' English proficiency so that they could maximally acquire the targeted language (English).

In reference to a preliminary documentation of the English textbooks conducted by the writers, English textbooks used by students of senior high schools and vocational high schools are the same. This should be reconsidered as students of senior and vocational high schools have different learning orientations and characteristics. The English textbooks of senior high schools should be oriented to English for Academic Purposes (EAP). On the other hand, the English textbooks for students of vocational high schools should be oriented to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) according to their study programs such as administration and business, automotive and electronics, forestry, agriculture, and the like. Ideally, the English textbooks which are nationally used accommodate the streams as mentioned above. However, as far as the writers are concerned, the English textbooks used at the level of SVHSs to some extent do not refer to the recommended streams: high-order-thinking-skills-based development, contextualization-based, and learner-characteristic-accommodation.

Referring to the above findings via documentation practices, a post-evaluation of the English textbooks is urgently conducted in order to reveal the information whether the English textbooks which are nationally used, meet some criteria proposed by a large number of experts or academicians. This information is of great importance for many parties such as SLTs, SLLs, book writers, and policy makers. Second language teachers, for example, may take an advantage of the information of the post-evaluation which facilitates them to make an effort to adapt the English textbooks to meet their students' characteristics. In support of the statement, Azizifar & Baghelani (2014, p.23) highlighted that the evaluation of English textbooks facilitates SLTs to make an adjustment of the evaluated English textbooks to accommodate SLLs' interests and to make use of the strong points and reveal the weaker areas of the English textbooks. In support of the statement, Rea-Dickens & Germaine (1994, p.4) strongly claim that post-evaluation of English textbooks confer SLTs valuable points to conduct educational practices. In summary, evaluating English textbooks is very crucial in nature.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The term *textbook* is defined as a compilation of useful materials which are relevant to the course area for a formal study. It provides teachers and their students with a guideline of learning practices which are of

significance for them to be engaged in some educational practices. According to Ahour & Ahmadi (2012, p. 176), a textbook serves the main sources which contain knowledge and information related to the learned subject. For example, English textbooks embody the exploration of some knowledge of language which includes micro- and macro-language skills which become the main focus of the English textbooks. Good English textbooks may contain the information of the use of language in context. As far as the writers are concerned, English textbooks not only contain the compilation of materials such as macro- and micro-language skills, but also contain some challenging activities or tasks and exercises that students should handle with. Also, the English textbooks provide SLLs with information of how language is used in various social contexts on the grounds that language is a social phenomenon. This suggests that English textbooks confer cultural aspects of the speakers of the target language which drive students to gain a framework of communication practices requiring English as a device for communication practices. In relation to this, the English textbooks should be well developed and referred to the standardized streams; otherwise they only become obsolete documents which are potential to demotivate SLLs to learn English.

In relation to English textbook development, it is evident that no perfect English textbooks are found. This suggests that evaluating English textbooks should be continuously conducted in order to closely look at whether or not the English textbooks accommodate the criteria as the resource of English language teaching and learning practices. This relies on the theory that an inappropriate selection of English textbooks used in the process of ELTL could demotivate SLLs (Hashemi & Borhani, 2015) leading to the failure for acquiring English. In support of this, a large number of experts claim that evaluating English textbooks could assist SLTs *'to get useful, accurate, systematic, and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook material'* (Ellis, 1997; Rahimy, 2007; Hashemi & Borhani, 2015). Cunningsworth (1995) strongly urges that English textbook evaluation is aimed at revealing the strengths and weaknesses of the English textbooks which trigger second language teachers to establish their sensitivity in selecting appropriate materials which accommodate second language learners' backgrounds. In addition, SLTs gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the English textbooks which guide them to select the practical, functional, novel, and meaningful English resources which serve as the framework of appraising, adjusting, and establishing English materials that accommodate SLLs to effectively and efficiently acquire the target language. In summary, English textbook evaluation is a fundamental part of teaching and learning (Rea-Dickens & Germaine, 1994).

