VOCABULARY LEVELS OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOK FOR INDONESIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADE TEN

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Abstract

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has published the latest edition of an English textbook entitled Bahasa Inggris to provide lesson materials based on Kurikulum 2013 or K-13. This paper aimed to discover whether or not the official English textbook Bahasa Inggris provided a suitable level of vocabulary for the tenth-grade students of senior high school. This content analysis focused on vocabulary levels. Data consisted of chapters 1-5, the first five chapters of the textbook to discuss in class in the first semester. The website vocabkitchen.com was used to analyze the vocabulary levels based on CEFR and Longman Communication 3000 vocabulary list was used as a reference to check the common 3000 words in both written and spoken English. Results showed that 27 words, more specifically 10 nouns, eight verbs, six adjectives, and three adverbs, were categorized as high-level vocabulary items. The researchers suggested alternative words that were considered as lower-level category words to improve the textbook. It is expected that the suggested improvements would assist the students to acquire their vocabulary proficiency to understand the content of the textbook well.

Keywords: CEFR, English textbook, Longman Communication 3000, vocabulary level

Abstrak

Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Indonesia telah menerbitkan edisi terbaru buku teks yang berjudul Bahasa Inggris untuk menyediakan bahan pelajaran berdasarkan Kurikulum 2013 atau K-13. Makalah ini bertujuan menemukan apakah buku teks Bahasa Inggris menyajikan tingkat kosa kata yang sesuai untuk siswa kelas 10 Sekolah Menengah Atas. Studi ini menggunakan metode analisis konten. Data terdiri dari bab 1-5, lima bab pertama yang dibahas dalam kelas selama semester pertama. Situs vocabkitchen.com digunakan untuk menganalisis tingkat kosa kata berdasarkan CEFR dan daftar kosakata 3000 Longman Communication digunakan sebagai rujukan untuk memeriksa 3000 kata umum dalam bahasa Inggris baik lisan maupun tulisan. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa 27 kata, lebih khusus 10 kata benda, delapan kata kerja, enam kata sifat dan tiga kata keterangan, dikaregorikan dalam kosa kata tingkat tinggi. Peneliti mengusulkan alternatif kata-kata yang dianggap dalam kategori tingkat lebih rendah untuk memperbaiki buku teks tersebut. Peneliti berharap saran perbaikan akan membantu siswa untuk memperoleh kecakapan kosa kata agar dapat memahami isi buku teks dengan baik.

Kata Kunci: CEFR, English textbook, Longman Communication 3000, vocabulary level

INTRODUCTION

The English textbook entitled *Bahasa Inggris* (Widiati, Rohmah & Furaidah, 2017) is the official textbook published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture referring to the latest curriculum implemented in Indonesia, Kurikulum 2013 or the K-13 Curriculum. It is undeniable that a textbook is one of the main components of a curriculum because it contains supporting learning sources to cater to the curriculum. In teaching and learning, a textbook is used as a standard source of information for a formal study of a subject and an instrument for teaching and learning (Graves, 2000).

Based on Tarigan (1990), a textbook is a standard book designed by experts aiming to achieve the learning goals and instructional objectives. It provides appropriate facilities to make the learners understand the subject matters easily. It is regarded as one of the learning sources which teachers use to create effective learning. It also provides a framework of guidance and orientation related to lessons discussed. It has to be able to make teachers, especially novice ones, find themselves confident to use it in their teaching. Therefore, it is essential to provide the textbook with appropriate materials. Pinter (2006) agrees that a textbook is the most crucial factor in teaching and learning. It guides both teachers and students in classroom learning activities. Most teachers make the best use of the explanations and exercises provided in the textbook. Others can find additional materials that refer to the textbook. Sheldon (1988) and Hutchinson (1994) (as quoted by Wang, 1998) confirm that English Language Teaching programs depend on what is served by the textbooks. Greene and Petty (1959) explain some criteria of a good textbook. They mention that it arouses students' interest, motivates students, has interesting illustrations, integrates with other subjects, stimulates personal activities, avoids ambiguity, has clear points and values, appreciates individual differences, and considers linguistic aspects, for example. A textbook should be evaluated to optimize the learning activity (Wang, 1998). There are some principles as the aspects of textbook evaluation. Ten aspects were composited by Madjid (2002), namely soundness of theory underpinning the learning principles, cultural and gender bias relevancy, acceptability, authenticity, skills integration, meaningful activity, authentic language use, cognitive development, grammatical and other linguistic explanations – inductive or deductive, and contextual and situational vocabulary presentation.

