PROPORION OF LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK ENGLISH ON SKY 1

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ABSTRACT: The study analyzes the proportion of language skills in an English textbook using qualitative evaluative design. A checklist was used to collect the data which were then presented in percentages. The result shows that the textbook focuses more on writing skills in its activities (29%). Speaking (26%) and listening (25%) are also given high portion. Reading has the lowest proportion on 20% in this textbook. The result of the evaluation shows that the textbook is suitable for seventh graders because the author made the textbook based on a government standard that requires students to reach the functional level of literacy.

Keywords: proportion of language skills, English textbook, textbook evaluation

The existence of textbooks is an important point and cannot be separated from teaching and learning process. Most teachers use textbook in teaching and learning process as a guide for teachers to explain the materials inside the textbooks. In teaching and learning process, textbooks have an important role to provide a framework of teaching and learning, syllabus, and task. Teachers may need more than one textbook in teaching and learning process. Teachers should be selective in choosing the appropriate textbooks for their class. To know whether the textbooks are appropriate or not, textbook evaluation should be done.

To know whether the textbooks that we use are appropriate or not, we need an in-depth evaluation. In his book, Choosing your Coursebook, Cunningsworth highlights the importance of checking whether or not there is a suitable balance between the language skills in textbook (1995). Evaluation of textbooks is also considered to function as a kind of educational judgment. The judgment will determine the quality of the textbooks.

“Evaluation is a matter of judging the fitness of something for particular purposes.” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Evaluation will enable teachers to determine whether the language learning textbooks they use or plan to use fit their learners needs and interests or not. Textbook evaluation is important to be conducted because not only that textbook can make learning easier and more enjoyable, but they can also potentially make students lose interest to learning due to the dull and uninspiring material Cunningsworth (1995).
The focus of the study is on evaluating the proportion of language skills in the English textbook English on Sky 1. The result of this research can determine whether the textbook presents balanced materials or not. The language skills that are evaluated by the researcher in this study are listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The study is intended as a reference for the teacher regarding an evaluation of a textbook entitled English on Sky 1. The reference hopefully can be useful for the teacher who use this textbook, so they can identify the language in each activity in English textbook English on Sky 1.

METHOD

This study is using the qualitative evaluative research method in evaluating a textbook, which is focused on the proportion of language skills through its activities in English textbook English on Sky 1. The analysis of language skills is intended to gain information whether or not the proportion of language skills in English textbook entitled English on Sky 1 meet the suitable balance.

The subject of the study is an English textbook entitled English on Sky 1 for VII graders. This book is written by Mukarto, et al. and published by Erlangga. It was first published in 2007. There are seven units in this book. Unit 1 A New School Year as the topic, Unit 2 Going to School, Unit 3 Around the School, Unit 4 Around me, Unit 5 A Big Clean School, Unit 6 My Favorite Star, and the last Unit 7 Cut the Paper, Please. Every unit in this textbook is divided into two main parts, Let’s listen and talk and Let’s read and write. Every main part has four different parts, those are let’s build the field, let’s learn the model, let’s learn to construct texts, and let’s construct texts.

The data are taken from English on Sky 1 for VII grader. The data cover the presentation of language skills in the textbook. Those skills are (1) listening, (2) speaking, (3) reading, and (4) writing. The data collected by the researcher are in the form of quantitative data collected from a checklist and analyzed using content analysis procedures.

In this study, the researcher uses a checklist as the instrument of data collection. The researcher developed the checklist by himself based on the activities in the textbook. The researcher takes activities from the smallest part of the textbook and puts them in the checklist. Checklist also contains four English skills in purpose to analyze every activity. The checklist displays information of the proportion of the four language skills in every unit.
The steps in collecting the quantitative data are as follows. First, the researcher developed the checklist by himself based on the activities in the textbook. Second, a thorough examination of the textbook was conducted. The researcher determines the kinds of English skills presented in each activity. Every activity may represent more than one skill. The examination started from general impression to specific impression based on the criteria in the checklist.

Third, the data were analyzed. In conducting the analysis, the researcher calculated the total of each skill from the activities in every unit and their percentages. Scores were then given for every skill in every unit, and then gave a final score for every skill from all units.

The first score is based on the total of each skill from the activities in every unit. The formula to obtain the score is as follows:

\[
\frac{\text{total score of every skill in every unit}}{\text{total score of all skills in every unit}} \times 100
\]

The second score represents the final score of the language skills based on the total of each skill in whole textbook. The formula to obtain the score is as follows:

\[
\frac{\text{total score of every skill in whole book}}{\text{total score of all skills in whole book}} \times 100
\]

The final scores are in form of percentages and the researcher gives comments to evaluate the textbook. Finally, a teacher who has used the textbook checks the overall results. The purpose of this step is to make the result of the study more objective. In a case of making the result more objective, the researcher will never change his own result with teacher’s result when they have different result. The teacher who checked the result of study is Hj. Hariati Tinuk M.Pd. She is an English teacher in SMPN 8 Malang. The researcher chooses her to verify the result of the study because she has taught English for several years and has used several textbooks, including *English on Sky 1*.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Findings

The result of textbook evaluation in terms of the presentation of English skills in English textbook *English on Sky 1* shows that writing skill has been given the highest proportion, as showed in Figure 1.
From the Figure 1, we can see that writing skill has the highest proportion of 29%, speaking 26%, listening 25%, and reading 20%. Most of the activities that represent the writing skill are integrated with other skills. For example, after the students listen to some dialogues, they should make a dialogue and practice it with their friends. Reading skill has the lowest percentage in this textbook. Most of the activities that represent reading skill are put in the last part in every unit. There are only a few reading activities and they are often integrated with listening or speaking skill and writing skill.

Each unit in this textbook shows different proportion for each skill. The detail of the proportion of language skill in each unit is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Proportion of Language Skills in Each Unit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit No.</th>
<th>Unit Title</th>
<th>% of English Language Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A New School Year</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Going to School</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Around the School</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Around Me</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>My Big Clean School</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>My Favorite Star</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cut the Paper, Please</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Unit 1, speaking skill has the highest proportion of 34%, followed by listening 30%, writing 25%, and reading 11%. The first part of this unit, *Let’s listen and talk*, has 17 activities. Most of the activities in this unit are presenting listening, speaking, and writing skills. From the proportion of English skills in Unit 1, it shows that this unit concerns more with listening and speaking skills. The activities in Unit 1 can improve students’ self-
confidence, because most of the activities focus on speaking skills.

Unit 2, *Going to School*, is not too different from Unit 1. Listening and speaking activities are given big portions. What makes Unit 2 different from Unit 1 is the proportion of writing skill. In Unit 2, it has the highest proportion of 31%. Listening and speaking have same proportion of 27%. Reading skill still has the lowest proportion of 15% in this unit. Most of activities in this unit integrate writing, listening, and speaking activities. This unit includes many pictures to make it easier for the students when doing the activities.

Unit 3, *Around the School*, presents listening and speaking activities with the same proportions. Listening and speaking are given 29% in this unit. Followed by writing 26% and the last still reading 16%. Listening and speaking activities have the highest percentage for the purpose of improving students’ self-confidence, because most of the activities are done as pair work or group work. In this unit, students are introduced to a new type of writing activity, which is rearranging jumbled words. In doing this activity, students can learn the pattern of sentences.

Unit 4, *Around Me*, gives writing skill the highest proportion of 35%. Reading skill has 28% and followed by listening 20% and speaking 17%. This unit introduces the topic of family and jobs to the students. From the result, this unit concerns with improving students writing skills. Different from writing activities in Unit 1 which ask students to make based on a variety of situations, the writing activities in this unit provide picture to help students in creating some conversations. There are more reading activities of reading skill in this unit than those in previous units. Moreover, this unit introduces four different types of functional texts such as personal letters, postcard, e-mails, and shopping lists.

Reading skill also has the lowest portion in Unit 5 with the proportion of 17%. The highest portion of 31% is given to speaking skill. Listening and writing skill have the same portion of 26%. This unit aims to introduce more types of conversation to students. Besides making conversations, students are also asked to describe something in the form of a descriptive text. Before making a descriptive text, in the students are introduced to some conversations, in which some objects are described.

