



# An Analysis of Reading Literacy Materials in English Textbooks for Students in Phase E

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## ABSTRACT

PISA results have contributed to curriculum changes in Indonesia. That a new curriculum known as Merdeka curriculum was introduced, education stakeholders developed materials that support the curriculum implementation, including new textbooks. Hence, this study aims at investigating and comparing reading processes and types of activities that contribute to facilitate reading literacy found in English textbooks for tenth graders. Accordingly, a descriptive research was undertaken. The data were sourced from two textbooks compiled based on the Merdeka curriculum. In total, 16 materials related to reading and literacy were collected. The findings show that between the two textbooks, the one provided by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology is more supportive of developing reading literacy in terms of reading activities. The activities found in the textbook are various and require high level of cognitive and metacognitive processes in reading. Moreover, some of the lesson was also equipped with extensive reading activities to the web. Yet, activities related to learning novel vocabulary should be carried out before coming to reading texts, so that the students can read fluently from the beginning. Another textbook, on the other hand, has limited types of reading activities in one lesson and they were repetitive in other lessons. In addition, higher levels cognitive and metacognitive of reading processes were missing. The activities tend to focus only on locating and understanding the information in the texts. Further, the textbooks were not equipped with content materials that facilitate them to acquire knowledge about reading demands of a situation and reading strategies. Thus, it is suggested that teachers need to either use the national textbook or provide their students with other meaningful and useful activities and with supplementary materials that heighten their awareness of reading demands and reading strategies.

**Keywords:** *Instructional material, Textbook, Reading Literacy, English language teaching*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is the key of acquiring written knowledge. By reading, students can be literate in any subject such as mathematics, science, digital, etc. Thus, before having other literacies, the students need to have reading literacy first. However in Indonesia, not only the reading interest of students is lacking, but their reading literacy is also low. Based on the result of PISA (2000 - 2018), an international evaluation for 15-years-old students (generally the first graders of senior high school in Indonesia) measuring literacy that has been taken by Indonesia every once three years, Indonesia could only score under the minimum competency level. It shows that the student representatives had not been literate enough in reading. Hence, Indonesia should evaluate the current education system, especially in high schools; which part of the system has not been preparing the learners to face such challenges.

According to some studies on general factors of why Indonesian students did not perform well in the PISA. One of reasons contributing to this issue is that the teaching and learning was not qualified yet [1]. Besides, the characteristics of school and the learning method that was implemented at school is the root cause of student failure to get good learning results in the PISA [2]. Thus, the curriculum and the learning environment as well as the learning climate, including the school infrastructure and the teachers, were factors of the low score of PISA Indonesia.

With regard to the students' low level of reading literacy, the students found it difficult to comprehend English reading texts due to several problems that came from the student self, the teacher, and external matter. The students' problem was that their basic ability of English such as to understand vocabulary in context, identify main ideas, make inferences and references, and to find detailed information, that they did not find

English subject interesting and demotivation. The problems from the teacher are with regard to providing insufficient preparation in teaching reading, using inappropriate methods while teaching, and the absence of extensive reading activities and reading strategy. Also, based on the researcher's experience, the learning reading activities tends to be undertaken by immediately practicing of reading texts without any preparation, such as introduction to reading strategies that may be used to certain texts before reading the texts. So that, the students will try to understand the texts by translating texts sentence by sentence based the vocabularies they have. This activity is then followed by several questions to answer. Next, the external problems are learning material and environment. Furthermore, the students were new to such types of question that they did not find it at school [6]. In sum, not only did the curriculum and learning environment contribute to this issue but teaching materials, teaching activities, and assessments as well.

In terms of curriculum, the Ministry of Education Culture Research and Technology identified that the curriculum 2013 had some shortcomings. As a step to mobilize in favor of the changes required, actually a new curriculum called *the Merdeka* curriculum has launched. This new curriculum will give freedom to teachers to teach subjects according to the learners' characteristics and to focus on teaching essential materials, so that they will have more time to facilitate learners to gain requisite basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy. In addition, it will let the teachers to develop their own teaching instruments according to the learners' needs by using holistic and flexible approach. Besides, the teachers will be encouraged by digital resources as references for implementing teaching autonomously. Nevertheless, the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum is still optional; the schools are free to choose either to keep using the 2013 curriculum, the simplified 2013 curriculum (the *Darurat* curriculum) or to shift to the new one when they are ready. Currently, there are about 2500 driving schools in Indonesia have implemented the *Merdeka* curriculum.

### 1.1. Textbook

Textbook is one of the preferred forms of instructional materials used in teaching and learning. It loads content materials, teaching and learning activities, some exercises, and resources.

In order to fulfil the need for quality, cheap, and equitable educational books and support the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum, the Ministry of Education Culture Research and Technology provide English textbook for both teachers and students grade 10, namely Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress for SMA/MA/SMK Grade X. Other publishers also published textbooks according to the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* (freedom to learn), such as Bahasa Inggris for SMA-MA/SMK-MAK Grade X by Yrama

Widya, Pathway to English for SMA/MA Grade X (Phase E), etc.

Among textbooks, teachers should be selective in using materials. There are some aspects to be concerned, including types of textbook. Textbooks are classified into two in the basis of production; they are printed and digital textbooks. In terms of printed textbooks, issues about subject matter content, social content, instructional design, readability, and production quality should be considered [7]. On the other hand, aspects such as content, interface, interactivity, technology, and practicality become concern of digital textbook [8].

### 1.2. Reading Literacy

Literacy gains more attention in language teaching these days As a result of the fast growth of information and communication technology (ICT), different types of text emerge. Digital reader-text interaction are preferred since it can be altered, transmitted, retrieved, and referenced to more readily than printed texts. In order to deal well with the changing text media, literacy skills must be possessed by students in this age. It has changed the way people acquire and use information recent years as definitely as the way the term literacy is defined.

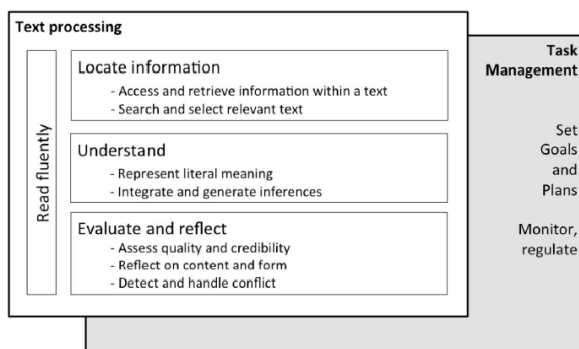
According to The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [9], literacy is specifically refers to "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts". There used to be only two kinds of text before, namely, hand-written and printed texts, but now digital texts have come to appear and been massively used in this digital age. Moreover, the requisite abilities dealing with the conventional texts are limited to the level in which the texts are only used passively. On the other hand, the digital texts enable users to go beyond the conventional ones. It is reflected on redefinitions of literacy. UNESCO [10] states that these days, literacy is more than text-dealing ability but a must-have effort to combat in this digital world.

Reading literacy precedes any other types of literacies. In other words, the most fundamental literacy is reading literacy. According to OECD [11], reading literacy represents someone's ability in reading texts through higher-level cognitive and metacognitive processes and using the information obtained from the reading to secure his/her necessities of life dealing with text. It can be inferred that having reading literacy can help someone be goal-oriented, knowledgeable and capable, as well as sociable person; so that they can participate well in the society for their own good and that of others.

### 1.3. Reading Processes

In PISA reading literacy assessment, two broad categories of reading processes are required, namely text processing and task management. When processing the texts, the readers are introduced to reading fluently

that enables someone to read words and texts without hesitation and after finishing reading, s/he can tell the overall meaning of the text that s/he got from the reading. Someone with fluency in reading indicates that s/he has passed the basic level of reading skills. Therefore, reading fluently needs to be trained to the students in order to make their comprehension skills improved.



**Figure 1.** PISA Reading Processes (OECD, 2019, figure 2.2)

Some reading purposes foster reading fluency are to locate specific information of text, to understand text, and to evaluate and reflect the text. To uncover specific information of the text, the readers need two processes. First, they can access and retrieve information within the text. Hence, they should understand what information is to find, know the text organizers, and be able to assess the connection of text. Sometimes, they are also required to skim through a series of paragraphs and scan a single piece of text. Second, the readers can find specific information across texts by searching for and selecting relevant text(s). Thus, the knowledge of text attributes such as header, source and links is on demand.

In addition, the readers need to represent the literal meaning of texts so that they can understand the texts being read. Besides, they should construct an integrated text by making inferences to find the main idea, making summary, or by titling the passage. Furthermore, to evaluate and reflect the texts, the readers need to check the quality and credibility of the texts. A qualified and credible text contains valid, up-to-date, accurate or unbiased information, written by qualified and credible author(s). Next, the readers can reflect on the content and form of texts, whether the two successfully convey the author's purposes and point of view. Also, the readers can evaluate and reflect the texts by detecting and handling conflict. If a text appears to contradict the others, the readers have to be conscious of the conflict and solve it.

Another requisite category of reading processes in the PISA reading domain is task management processes. Because of time issue, the students are required to be aware of what they will get from their reading and use strategies to accomplish reading tasks based on their own interests and initiative. Hence, they will not be in a hurry or feel running out of time when doing the tasks. In other words, these processes represent a different metacognitive level of processing that support the readers processing the text well.

## 2. METHOD

The purpose of this study is was to analyze and compare reading literacy activities found in two English textbooks that are compiled according to the *Merdeka* curriculum. Therefore, this research used descriptive quantitative approach to describe and compare types of activities contributing to build reading literacy and text processes involved in the reading activities. By using content analysis, all activities found in the textbooks were identified in terms of types of activities and reading processes. To compare them, the frequency and percentage of each aspects were calculated.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The source of data in this research was two textbooks that were structured based on the new curriculum. Textbook 1 has 6 lessons with 28 activities related to reading literacy. Meanwhile, 48 relevant activities were found in Textbook 2 with 10 lessons.

### 3.1. Types of reading activities

The first textbook presents many types of activities for reading (see Table 1). It always starts pre-reading activity through questioning, watching a related video, or previewing a set of relevant pictures for discussion or brainstorming to make connection between previous knowledge and text to be read. Whilst reading, another activity was also undertaken, such as annotation. After reading, a set of tasks in the form of answering questions in types of multiple-choice, essay, and true-false; filling the blanks; matching items; completing the tables; guessing the main ideas of each paragraph or meanings of novel words; and writing things being learned from the texts.

This is in line with the findings of a research on the same topic to a textbook for junior high school [12] that activities such as questioning and skimming/scanning main ideas were easily found in the textbook. Differently, the activities such as identifying word meaning and brainstorming were hardly found in it. However, it is requisite to identify the meaning words when it comes to comprehending a text [13-15]. Additionally, brainstorming is proven to be effective in improving reading comprehension [16-19].

**Table 1.** Types of Reading Activities of Textbook 1 and Textbook 2

Lesson	Textbook 1	Textbook 2
Pre-reading	Previewing the topic Pre-questions Watching a short relevant video and telling their opinion about the video	Pre-questions
Whilst-reading	Annotation	Highlighting novel words Underlining specific terms
After-reading	Answering the questions through group discussion Completing the table of comparing 2 expository texts Discussing how the ideas of the texts were structured to achieve their goals Matching the main ideas with information in each paragraph Comparing the stories Analyzing the similarities and differences of the two stories Writing things being learned from the text Guessing meaning of selected words Collecting novel vocabulary Pair discussion about guessing the main idea of text through image Arrange the paragraphs Reflecting the texts through discussion Answering true-false questions Filling in a gap in each incomplete sentence Group work discussion Answering questions	Completing chart or table Making an info graphic Describing implied meaning Matching items Finding relevant information Checking the credibility of the statements Answering multiple-choice questions Sharing the lessons being learned from the topic Analyzing contents, generic structures of the text Filling in gaps in an incomplete note with words from the text Giving examples of text with fake information Finding texts Evaluating texts whether they serve a purpose and have been delivered to the readers accurately

Generally, the second textbook (see Table 1) provided types of activities in the order of reading a text, understanding the text, answering related questions to check comprehension. To understand the text, activities like highlighting or underlining novel words and completing charts or tables were carried out. Unfortunately, the activities were not various indicated from the repetitions happen to each lesson.

### 3.2. Reading processes involved in the activities

In answering PISA reading questions, there are two categories of process involved in reading, namely cognitive and metacognitive processes.

#### 3.2.1. Cognitive processes

Based on the textbook analysis (see Table 2), the reading activities found in Textbook 1 required all cognitive processes, in which reflecting on content and form was frequently used the most, followed by the

process of integrating and generating inferences. Meanwhile, the textbook loaded the fewest process of detecting and handling conflict.

