

**EVALUATING EFL TEXTBOOKS FOR VOCATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL IN INDONESIA: A CORPUS-INFORMED AND
LEXILE-BASED MODEL**



SKRIPSI

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**EVALUATING EFL TEXTBOOKS FOR VOCATIONAL HIGH
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SKRIPSI

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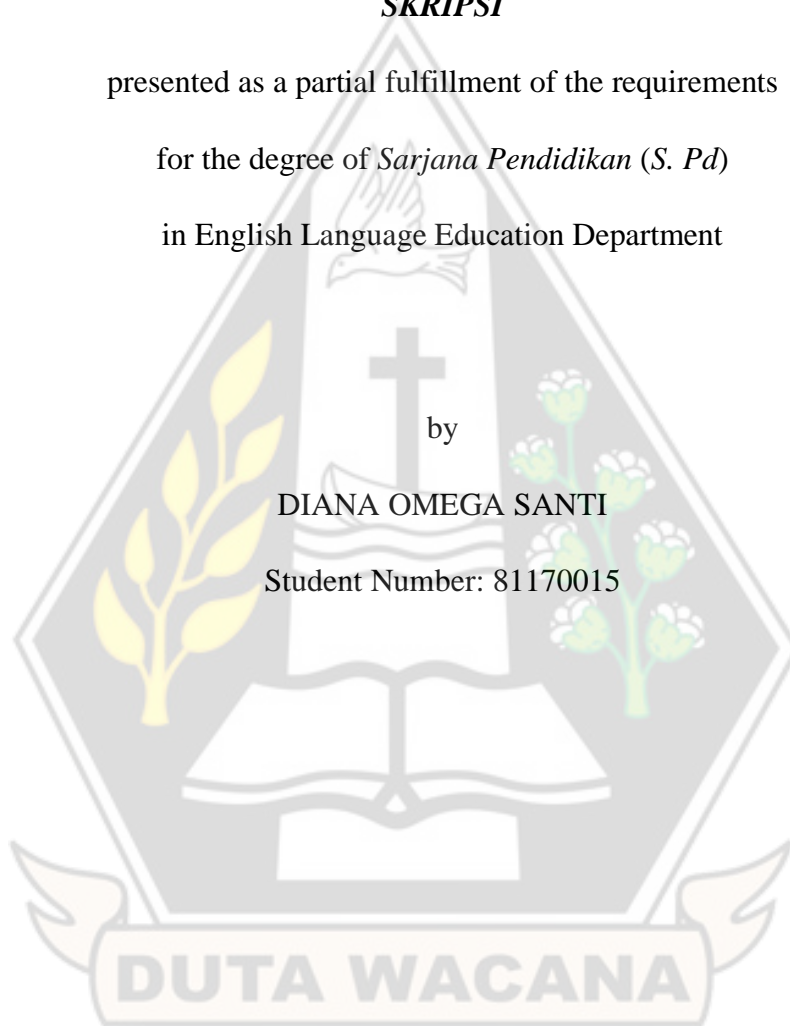
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by

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IN INDONESIA: A CORPUS-INFORMED AND LEXILE-BASED MODEL**

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I honestly declare that this *Skripsi* does not contain the work or parts of the work of other people, except those cited in the quotations and the references.

Yogyakarta, 20 November 2022

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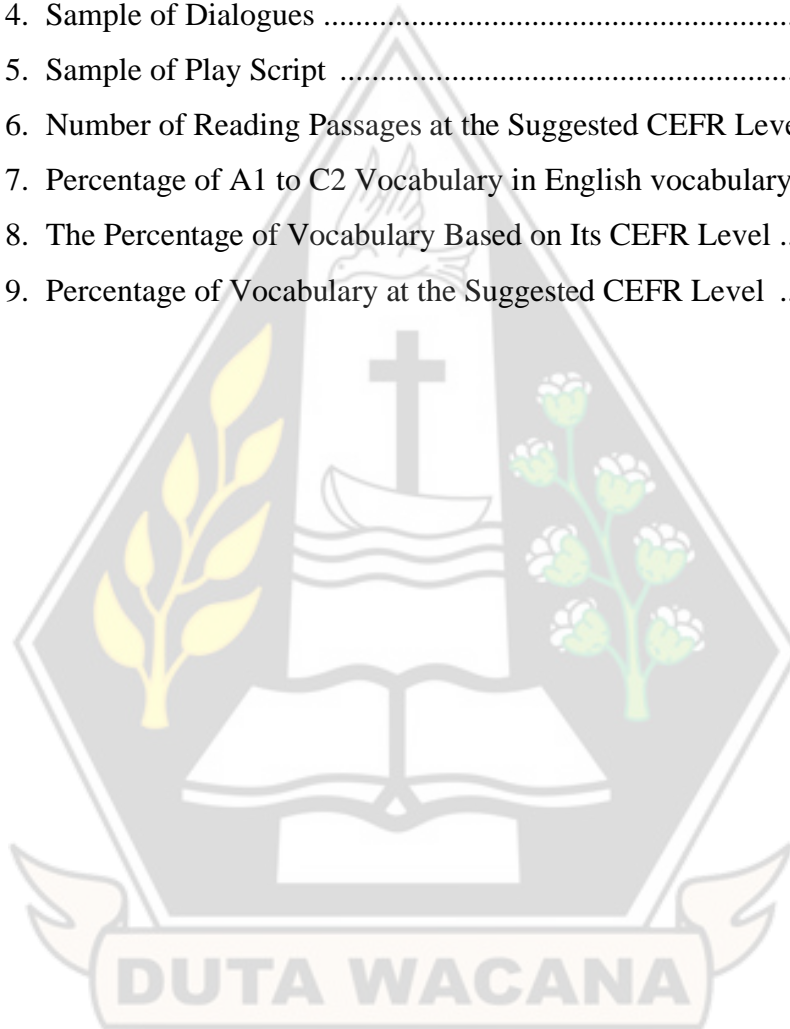
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Abstract

Santi, D. O. (2022). *Evaluating EFL textbooks for vocational high school in Indonesia: A corpus-informed and Lexile-based model* (Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis). Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana: Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

This study was intended to identify the text difficulty levels and English vocabulary profiles of a set of electronic English coursebooks for senior and vocational high schools in Indonesia. Furthermore, it also analyzed how the text difficulty levels and vocabulary profiles in these books correspond with the targeted proficiency level of vocational high school graduates. This book evaluation research was worth-conducting since these selected coursebooks were published by Ministry of Education and Culture and intended to be used nationally by Indonesian vocational high school teachers. A corpus-informed and Lexile-based model was employed as the design of this research. