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# Including Diversity Awareness, Anti-Violence and Vocational Skills in Language Learning: An Evaluative Study to English Textbook in Indonesia

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## Abstract

As the government of Indonesia is implementing a program of Vocational School Revitalization, improving the quality of instructional material, including the quality of textbooks. This study aims at analyzing how the English textbook for grade X of vocational high school has included diversity awareness, anti-violence, and vocational skills in their content. Diversity awareness, anti-violence, and vocational skills are important to be presented in the textbook in Indonesia because Indonesia has more than 300 ethnic groups, or in exact number, there are 1340 ethnics spreading all over the islands. This awareness is important in order to build tolerance among others and also anti-violence habit. As the textbook plays an important role in Indonesian education, this action on building diversity awareness could be assisted through the inclusion in the textbook. The textbook being evaluated in one published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. The research conducted as a descriptive, evaluative study, through content analysis data collection method. In general, it is found that textbook being evaluated has including diversity awareness, anti-violence, although it is found that there is one picture that may promote violence. However, the textbook has not sufficiently facilitated the development of vocational skills since the materials are more based on General English instead of English for Specific Purposes.

**Keywords:** Textbook Evaluation, Learning Material, Vocational, Character Building

## 1. Introduction

On 9 September 2016, President of Indonesia instructed to all the responsible stakeholders to start conducting a program called Vocational School Revitalization. The program includes improvement of the national curriculum for vocational school and all the instructional tools to meet the industrial demand and to enhance the quality of the graduates professionally. Regarding the instruction, the Ministry of Education and Culture (or in Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan/Kemendikbud) (2017) designed the plan in implementing the program, which included the program in improving students' English proficiency since competitive English

proficiency has become an essential job demand. Thus, it is expected that the curriculum and the instructional design and tools facilitating the learning of related vocational skills.

To improve the quality of vocational education and the quality of the graduates, maintaining the quality of the textbook is significant to be done. According to Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional (Permendiknas) Republik Indonesia Nomor 2 Tahun 2008 (an official rule which regulates about textbook for Indonesian formal education), the textbook is at a vital position since it is stated as the compulsory sources in all grade of formal education. According to Tomlinson (1998), one of the crucial standard to be fulfilled by a textbook is it has to be in line with the curriculum, syllabus or any instructional planning which becomes the basis of the learning process.

Indonesia has more than 300 ethnic groups, or in exact number, there are 1340 ethnics spreading all over the islands. Regarding this diversity, it is important to build awareness to students as the younger generation of the nation, through formal and informal education. This awareness is important in order to build tolerance among others and also anti-violence habit. As the textbook plays an important role in Indonesian education, this action on building diversity awareness could be assisted through the inclusion in the textbook. Actually, Evaluative studies to language textbook in Indonesia had been conducted. Asri (2017), Firdaus, dkk. (2014), Pujiastuti (2013), and Anam (2014) conducted evaluative studies to examine the quality of Indonesian language textbook for elementary, junior high and senior high school, while Nurdeani (2014) conducted an evaluative study towards English textbook for elementary school. However, none of the study considering on English textbook for vocational school, and none of them consider their evaluation on the diversity awareness, anti-violence, and vocational skill inclusion.

Considering the urgency and novelty, evaluative study to examine how the English textbook has the inclusion of diversity awareness, anti-violence, and vocational skills is significant to be conducted. This study focused on analyzing the content of English textbook for grade X in vocational high school, especially on how it is including diversity awareness, anti-violence, and vocational skills in its content, which is published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. Evaluation of other books and other grades is suggested to be conducted as further prospective research.

## 2. Method

This study was descriptive, evaluative research. According to Sudaryono (2017) descriptive research is aimed at describing condition or phenomenon as what it is, while Irina (2017) stated that descriptive research focuses on fact-finding and not only describes it but also analyse it deeply. Sudaryono (2017) also stated that evaluative research is functioned as an assessment of the benefits and quality of products or result of the process. In accordance, Nunan (1992) defined evaluative research as a systematic process to examine the achievement of an objective. Thus, evaluative research will not only obtain information but also analyse it as a basis of the decision-making process. The below table is presenting the identity of the textbook being evaluated:

Table 1. Identity of Evaluated Textbook

<b>Title</b>	<i>Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X</i>
<b>Author(s)</b>	Utami Widiati, Zuliati Rohmah, and Furaidah
<b>Publisher</b>	<i>Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan</i> (Ministry of Education and Culture)
<b>Publishing Year</b>	2017
<b>Number of Pages</b>	i-viii; 1-224
<b>Number of Chapters</b>	15 Chapters

### 3. Results and Discussion

In language learning and acquisition, Muñoz (2007) stated that there are four aspects in psycholinguistics that bring impacts, such as cognitive development, language intelligence, learning style, and affective, character, and social factors. Each of the factors is explained as below.

a) Cognitive Development

Muñoz (2007) stated that the theory raised by Piaget and Neo-Piagetian categorizes human intellectual development into chronological phases. In general, the phases are explained as (1) the first phase that shows the children development situation in the age of 18 months until 4 years, which is called as "concrete operations" which is to understand concrete things, then (2) the phase in the age of 4 years old to 7 years old, which focuses on development of intuitive thinking, (3) at age of 7 to 12 years old the development is marked by the ability to operate something concrete like combining, sorting, re-arrange and reconstruct, and (4) phase after the age of 12 years old that is marked by the ability to think abstract things, like interpreting implicit meaning, thinking logically, drawing conclusion, formulating reason, and realizing consequences of any acts.

Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that the difference between the intellectual development of children and adult is on the ability to solve a complex problem which is not only involving concrete factor but also abstract things which have to be interpreted. Older language learners have a better ability to solve the problem than the younger ones. This is because their biological maturity and experiences which enrich their knowledge.

b) Language Intelligence

Younger language learners use their memory rather than their analytical ability. Thus, the language learners who are below 12 years old tend to observe visual things and remember them by memorizing. This is in contrast to what adult language learner does. The adults tend to chunk the information they receive, analyse it then keep it in their memory (Muñoz, 2007). It can be concluded that (1) adult learner tend to learn through their analysis ability, (2) Adult learner tend to learn consciously while the younger ones learn unconsciously (acquire).

c) Learning Style

According to Muñoz (2007), most young language learners have a kinaesthetic learning style as their dominant style. Learners with kinaesthetic learning style like to learn by associating the material being learned to the verbal stimulus to move their body. This body movement could be in the form of practicing, touching an object, or playing games. For the reason, young language learners learn through (1) repetition, (2) organization (grouping concepts into several categories), (3) elaboration (associating concept to visual media or story). Along with the time going, learning style tends to change into visual or auditory.

d) Affective, Character and Social Factor

Muñoz (2007) explained that affective, character and social factors that are most influencing is self-confidence. Other than impacted by mental maturity, self-confidence is also impacted by the social environment. Learners who are less than eight years old tend not to understand yet the effect of other people judgment toward their self-evaluation. However, significant change happens in the range of age 11 to 17 years old, in line with the puberty phase. At this phase, self-confidence is much affected by other people's judgement. Comments of others will significantly affect the self-confidence of the learners. While when they have become adults, their confidence will be instability, but the self-evaluation that they had been drawn in the puberty phase will significantly shape their confidence level.

Another affective aspect that significantly impacts language learning is motivation. The thing that enhances the motivation of young and adult learners is very different. Young language learners are motivated by the learning process that they enjoy. This motivation is related to the learning activity

being offered, interesting media, and teacher's characteristics. In contrast, adult language learners' motivation is impacted by their understanding of the urgency of the learning process. Thus, in order to enhance adult learners' motivation, it is needed to ensure the learners understand explicitly the benefit of the learning process to their selves, practical value of the learning objectives and how the learning can boost their daily communicative skill and also professional language skill.

The evaluated textbook is for vocational high school students at grade X, who are considered at the age of 14 to 16. As stated by Muñoz (2007), these students adult language learner who has characteristics as mentioned below:

- a) Having the capacity to learn the use of more abstract and complex language;
- b) Being able to learn through activities that encourage logical reasoning;
- c) Learning through analysis and comprehension;
- d) Learning consciously;
- e) Having a visual and auditory learning style;
- f) Having unstable self-confidence because they are much impacted by judgment from other people;
- g) Having motivation that is influenced by the understanding of the urgency of their learning to their own communication and professional skill.

Based on the above characteristics, a textbook that suitable for their cognitive and socio-emotional development at the age of 14 to 16 have to have these following characters:

- a) Able to facilitate cognitive development which aligns to the level of being able to communicate in more abstract and complex language;
- b) Able to facilitate the learning with activities that encourage logical reasoning;
- c) Able to encourage the development of analytical and comprehension ability;
- d) Able to give direction on how the material could help them to achieve related learning objectives and skill, as students learn consciously. This will enhance their learning motivation because the students will understand the urgency of their learning;
- e) Able to facilitate all learning styles students have;
- f) Able to use instruction that can enhance students' unstable self-confidence.

As a result of the analysis, the evaluated textbook has been facilitating cognitive development, which includes facilitating students to learn the use of more complex and abstract language and to learn through logical reasoning. It is reflected by the learning activities being presented in the textbook. For example, on page 111, there is an activity of answering comprehension questions based on the text entitled "Meeting My Idol." In the activity, students are asked to answer some questions which direct them to the use of abstract language to describe feelings (for example in question "How did the writer feel when she knew that Afgan was coming to town?" and "How did the writer feel when she finally got the turn to get Afgan's signature?"), and to describe thought (for example in question "Why do you think people like Afgan?"). The use of complex language is shown in sentence construction in the example of reading activities. For example, on page 146 in a text entitled "Cut Nyak Dien" there is a sentence "In 1875, Cut Nyak Dhien and her baby, along with other mothers, were evacuated to a safer location while her husband Ibrahim Lamnga fought to reclaim VI mukim." Other example of the use of complex sentence is on page 59: "At a moonlit night when the full moon rays reflect back from the white marble and give the Taj Mahal a tinge of blue color."

Example of the learning activity that encourages the use of logical reasoning and enhance students analytical and comprehension ability is found in Chapter 9. In Task 2 (page 124), there are questions and instruction: "What caused the battle? Draw a diagram that shows chronologically the events that led to the battle" and "Indonesia had gone through many battles. Why do you think the date of the Battle of Surabaya is used as a momentum to commemorate our hero's contribution?". These questions encourage students to find and conclude the answer based on their understanding of the content of the text. Furthermore, the information that will be the answer is stated implicitly in the text, which can be an encouragement to students to develop logical reasoning and analytical ability.

The theory stated by Muñoz (2007) is in accordance to the standard of the English textbook ruled by Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (Indonesia's National Education Standardization Body) (2011), that stated that an English textbook has to motivate the students to do what it is important to develop life skills. What it means by life skills are:

- a) Personal skill, which includes acknowledging strengths and weaknesses of self and others, and developing self to be independent, social, and religious;
- b) Social skill, which includes being able to cooperate, tolerate, respect gender equity, solve problems, and take the decision;
- c) Academic skill, which includes digging and using information, solving problems, and taking a decision in scientific activity;
- d) Vocational skill, which includes having the ability, attitude, and competency which are needed to do a certain professional job.

Moreover, a textbook has to presented materials that may encourage the students to have sufficient diversity awareness (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan/ BNSP, 2011). It means that the activities presented in the textbook have to be able to motivate students to do something to develop the attitude showing respect and tolerance on diversity. Things that could reflect the development of diversity awareness, according to BNSP (2011) are:

- a) Appreciation of diverse culture and differences in the community, which includes various cultural value and local genius;
- b) Consciousness on local potentials in order to promote them locally, nationally and globally;
- c) Appreciate democratic values which is appropriate to surrounding socio-cultural context;
- d) Understanding national insights to develop a sense of nationalism;

According to the result of the study, the development of personal, social, and academic skills have been facilitated in the learning activities presented in the textbook. Self-assisted activities which are stressing on student-centered learning is a form of personal and academic skill development, while social skill is developed through group assignments which encourage students to develop their cooperating skill and tolerance to others. However, it is found one picture which is considered as not in-line in promoting anti-violence attitude. The mentioned picture is an illustration for Hangman game activity, which shows a doodle of hanging person's body (see Figure 1). Although it might be understood that the use of the picture is not intended to promote suicidal or sadistic attitude, it is recommended to provide another game activity with minimum risk of misinterpretation and misleading.

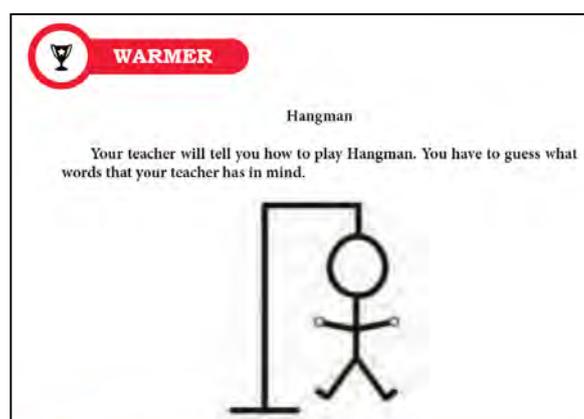


Figure 1. Illustration of Hangman Game Activity  
(Textbook Chapter 10 page 133)

Diversity awareness development is facilitated by the textbook by providing an example of texts in which are told the story of national independence heroes and story of other people who may become models of nationalism and patriotism. Moreover, the textbook also provides descriptive text examples which explain the beauty of Indonesia's nature. This kind of texts is also useful in developing the feeling of proud to be Indonesians who

have a wealthy nation. Diversity awareness is also developed through the use of situational context within activities. For example, in a writing activity, the given situational context is "Your friend got an opportunity to be an interpreter in an international conference on inter-religion dialogue to create and preserve peace and harmony" (see Figure 2). This context shows the importance of peace and harmony among religions. Furthermore, diversity awareness is also developed through the use of picture illustration (see Figure 3). The picture illustration shows the diversity in the form of difference in physical characteristic, and people with the difference are living in peace and harmony.