In lieu with English textbook evaluation, a large number of criteria have been proposed by some experts (Williams, 1983; Sheldon, 1988; Brown, 1995, Cunningsworth, 1995; Harmer, 1996; Zabawa, 2001; McGrath, 2002; Garinger, 2002; McGrath, 2002; Ansari & Babaii, 2002; Litz, 2005; Miekley, 2005; Mukundan & Ahour, 2010; Mukundan, Nimehchisalem, & Hajimohammadi, 2011; Hashemi & Borhani, 2015). They come to the agreement of criteria related to the physical characteristics of textbooks such as layout, organizational, and logistical characteristics which should exist in the evaluation checklists. Beside those criteria, some points such as use of specific language, language functions, grammar issues, skills content, and learner's characteristics (personalities, needs, interests, ages, cultural backgrounds and the like) should be included in the evaluation checklist for English textbook (Tok, 2010-510). More specifically, Garinger (2002) proposes four issues to evaluate textbooks. They are (1) the accommodation for students' acquisition, (2) the equal division of controlled and free practices, (3) the sequence of the organization from simple to complex activities, and (4) the variety of the exercises.

Different from those four criteria, there are two parts of checklist as proposed by Mukundan & Ahour (2010) and Mukundan, Hajimohammadi, & Nimehchisalem (2011). They include (1) textbook general attributes and (2) textbook learning content. The former is subdivided into five major components: (a) syllabus and curriculum, (b) methodology, (c) suitability to learners, (d) physical and utilitarian attributes, and (e) efficient outlay of supplementary materials. The latter consists of sub-components which include (a) general content, (b) listening, (c) speaking, (d) reading, (e) writing, (f) vocabulary, (g) Grammar, (h) pronunciation, and (i) exercise. The two criteria can be applied in evaluating the English textbook.

With regard to the above criteria, it is evident that the criteria only focus on two issues, namely language content and physical characteristics of textbooks. The criteria do not include the issues of contextualization of the language use, thinking skill development, and the like. This implies that a practical and meaningful set of criteria must be comprehensively explored in order that the results of the English textbook evaluation confer a valuable framework as the basis of evaluating English textbook. To do so, the writers propose six criteria as the basis of textbook evaluation. They include (1) the suitability of basic and core competence in reference to the content, (2) the English textbook organization and language skill areas, (3) the contexts of language use, (4) critical thinking skill enhancement, (5) the culture integration, and (6) learner-characteristic-accommodation.

These six criteria are believed to be more comprehensive criteria utilized in evaluating English textbooks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research is categorized as a post-evaluation type which is conducted through comparing between the indicators and the evaluated English textbook. The subject of the evaluation is the English textbook of Grade X used for students of SHVSs. The selection of English textbook of Grade X relies on the fact that it is widely used by a large number of secondary schools as the starting point of the implementation of the 2013 curriculum. The textbook was developed by the centre for curriculum and textbook development under the ministry of education and culture. There were also 14 English teachers of Vocational High Schools (VHSs) from 14 different vocational schools voluntarily participating in this research from three different districts. Two techniques: note-taking with the use of a post-evaluation checklist and questionnaire were employed. The checklist was constructed in reference to six indicators, namely (1) the suitability between basic and core competence and the content, (2) the English textbook organizations and language skill areas, (3) the contextulaization of task (4) critical thinking skill enhancement, (5) the culture integration, and (6) learner-characteristic-accommodation. These checklist criteria are used to qualitatively describe the evaluated English textbook.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS:

In reference to the data analysis, the following presents the research findings and discussions using six indicators for evaluating the English textbook. Each is presented below.

The suitability between basic and core competence and the content:
It is evident that most of the contents of the evaluated English textbook meet the core and basic competence as stated in the curriculum 2013 on the grounds that the English textbook was mainly developed on the basis of the core and basic competence. The two issues are realized in the learning objectives embodying two aspects, namely affective and cognitive domains. Look at the following objectives.

Learning objectives
*A*fter studying Chapter 2, students are expected to be able to*:*
1. perform seriousness to learn English in communication practices about aprreciating and caring for their teachers and friends;
2. perform care, self-confidence, and resposibility in conducting communication practices of complementing and caring for others;.
3. identify social functions, the structure of texts, and linguistic elements in expressing extended complementing and their responses;
4. dentify social functions, the structure of texts, and linguistic elements in expressing extended cares and their responses;
5. construct spoken and written texts to express and respond to extended complementing; and
6. construct spoken and written texts to express and respond to extended care.