Unit 6, *My Favorite Star*, presents the four skills differently from those in the previous units. In this unit, the four English skills are presented almost equally. Writing skill 28%, followed by reading 27%, then listening 24%, and the last speaking 21%. In Unit 6, students not only learn to describe objects, but they also learn to describe persons. This unit starts with introducing the parts of the human body. This unit concerns with learning descriptive texts by presenting the four language skills almost equally.
Unit 7, *Cut the Paper, Please*, is the last unit in English textbook *English on Sky 1*. Unit 7 gives writing skill the highest proportion of 32%. Reading skill has 29%, followed by speaking 22% and listening 17%. This unit concerns with introducing procedure texts. Students also learn adverbs of manner, conjunctions, and action verbs, to help them in writing procedure texts.

**Discussion**

According to BSNP, there are four literacy levels in learning language, performative, functional, informational, and epistemic. Based on the standard of BSNP, students in Junior High School should be able to reach the functional level of literacy. This means that in their daily life, students should be able to use English to communicate with other people orally and in written form. To reach this level of proficiency students should practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English. The finding of this research shows that writing skill has been given the highest proportion in *English On Sky 1*. This is followed by listening, speaking and then reading. From the result, the researcher decided to mark the English textbook, *English On Sky 1*, as a good textbook for the first grade students in Junior High School. Moreover, this textbook has many activities with integrated skills.

Students need to practice listening and speaking, because those skills are important to communicate with other people in real life. When people can communicate well, they will have the power to make the whole world revolve around them, because it is central to all activities (Patil, 2012). It is important to make students learn those two skills as the basic for their communication. That is why most activities in the first three units put listening and speaking skill in high portion.

Listening and speaking may take a place as important skills to use in direct communication, but the highest portion of language skills in this textbook is writing skill. From this result, the researcher believes that the writing skill can improve the students’ ability in communicate with other people. This textbook provides many exercises that require student to create a dialogue or text based on daily activity. In grade VII students may not be able to express their thought directly. They need to put it in written form first. It is needed, because it can minimize mistakes. So the students can have more confidence when they practice it orally.

According to Cunningsworth (1995), one of the characteristics of a good textbook is a balance proportion in presenting the four language skills. In this textbook, *English On Sky 1*, the author gives more proportion for writing. Reading skill has been given the lowest
proportion. From the researcher’s point of view, the result shows that the author of the
textbook is trying to make the textbook based on the standard from the government which the
purpose is to make the students reach the functional level of literacy.

Although a good textbook should provide the English skills in balance, but it cannot
reach the target of teaching and learning process, the textbook can be useless. A good
textbook should provide the four English skills and based on the standard, so it can reach the
target of teaching and learning process, and helps the students learn easily.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
Conclusions

The result of the study, which shows writing skill with proportion of 29%, speaking
26%, listening 25%, and reading 20%, can make the textbook to be categorized as a good
textbook. From the result, this textbook is written based on the standard from the government.
The target of learning English in junior high school is to make the students reach functional
level of literacy. In this level, they should be able to use English in their daily activities.

The proportion of language skills in English textbook, English On Sky 1, is good
enough to be presented to the students in first grade of junior high school. The students can
learn listening and speaking to improve their ability in communication. The purpose of giving
writing skill the highest portion, the researcher believes that it can minimize mistakes and
improve the students’ confidence.

Suggestions

In line with the conclusion above, the researcher tries to give some suggestions. First,
English teachers should try to add more example texts for the materials to cover the lack of
reading activities in the textbook. The English teachers can integrate the reading skill with the
speaking skill. Teachers can ask students to read the example of the text in the front of the
class. The material for the reading skill can be taken from other textbooks or the Internet. The
most important thing is that the teachers should be aware that the objective of this textbook is
to help the students reach the functional level of literacy.

Secondly, the author of the textbook should provide more texts, so that the language
skills are presented in balance. Although the target is to make the students reach the
functional level of literacy, the students need to practice reading skills early, because it can
help them to develop their reading habits and increase their vocabulary and knowledge. This
will support the development of the other language skills.
REFERENCES