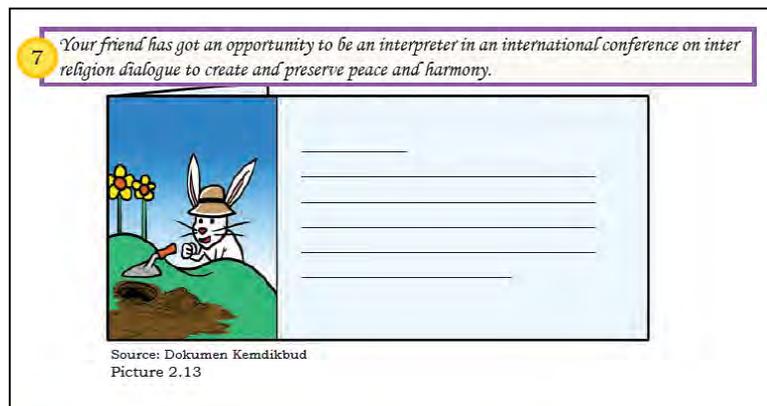


Figure 2. Example Situational Context in an Activity Which Shows Peace and Harmony among Religions (Textbook Chapter 2 Page 32)

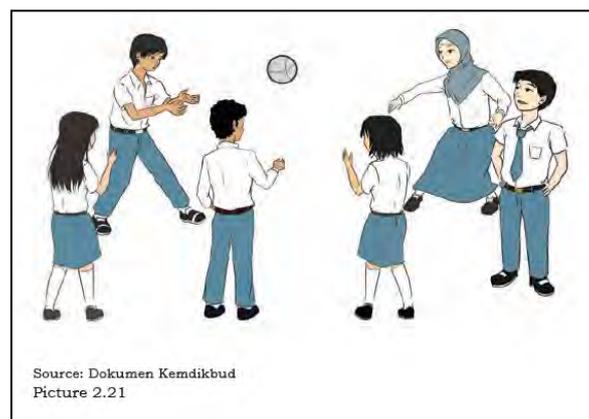


Figure 3. Picture Illustration That Shows Unity in Diversity (Textbook Chapter 2, Page 36)

A serious problem that is found in the evaluated textbook is there is not enough learning material and activities that facilitate the development of related vocational skills. The importance of vocationally related content is stated by Muñoz (2007), and especially for Indonesia, it ruled by BSNP (2011). As stated by Muñoz (2007) in previous explanation, the motivation of adult learner is influenced by the understanding that what is learned is urgent and important in order to be able to communicate and to do the desired professional job. In accordance to that theory, because students learn in the situation that they are conscious too, it is needed to make them to explicitly understand the objectives of the learning process and the competence they will achieve after the learning process has been done. This will increase the learning motivation because the students understand the urgency of their learning and how the learning will impact their communication and professional competence. The students of vocational high school have had more specific interest and career goal, if we compare to students of general high school. Thus the English they need to learn is more towards the English, which more specified according to the career goal, or English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

It is found that the evaluated textbook has not facilitated ESP learning sufficiently. There is no activity which presents specific term related to specific job demand. The textbook is more like a textbook for general English,

which is more suitable to be used by students of general high school than students of vocational high school. Some examples of descriptive texts which are about description of tourism destination are suitable for tourism vocational high school students, but more than that there are no more materials which are suitable for ESP learning.

#### 4. Conclusion

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that:

- a) The evaluated textbook has been facilitating cognitive development, which includes facilitating students to learn the use of more complex and abstract language and to learn through logical reasoning. It is reflected by the learning activities being presented in the textbook.
- b) The development of personal, social, and academic skills have been facilitated in the learning activities presented in the textbook. However, it is found one picture which is considered as not in-line in promoting anti-violence attitude. It is recommended to provide another game activity with minimum risk of misinterpretation and misleading.
- c) Diversity awareness development is facilitated by the textbook by providing an example of texts in which are told the story of national independence heroes and story of other people who may become models of nationalism and patriotism. Moreover, the textbook also provides descriptive text examples which explain the beauty of Indonesia's nature. This kind of texts is also useful in developing the feeling of proud to be Indonesians who have a wealthy nation. Diversity awareness is also developed through the use of situational context within activities and the use of picture illustration.
- d) A serious problem that is found in the evaluated textbook is there is not enough learning material and activities that facilitate the development of related vocational skills. It is found that the evaluated textbook has not facilitated ESP learning sufficiently. There is no activity which presents specific term related to specific job demand. The textbook is more like a textbook for general English, which is more suitable to be used by students of general high school than students of vocational high school. Some of the examples of descriptive texts which are about description of tourism destination a material are suitable for tourism vocational high school students, but more than that there are no more materials which are suitable for ESP learning.

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