This finding is quite similar with the findings of a research that analyzed the reading activities in an English textbook for grade junior high school by using Bloom's revised taxonomy [20]. It was found that the remembering activities were delivered in the textbook for 16%, meanwhile in this research it was 19%. In addition, they also found understanding activities were less than the remembering activities with the percentage 14% but in this research it was frequently offered activities with the percentage 33%. Further, the evaluating activities were the least in the junior high school textbook with the delivery 4%, yet in this research the first senior high school textbook was dominated by evaluating activities with the delivery 48%.

**Table 2.** Percentage of Cognitive Process Involved in Reading Activities of Textbook 1

Lesson	Cognitive Processes (%)						
	Access and retrieve	Search and Select	Represent literal meaning	Integrate and Generate inferences	Assess Quality and credibility	Reflect on Content and Form	Detect and handle conflict
1	11,11		11,11	44,44	11,11	22,22	
2			33,33	33,33		33,33	
3		28,57				71,43	
4			16,67	50	16,67	16,67	
5	10	10	10	10	20	30	10
6	37,5	12,5		12,5	25	12,5	
Total	9,52	9,52	9,52	23,81	14,29	30,95	2,38

Table 3 below illustrates cognitive process involved in reading activities found in Textbook 2. From the analysis, the data revealed that processes for locating information and understanding texts became majority. This is in line with the findings of a research

in the same topic [20]. On the other hand, the processes for evaluating and reflecting texts cannot be found in every lesson.

**Table 3.** Percentage of Cognitive Process Involved in Reading Activities of Textbook 2

Lesson	Cognitive Processes (%)						
	Access and retrieve	Search and Select	Represent literal meaning	Integrate and Generate inferences	Assess Quality and credibility	Reflect on Content and Form	Detect and handle conflict
1	20	10	10	50		10	
2	12,5	12,5	12,5	50		12,5	
3	6,67	13,33	6,67	33,33	26,67		13,33
4	30		30	30		10	
5	23,1	23,1	30,7	23,1			
6	28,58	21,43	7,14	28,58	7,14	7,14	
7	46,67	16,67	3,33	26,67		6,67	
8	40	10	5	30		5	
9	41,18	11,77	11,77	29,41	5,89		
10	16,67	22,22	5,55	3,89		16,67	
Total	30,07	15,03	10,46	32,68	3,92	6,54	1,31

**3.2.2. Metacognitive processes**

Table 4 revealed that Textbook 1 facilitates the students with metacognitive process that enable them to manage the reading tasks in the activities effectively but Textbook 2 does not. Textbook 1 was equipped with

content materials that gives the students opportunity to regulate their reading process. From the contents, they learn how to read effectively by using reading strategies and heightening awareness of reading purposes.

**Table 4.** Types of Metacognitive Processes in Reading Activities of Textbook 1 and Textbook 2

Metacognitive Process	Textbook 1	Textbook 2
Reading Demands	Previewing relevant pictures and connecting them to a story Watching a video and discuss it Pre-questions	Pre-questions
Reading Strategies	Teaching strategy for guessing meaning Guessing meaning of selected words or novel	

	vocabulary Teaching strategy for making inferences Learning how to annotate essential information Annotating Learning how to read two texts and make annotation Pair discussion about guessing the main idea of text through image Learning ways to identify text structure together	
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#### 4. CONCLUSION

Instructional design, which is reflected on the activities, becomes one of the essential components of a textbook that should be paid attention to. The first textbook was good in many points, still it lacks of development of reading fluency. In order to make the students fluent in reading, they at first should have known the meaning of key words used in the text they are going to read. Hence, it is suggested to add an activity (as another pre-reading activity) for building reading fluency by listing key words of the texts, right before reading. The second textbook needs more revisions since it does not require some higher order of cognitive reading process and lacks of metacognitive processes. Thus, it is suggested to use supplementary materials to cover the lacks.

It can be inferred from the findings that before deciding to use any materials, analysis of every aspects is requisite.

#### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: study conception and design; data collection; and analysis and interpretation of results: Muflihatuz Zakiyah; draft manuscript preparation: Muflihatuz Zakiyah, Yuli Tiarina. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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