With regard to the above objectives of Chapter 2, the evaluated English textbook is aimed at establishing SLLs to perform their seriousness, care, self-confidence, and responsibility in handling oral communication practices of complementing and respecting others under the issue of affective domain as shown in objective 1 and 2. Added to this, SLLs are expected to be able to identify social functions, generic structure of texts, and linguistic features used in making communication practices of complementing act and its responses and to be able to construct spoken and written texts under the issue of how to produce extended complimenting and how to respond to the complements. These learning objectives refer to the following basic competence as written in the curriculum. Objective 3 is relevant to basic competence 3.2 which states analyzing social functions, text organizations, and linguistic features in expressing extended compliments with regard to its contexts. Objective 4 refers to basic competence 3.3 which states analyzing social functions, text organizations, and linguistic features of how to show a care to others followed by its responses according to the appropriate contexts. Objective 4 is generated from basic competence 4.3 which states constructing spoken and written texts to express and respond to extended compliments by taking account for social functions, text organizations, and linguistic features in accordance with the appropriate contexts. Objective 5 refers to basic competence 4.4, which states constructing spoken and written texts to perform and respond to care expressions by taking account

for social functions, text organizations, and event elements. The basic competence is manifested in a series of tasks of Chapter 2. Such evidence also happens in other chapters of the evaluated English textbook. In summary, the English textbook is developed under the mainstream of core and basic competence. This statement is supported by voices as uttered by English language teachers of VHSs participating in this study. All of teacher cohorts strongly agree that the English textbook is mainly developed on the basis of core competence and basic competence.

Organizations of English textbooks and language skill areas:

In reference to data analysis, in every chapter of the English textbook, the writers organize the English textbook into some parts, namely (a) *warmer*, (b) *vocabulary builder*, (c) *pronunciation practice*, (d) *reading*, (e) *vocabulary exercises*, (f) *text structure*, (g) *grammar review*, (h) *speaking*, (i) *writing*, and (j) *reflection*. The *warmer* session is aimed at recalling the prior knowledge of the students and attracting students to materials through some activities such as application of games, identification of phrases, identification of pictures, and the like. *Vocabulary builder* is intended to recall lexical items which have already learned and/or will be learned in the chapters concerned. *Pronunciation practice* is designed for facilitating students to read some lexical items. *Vocabulary exercises* are projected to enhance students' vocabulary. *Text structure* deals with reviewing the generic structure of the texts learned. *Grammar review* is concerned with presenting the grammar focus. All of them highlight micro-language skill development. This suggests that the micro-language skills are explicitly presented in the English textbook. This contradicts the current theories which claim that the micro-skills should be embedded into macro-language skill development so that students gain an understanding how those micro-skills are applied in contexts not in isolation.

Besides, it is evident that the macro-language skills (reading, speaking, and writing) except listening are presented in every chapter. Of the three macro-language skills, reading dominates in the evaluated English textbook compared to the other macro-language skills as a lot of tasks of the macro-language skill development are found in every chapter of the evaluated English textbook. However, it is evident that reading practices only deal with testing rather than learning as every text is always followed by comprehension questions instead of the meaning making of the targeted texts.

Look at the following example:

Assalamu'alaikum Alia,

It was very interesting to read your letter about yourself and your hometown. I would really like to be your pen friend.

I'm a sixteen-year-old school student from Johor Bahru in Malaysia. Actually I attend an Islamic boarding school just outside the city but my family live in Kuala Lumpur. My eldest sister is a medical doctor. She will get married soon. My younger brother is an elementary school student in KL but he often writes to me via email.

My favorite subjects are social sciences. I like history very much; it helps me know more how different countries existed in the past. At school we are supposed to use English at all times, even when we are in the dormitory, so we have become quite fluent although sometimes we slip back into Malay, which is our mother tongue.

As for hobbies, I'm really into songs and music. My favorite singer is Yusuf Islam whose former name was Cat Steven. He's so cool! Another singer I like is Maher Zain with his religious songs. My favorite Malay singer is of course Siti Nurhaliza. I also like watching movies, especially comedies. The actor I like best is Tom Cruise.

I'm really into books. I like reading novels and short stories, mostly by Malay authors who you probably haven't heard of. I like some writers in English, like JK Rowling and Indonesian writers too, like Andrea Hirata and Ahmad Fuadi. My dream, when I'm older, is to be a writer of science fiction books set in the distant future.

I'd really love to come to Indonesia some day. I heard that it has the largest number of Muslims of any country. A book that I've just read mentions that

there are some magnificent places to visit, such as, Bali, Sulawesi,

Papua and Borneo! What about you, do you want to visit

my country?

Wassalam, Saidah   (ET-X/S1/Chapter 1/Task 2/P-5)

Answer the following questions briefly.

1. How does Hannah contact Alia? Is there anybody introducing Hannah to Alia?
2. Does Hannah want to be Alia's friend?
3. Where does Hannah study?
4. Tell me about Hannah's family!
5. What are Hannah's hobbies?
6. Does she like animals? What animals does she have?
7. What do Hannah and her Hmong friends love to do?
8. What profession would she like to have after graduating from her school?
9. She isn't interested in fashion. Why?

With regard to the above example, students are driven to only answer the questions. It will be meaningful when the task is targeted to make sense of the text with the use of top-down processing (content-analysis-based), bottom-up processing (language-analysis-based), or interactive processing (mixed-analysis-based). Those approaches facilitate students to deal with meaning making so that students could establish their own strategies in deconstructing any texts instead of answering questions.

With regard to the data analysis, speaking practices also exist in the evaluated English textbook. The speaking practices deal with exploring conversational gambits and functions of language such as talking about oneself, complementing and showing care, congratulating others, and the like. This session is aimed at facilitating students to construct the spoken texts in reference to the situations as exemplified below.

Ask your parents or relatives about historical places that they know. Use these questions to guide you. Report the information you have obtained to the class.
• What is the name of the place?
• How old is the place?
• Is the place spooky?
• Why is it mysterious?
• How does the place look like?   (ET-X/S1/Chapter 8/Task 1/P-101)

The task above shows that the writers use a product approach rather than a process one to deal with writing presentation as the students are driven to construct texts in reference to the situations provided without asking them to conduct mind-mapping, outlining, writing a draft, revising a draft, and finalizing the draft. The same orientation happens in the following writing task.

Write a paragraph about your holiday plan. Use *I would like to ..., I will .... I am going to.....*and *would rather ....* in your paragraph. You can use the questions to guide you:
Holiday plan
- Where would you like to go on holiday? Would you like to go somewhere interesting or stay at home?
- What are you going to do during holiday? Do you have any special interest?

(ET-X/S1/Chapter 2/Task 1/P-40)

With regard to the findings, the application of a process approach is highly recommended in the English textbook on the grounds that such an approach is believed to facilitate SLLs to easily construct texts and to generate their ideas in constructing English texts. Added to this, a mixture of process and product approach applied in English textbook development could enhance SLLs' writing skills.

English textbook contextualization:
In regard to the issue of contextualization, the materials of the English textbook should theoretically be contextualized in the sense that the use of language is found in real life of the target and local language contexts in order to maintain the meaningfulness and practicality of the language use. In order words, the tasks designed for developing the micro- and macro-language skills should be based on social contexts initiating the use of language. In reference to this issue, most of materials in the evaluated English textbook tend to be decontextualized as presented in the speaking task below.

Task 2:
Complete the following conversations with your own words.

Conversation 1
Rani : Hi Anisa.
Anisa : Hi, you look great in that pink head scarf. What a nice scarf!
Rani : _____ (1) to say that.
Anisa : I've never seen you in that hat. Where did you buy it?
Rani : My mom bought it for me when she went to the market.
Anisa : I see.
Rani : Look. The teacher is coming!
Anisa : Pak Sultoni.
Conversation 2
Mr. Sultoni : Hi, how are you?
Rani   : We're good. Thanks.
Anisa   : Excellent.
Rani   : _____ (2) hair cut, Pak Sultoni.
Anisa   : Yes, you're looking good with your hair style.
Mr. Sultoni : Thanks a lot. Rani, I heard you won the Math Olympiad. Is it true?
Rani   : Yes, I won the second prize last week.
Anisa   : _____ (3)
Mr. Sultoni : _____ (4) to hear that.
Rani   : Thank you very much for saying so.

(ET-X/S1/Chapter 4/Task 2/P-49)

The above data clearly show that the English textbook writers decontextualize the conversation on the grounds that no situation is given to lead students to completing the dialog. Added to this, it is not common for Rani and Anisa to use English as a means of communication without any context of situation which states as follows: Rani and Anisa are students of senior high school 1 Yogyakarta. While waiting their English teacher (Mr. Sultoni), Anisa comments

on scarf that Rani wears with the use of English. Such evidence also happens in the following writing task.

Write down the inside parts of the congratulation cards based on the cover.

Your sister has graduated from a culinary arts program in Padang, West Sumatra. She wants to be the best chef and plans to open her own restaurant.

(ET-X/S1/Chapter 4/Task 2/P-52)

The above data justify that the writers of the English textbook decontextualize the task because no context of situation is given. This statement is supported by 14 English teachers of vocational high schools who strongly criticized that a lot of tasks in the evaluated English textbook are not accompanied by the context situations. The above task will be meaningful when situation is modified as follows. Please write a congratulation card in English based on the situation: Your sister's husband gets married with an Australian man. He is promoted to be a manager in one of the leading companies in NSW, Australia.

Critical thinking skill enhancement:
One of the characteristics of the 21 century in relation to the process of English language and learning is the development of SLLs' thinking skills which focuses on higher order thinking skills in order that SLLs could maximally acquire the L2 and establish their self-regulated learning which directly or indirectly determine the success for second language learning. This spirit is actualized in a series of educational practices which include the development of English textbooks. This implies that the evaluated English textbook should accommodate the development of SLLs' critical thinking skills as manifested in every chapter of the English textbook. In other words, the development of HOTS should become the focus of the English textbook.

In reference to the data analysis, most of tasks in relation to reading practices tend to develop lower order thinking skills rather than higher order thinking skills. This evidence happens because the writers of the English textbook develop comprehension questions which are dominated by factual questions rather than analytical ones. Those factual questions are characterized with the use of *when, where, what, who, how many, how much,* and *Yes* or *No* questions without any justification of the answers as given with an example below.

VISITING NIAGARA FALLS

Niagara Falls is the collective name for three waterfalls that cross the international border between the Canadian province of Ontario and the USA's state of New York. They form the southern end of the Niagara Gorge. From largest to smallest, the three waterfalls are the Horseshoe Falls, the American Falls and the Bridal Veil Falls. The Horseshoe Falls lie on the Canadian side and the American Falls on the American side. They are separated by Goat Island. The smaller Bridal Veil Falls are also located on the American side, separated from the other waterfalls by Luna Island. There are various attractions that people can enjoy in Niagara Falls, six of them are described here.

The first to enjoy in Niagara Falls is *Cave of the Winds*. This attraction helps people get closer to the falls and go face-to-face with the pounding waters of the Falls. People can get soaked on the Hurricane Deck where they are just feet from the thundering waters. Waterproof clothing and sandals are provided. A trip at night when the Falls are illuminated in a rainbow of color is really amazing.

The second charm is *Maid of the Mist Boat Tour*. It is a world-famous scenic boat tour of the American and Canadian Falls for about a half-hour ride. People may access the tour via the Observation Tower elevator at Prospect Point in the state park. The boat operates mid-May until late October.

The next to visit in Niagara Falls is *Niagara Adventure Theater*. Here tourists may enjoy the most powerful and involving film experience that brings reality to life on a 45 foot screen. Audience members are given the priviledge to discover the thundering Falls from a completely new and exhilarating perspective, and plunge over them. The theater shows hourly and free multi-language headsets are made available.

Niagara Science Museum is another place to visit. It is a sanctuary for the preservation and appreciation of old science instruments and philosophical apparatus.

The fifth point of interest is *Niagara's Wax Museum of History*. Here, life-size wax figures portraying dramatic history of Niagara Falls are presented to guests. They can see Fort Niagara Scene, Indian Village, old store, blacksmith and barber shop scenes and how electricity is made. Wax figures of Julia Roberts, Princess Diana and many more are displayed here, too.

Finally, people can also enjoy *Rainbow Air Helicopter Tours* above and around the American and Canadian Falls. The tours start from downtown, next to the entrance to the Rainbow Bridge, and open from 9am to dusk when weather permits. The tours operate every day from second weekend in May until October 31st.

The Niagara Falls are renowned both for their beauty and as a valuable source of hydroelectric power. Managing the balance between recreational, commercial, and industrial uses has been a challenge for the stewards of the falls since the 19th century.

(Adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niagara_Falls and http://www.niagara-usa.com/things-do/attractions/falls-region)

Comprehension Questions:

Answer the following questions by referring to the text 'Visiting Niagara Falls.'
1. Where is Niagara Falls located?
2. Mention the three waterfalls that form the Niagara Falls.
3. What can people enjoy in the Cave of the Winds?
4. Can people ride on the Maid of the Mist Boat Tour in January?
5. Where can people watch a film of the thundering falls with completely different background?
6. Can the tourists enjoy the film in their own language?
7. What is kept in Niagara Science Museum?
8. What is shown in Niagara's Wax Museum of History?
9. Where can people see the story of how electricity was made?
10. Is it possible for people to have Rainbow Air Helicopter Tours at night?

(ET-X/S1/Chapter 7/Task 2/P-84-85)

With regard to the above comprehension questions, all of the questions are categorized as lower-order-thinking-skill questions as they are concerned with factual questions which give emphasis explicit information as stated in the text. For example, Question 1, 5, and 9 deal with setting of time, Question 2, 3, 7, and 8 are about W-questions, and Question 4, 6, and 10 concern Yes or No questions, and Question 2 deal with a factual comprehension question. All of those questions require factual information which exists in the text given. Similar evidence also happens in most of reading practices of the evaluated English textbook. Look at the following example.

Comprehnsion questions.
Answer the following questions briefly.
1. Who wrote the announcement?
2. When was the announcement released?
3. Who is the announcement for?
4. What is the announcement about?
5. When and where will actually the concert be held?
6. What has the Faith & D Entertainment Management submitted to CJes Entertainment?
7. Has there been an announcement regarding ticket sale? Why do you think so?
8. What did Faith & D Entertainment write in the last paragraph?

Cancellation of JYJ Concert in Singapore

+ Write a Note

by Faith & D Entertainment on Monday, March 28, 2011 at 5:19am

Dear Fans and Media

This is an official announcement to inform everyone that we have just been notified by CJes Entertainment, the artiste agency of JYJ that they have decided to cancel JYJ World Tour Concert in Singapore which is scheduled on 23 April 2011 at Singapore Indoor Stadium.

It is with utmost regret that we have to accept this cancellation notice from the artiste agency at this point in time. We have submitted the final plans for stage, seating and ticketing for the agency's approval so as to proceed with the official announcement on ticket sale. These plans are in accordance with the regulations required by the authorities in Singapore and the budget allocated for the concert. It is most unfortunate that the plans are not approved by CJes and their decision is to cancel the concert. We respect the agency's decision and, with great regret, we are unable to change their mind but to accept this unforeseen circumstance that is beyond our control.

We understand the disappointment as well as the inconvenience caused due to the cancellation and we sincerely apologize – especially to the fans of JYJ.

The Management
Faith & D Entertainment

The above questions also perform LOTS questions as all of the questions are categorized as factual questions which can be easily found in the text given. In other words, no analytical questions are found in the comprehension questions. This suggests that English textbook writers have to construct HOTS comprehension questions, for example: *Why is the concert concealed?*, *Why should the management issue the announcement*?, and the like. Such types of questions require analytical thinking skills.

The above finding is justified by statements voiced by 14 English teachers of VHSs in Yogyakarta who commented on the development of HOTS as manifested in any tasks of the evaluated English textbook. All of the teachers stated that a great number of tasks were designed on the basis of LOTS questions.

Culture integration:
It is evident that cultural integration in English textbooks is highly recommended by a large number of experts as it could provide students with a comprehensive understanding on how language is used according to the social contexts both in target and local contexts. In other words, this cultural integration could facilitate students to capture the real use of language which assists them to drive all of information in long term memory space enabling them to recall the memory when needed. This suggests that English textbook writers should highlight the cultural integration in their English textbooks.

In reference to the data analysis, it is found that the evaluated English textbook has already integrated the local and target culture as manifested in some part of chapters. However, the English textbook writers tend to dominate the integration of local culture in the English textbook. In addition, the inclusion of the culture is not well structured in every chapter as no clear mainstream of the integration of both cultures is found. In other words, the inclusion of the culture in English textbook is not systematical and purposively designed in every part of chapter to present the macro-language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Theoretically, the integration of the local culture can be the initiation of presenting productive language skills (speaking and writing) as students have been familiar with the context leading them to generating their ideas easily. On the other hand, the target culture can serve as the initiation of presenting the receptive language skills (listening and reading) because both can be used as the window of getting information from the target culture. With regard to this finding, English textbook writers should be consciously concerned about the integration of the local and target culture in developing English textbook on the grounds that it facilitates students to capture the social planes that exist in real contexts. This leads students to maximally acquiring the target language.

Learner-characteristic-accommodation:
As clearly mentioned in the literature review, learner characteristics should be one of the bases of developing English textbooks in order that the English textbooks can be effectively and efficiently used as the resource to learn the target language. Therefore, needs analysis must be one of the stages before developing English textbooks. In the needs analysis, the portraits of the target and learning needs can be comprehensively explored as the basis of developing English textbooks. However, as far as the writer is concerned, the evaluated English textbook did not meet learner characteristics on the grounds that needs analysis is impossible to be conducted. This relies on the fact that it is impossible to conduct needs analysis representing all Indonesian regions as the English textbooks are nationally recommended. One of the possible reasons is financial matter. In summary, the evaluated English textbook is out of learner- characteristic-accommodation.

One of the efforts to be conducted in order to meet learner-characteristic accommodation is developing the different English textbooks used for students of senior high schools and of vocational high schools. This relies on the theory that the nature of the learners is different. Students of VHSs are expected to deal with general English which focuses on English for Academic Purposes. On the other hand, students of VHSs are targeted to concern English for specific purposes. This leads to selecting materials which accommodate their backgrounds of their study. This suggests that the different learning orientation should be taken into account by English textbook writers. Accordingly, the focus of macro-language skill presentation should be different because that students of SHSs are projected to be able to strongly deal with meaning making of English texts regarding the establishment of the three other macro-language skills. On the other hand, students of VHSs are aimed at developing their speaking skills which are relevant to their workplaces without ignoring the three other macro-language skills to support their career development.

With regard to the post evaluation of the English textbook, there is no difference of the English textbook used for students of SHSs and VHSs. In other words, there is only one type of English textbook nationally used for the first semester students of SHSs and VHSs. This case should be minimized as they have different orientation. Therefore, it is urgent to develop English textbook for students of VHSs. In summary, the English textbook need to be revised.

CONCLUSIONS:

In reference to the above findings, some conclusions are made as follows. First, the English textbook is developed in reference to core competence and basic competency. Second, the English textbook gives an emphasis on the development of micro-language skills (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar). The macro-language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing are not equally presented. Third, there is a decontextualization of tasks of the English textbook on the grounds that a great number of texts used in the English textbook are not followed by the context of situations. Fourth, the English textbook gives an emphasis on the development of lower instead of order thinking skills. Fifth, the selected texts are dominated by local cultural contexts which lead to the decontextualization of the materials. Sixth, the English textbook do not accommodate students' characteristics. Sixth, it is evident that the evaluated English textbook as explored above does not accommodate learner backgrounds on the grounds that the English textbook is designed for students of senior high school and vocational high school who have different orientations for learning English. Students of SHS are projected to concern English for academic purposes while students of VHS are oriented to deal with English for specific purposes. This suggests that the English textbook designed for SHS and SVS must be different.

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