In the Indonesian education context, Kinasih (2014) mentions the essential components of English textbooks for Senior High School from *Pusat Perbukuan* (*Pusbuk*).

English textbooks for Senior high school should facilitate the learners to communicate both in spoken and written form using their English skills, facilitate learners for the correct and appropriate English use to fulfill the demands of communication contexts and language knowledge, facilitate learners to improve their communication skills through the learner-centered approach, support learners in developing both soft and hard skills, promote cross-cultural understanding and be oriented to the development of science and technology. Considering these matters, English textbooks should not have any problems with the worthiness of the content, language appropriateness, and accuracy, as well as illustrations and layout.

The fact that a textbook should consider linguistic aspects related to the students' ability, English textbooks published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture are obliged to provide appropriate linguistic aspects, especially the vocabulary level, which is the main focus of this paper. The researchers intend to explore the vocabulary level appropriateness used in the English textbook published by the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture by analyzing the vocabulary levels of the English textbook for senior high school grade 10 entitled *Bahasa Inggris*. Thus, the research question in this study is formulated as follows: Does the official English textbook *Bahasa Inggris* published by the Ministry of Education and Culture provide a suitable level of vocabulary for the tenth-grade students of senior high school?

To solve the question above, the researchers need to discuss vocabulary issues. Vocabulary is the total number of words that create a language (Hornby, 1989 cited in Amaliah, 2013) divided into high-frequency academic vocabulary, technical vocabulary, and low-frequency vocabulary (Nation, 2002). Coady (1997) states that 2,000- 3,000 high-frequency words should be studied until they become sight words. Furthermore, this group of vocabulary covers the range of the colloquial language for listening and speaking (Nation,

2005). There exist two common problems in learning a language (Grabe, 2001), namely lack of vocabulary and lack of extensive reading. Thus, using simplified texts can also save learners from struggling unnecessarily with difficult vocabulary items (Nation & Deweerdt, 2001). McCarthy (1990) agrees that vocabulary is crucial in language learning since, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way. However, learning vocabulary cannot be done instantly. Nation (2001) states that a large number of words should be mastered by foreign language learners which are useful for the long-term and not essential for a short-term goal.

Teachers need to consider that vocabulary is a basic need for language learning. Tran (2019) says that vocabulary acquisition is not given enough attention in English-language teaching. Thus, teachers should identify students' vocabulary learning strategies. It is assumed that students process information and knowledge from the teachers more easily. They may have a better understanding and achievement as well.

The average vocabulary mastery of the first year Indonesian university students is only about 1,226 English words (Nurweni & Read, 1999 in Nur, 2004). Their argument was based on the considerations referring to Zimmerman (2005), the scores on the VLT test to provide an estimation of vocabulary size. For example, if students answer 9 items out of 18 items in the 1,000 level correctly, it is assumed that the students know about 500 out of the 1000 words from that level. Thus, on average the students obtained the score 72.52%, it is assumed that they know approximately 1,450 words (Munandar & Nurweni, 2015). This fact leads to a hypothesis of the vocabulary mastery of senior high school students, the 10th graders, which should be lower than the mastery of first-year university students. Munandar and Nurweni (2015) state that the first year Indonesian university students are assumed to have been learning English for around 6 years, while senior high school students are assumed to have been learning English for fewer years. Thus, there is a significant correlation between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size of the students. In other words, when students perform a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies, their vocabulary size is better. Another argument from Nurweni and Read (1999) is that Indonesian EFL university learners master 1,220-word families after 900 hours of instruction.

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) provides a detailed description of the learner level. It is useful to be a document reference for academic practitioners, such as teachers, school directors, curriculum developers, material designers, syllabus designers, and proficient learners. CEFR provides levels similar to the beginner (A1 and A2 levels), intermediate (B1 and B2 levels), and advanced (C1 and C2 levels).

Table 1. CEFR general description

	Level		General description	Cambridge English Exam
Proficient User	C2	Mastery	Highly proficient – can use English very fluently, precisely and sensitively in most contexts	Cambridge English Proficiency
	C1	Effective Operational Proficiency	Able to use English fluently and flexibly in a wide range of contexts	Cambridge English Advanced
Independent User	B2	Vantage	Can use English effectively with some fluency in a range of contexts	Cambridge English First/First for Schools
	B1	Threshold	Can communicate essential points and ideas in familiar contexts	Cambridge English Preliminary/Preliminary for Schools
Basic User	A2	Waystage	Can communicate in English within a limited range of contexts	Cambridge English Key/Key for Schools Cambridge English Flyers
	A1	Breakthrough	Can communicate in basic English with help from the listener	Cambridge English Movers Cambridge English Starters

(Adopted from Introductory Guide to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)
for English Language Teachers)

The CEFR is essential for language teaching and learning. It describes not only the learner levels but also the approach to language learning expected in the learning classes. The description of the levels is based on skills and it focuses on the communicative purposes rather than on the specific linguistic knowledge,

Longman Communication 3000 (Longman, 2007) provides a list of 3000 words which are the most frequent in spoken and written English. Based on Nation (1997), the 3000-word level is sufficient for producing speaking and writing productively. It shows the basis of English words which are important for learning and studying English communicatively in speaking and writing. It is considered as a powerful tool to help learners develop their comprehension and communication skills. There exist symbols S1, S2, and S3 for the most frequent spoken English words and symbols W1, W2, and W3 for the top of frequent words in written English. This vocabulary list helps learners focus on mastering meanings, grammatical patterns, and collocations as well.

METHOD

One of the research methods used to analyze text data is content analysis (Hsieh & Sarah, 2005). Text data include verbal, print, and electronic forms, for example. The text data are obtained from narrative responses, interviews, open-ended survey questions, focus groups, observations, or print media (Kondracky & Wellman, 2002). In this paper, the text data were collected from the print media, an English textbook called *Bahasa Inggris* published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. Downe-Wamboldt (1992) mentions that the goal of the content

analysis is to provide both knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study. There are three approaches to content analysis, namely conventional, directed, and summative content analysis (Hsieh & Sarah, 2005). However, content analysis has been chosen as the method of this study to gather the qualitative data to answer the research question of this study, as stated earlier: Does the official English textbook *Bahasa Inggris* published by the Ministry of Education and Culture provide a suitable level of vocabulary for the tenth-grade students of senior high school?

This study was conducted first by choosing some chapters as the samples for the analysis. Chapters 1–5 were analyzed as they were the first five chapters for the first semester materials to discuss. Second was analyzing the vocabulary level from each chapter referring to the CEFR vocabulary level using the online website (vocabkitchen.com). Third, the researchers analyzed each word labeled as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, and words that were not listed in those categories. Fourth, the researchers identified the words which were considered as belonging to high-level

vocabulary and checked them in Longman Communication 3000 vocabulary list. Fifth, the researchers suggested alternative words considered having lower-level vocabulary.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Most of the words from the English textbook entitled *Bahasa Inggris* published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture were labeled as A1-A2 based on CEFR level and S1–W1 based on Longman Communication 3000 vocabulary list. However, the researchers discovered some words which were possible to be replaced to ease students' comprehension of the vocabulary. Based on Nurweni and Read (1999, as cited in Nur, 2004), the first year Indonesian university students acquire the average of only about 1,226 English words. The researchers found words categorized as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs which were considered as high-level vocabulary. They were B2, C1, C2, and off-list vocabulary based on CEFR and S3, W3, and off-list vocabulary.

Table 2. Vocabulary analysis of nouns

No.	Original words	CEFR	Longman 3000	Word Recommendation	CEFR	Longman \ 3000
1	prompt	B2	W3	questions	A1	S1, w1
2	campaign	C1	S3, W3	movement		S1, W1
3	angle	B2	S3, W3	corner	A2	S1, W2
4	cookies	C2	S3, W3	biscuits	A1	S2
5	equivalent	C1	W3	words	A1	S1, W1
6	builder	-	S3	exercise	A2	S2, W2
7	collaboration	-	-	work together	A1	S1, W1
8	encouragement	B2	-	help	A1	S1, W1
9	content	B2	S3, W3	subject	A1	**S2, W1**
10	sob	-	-	cry	A2	**S2, W2**

The researchers suggested 10 nouns from the samples to change into a lower vocabulary level. The word *angle* on page 57 was labeled as B2 CEFR level and S3-W3 in Longman Communication 3000. The researchers suggested that the word *angle* be changed with the *corner*. The word *corner* was labeled as A2 CEFR level and S1-W2 in Longman Communication 3000. The sentence is *"... having eight **angles** and eight sides",* which can be changed into *"... having eight **corners** and eight sides".* The word *content* on page 32 was labeled as B2 CEFR level and S3-W3 Longman Communication 3000 should be changed into **subject** as it is labeled A1 CEFR level and S2-W1 in Longman Communication 3000. The word **content** was identified in the sentence of "Let me see this **content**." As suggested, the sentence can be changed into "Let me see this **subject**." The word **encouragement** on page 33 was labeled as B2 CEFR level and it was not listed in Longman Communication 3000. The researchers suggested that it be changed with the word **help,** which is labeled as A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 Longman Communication 3000. The sentence "Compliment is useful to give **encouragement** so that …" was suggested that it be changed into "Compliment is useful to give **help** so that …" Another example of a noun that was considered as high-leveled vocabulary is **prompt**. It was categorized as B2 CEFR level and W3 in Longman Communication 3000. It is written on page 10 in the sentence "Use the following **prompts** to help", and it can be rewritten as "Use the following **questions** to help."

The words **campaign** and **equivalent** were labeled as C1 CEFR. **Campaign** was labeled as S3-W3 in Longman Communication 3000, whereas **equivalent** was labeled as W3 in Longman Communication 3000. The word **campaign** in "*You are preparing **a campaign** for the president of the student organization*" can be changed into **a movement**. The sentence would then read as follows: "*You are preparing **a movement** for the president of the student organization".* One word from the sample, **cookies**, was labeled as C2 CEFR level and S3-W3 in Longman Communication 3000. On page 41, "We are going to practice baking **cookies**", and the suggestion was to change it with **biscuits,** which is labeled as A1 CEFR level and S2 in Longman Communication 3000. The other words were **builder, collaboration,** and **sob,** which were the off-list vocabulary of CEFR. The word **builder** was categorized as S3 in Longman Communication 3000. Next, the words **collaboration** and **sob** were not listed in Longman Communication 3000. On page 2, there existed an exercise of **Vocabulary Builder,** which may be revised as **Vocabulary Exercise**. The sentence *"I can be really angry, and that can mean that there will be no more **collaboration** between us".* On page 126, the word **collaboration** can be changed into **working together,** which was labeled A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000. The sentence then would read *"I can be really angry, and that can mean that there will be no more **working together** between us".* The word **sob** on page 15 may be revised into **cry**, which was labeled as A2 CEFR level and S2-W2 in Longman Communication 3000.

Table 3. Vocabulary analysis of verbs

No.	Original Words	CEFR	Longman Communication 3000	Word Recommendation	CEFR	Longman Communication 3000
1	determine	C1	-	decide	A2	**S1, W1**
2	appoint	C1	W3	choose	A1	**S1, W1**
3	proceed	C1	S3, W3	act	B1	S1, W1
4	retain	C2	W3	keep	A2	S1, W1
5	preserve	B2	W3	keep	A2	**S1, W1**
6	relate	C2	S2, W1	describe	A2	**S2, W1**
7	illuminate	-	-	light	A1	**S1, W1**
8	elect	-	S3, W3	choose	A1	**S1, W1**

The word *preserve* (B2 CEFR level, W3 in Longman Communication 3000) in the sentence *"... to create and preserve peace and harmony"* can be changed into *"... to create and keep peace and harmony"*. The word *keep* i\was labeled as A2 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000. The word *appoint* (C1 CEFR level and W3 in Longman Communication 3000) on page 23 could be replaced to *choose* (A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000). The sentence *"Alif is finally appointed as the director of a national company where he works"* may be revised as "*Alif is finally chosen as the director of a national company where he works"*. The word *determine* was labeled as C1 CEFR level but it was not listed in Longman Communication 3000. Accordingly, the researchers suggested that this word be changed with *decide,* which is labeled as A2

CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000. Thus, the sentence *"... usually determines whether readers would continue reading or not"* should be changed into *"... usually decides whether readers would continue reading or not."* Next, the word *proceed* found in the vocabulary list on page 82 was labeled C1 CEFR level and S3-W3 in Longman Communication 3000.

The word *relate* on page 16 is indicated as the C2 CEFR level. It is advisable to change this word into *describe* since it is labeled as the A2 CEFR level. Even though the word *relate* and describe are listed as S2-W1 in Longman Communication 3000, they are labeled differently in CEFR. On page 16, the sentence *"Does it relate to a family relationship?"* should be revised into *"Does it describe a family relationship?"* Another word indicated as the C2 CEFR level is

retain. It is listed as W3 in Longman Communication 3000. The sentence *"What is your plan to make you **retain** the words and the meaning more firmly in your mind?"* in page 68 should be changed into *"What is your plan to make you **keep** the words and the meaning more firmly in your mind?"* the word **keep** is categorized as A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000.

Some words are off the list in CEFR, *illuminate,* and *elect*. The word illuminate is not listed both in CEFR and in Longman Communication 3000. Though the word **elect** is off the list in CEFR it is labeled as

S3-W3 in Longman Communication 3000. The sentence *"A trip at night when the Falls are **illuminated** in a rainbow of color is amazing."* is best replaced into *"A trip at night when the Falls are **lighted** in a rainbow of color is amazing."* This sentence is on page 72. The other word is elect in page 47, "*If I am **elected** as the president of the student organization, ..."* this sentence is best replaced into "*If I am **chosen** as the president of the student organization, ..."* the word **choose/chosen** is labeled as A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000.

Table 4. Vocabulary analysis of adjectives

No.	Original Words	CEFR	Longman Communication 3000	Word Recommendation	CEFR	Longman Communication 3000
1	exhilarating	-	-	very happy	A1	**S1, W1**
2	distant (p.2)	-	W3	far	A2	**S1, W1**
3	magnificent	-	-	great	A1	**S1, W1**
4	casual	-	-	free	A1	**S1, W1**
5	hesitate	-	W3	wait	A1	**S1, W1**
6	dominant	-	W3	main	B1	**S1, W1**

Table.4 shows adjectives that are off the list in the CEFR level. The word ***exhilarating*** and ***distant*** is found in the new vocabulary list. The researchers considered that the word ***exhilarating*** should be revised into ***very happy*** (A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000). Although the word ***distant*** is off the list in CEFR, it is considered as W3 in Longman Communication 3000. It is suggested that it be changed into ***far*** which is labeled as A2 in the CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000.

The word ***dominant*** and ***hesitate*** are both off-listed in the CEFR level but they are labeled as W3 in Longman

Communication 3000. The word dominant is found on page 63, in the sentence *"What is the most **dominant** tense used in this text?"* The researchers suggested that it be revised into "What is the ***main*** tense used in this text?" The word main is categorized as B1 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000. The word ***hesitate*** in the sentence *"Don't **hesitate** to see your teacher or classmates and discuss…"* is best replaced into *"Don't **wait** to see your teacher or classmates and discuss…"* The word wait is labeled as the A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000.

The word ***casual*** and ***magnificent*** are

both off-listed in CEFR and Longman Communication 3000. On page 58, *"Have a **casual** chat with your friend."* Is best replaced into *"Have a **free** chat with your friend."* The word **free** is labeled as the A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000. On page 46, *"Don't*

***hesitate** to see your teacher or classmates and discuss…"* is best replaced by *"Don't **wait** to see your teacher or classmates and discuss…"* The word **wait** is labeled as the A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000.

Table 5. Vocabulary analysis of adverbs

No.	Original Words	CEFR	Longman Communication 3000	Word Recommendation	CEFR	Longman Communication 3000
1	similarly	C1	-	the same	A1	**S1, W1**
2	commonly	C1	-	often	A1	S1, W1
3	sufficiently	C1	W2	completely	B1	**S1, W2**

Table 5 shows the adverbs of manner found in the sample. There are commonly, similarly, and sufficiently. They are all labeled as C1 CEFR level. The word commonly found in the sentence *"What are the expressions **commonly** used to congratulate people?"* on page 33 should be replaced by the word often. The sentence will be *"What are the expressions **often** used to congratulate people?"* The word **often** is labeled as A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000. The sentence of *"**Similarly**, in responding to congratulating expressions…"* found on page 35 is suggested to change into *"**The same** as in responding to congratulating expressions…"* The word **the same** is labeled as A1 CEFR level and S1-W1 Longman Communication 3000. The sentence *"Words cannot describe the beauty **sufficiently**."* On page 70 is best replaced by *"Words cannot describe the beauty **completely**."*

CONCLUSION

The newest edition of English Textbook entitled *Bahasa Inggris* published by the Indonesian Department of Education is to fit the newest curriculum applied in Indonesia, *Kurikulum 2013,* or K-13. In this book, there are found 28 words (from chapters 1-5) which are considered as high-level based on CEFR and *Longman Communication 3000*. The words found are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Although most words are labeled A1-A2 CEFR level and S1-W1 in Longman Communication 3000, those 28 words are advised to change to ease the readers. Based on Wang (1998), textbooks should be evaluated to optimize the learning activity. Thus, the researchers provided alternative words that are considered to be in the lower-level category. This is to fit the students' vocabulary proficiency as basic learners of English to understand the content of the book well.

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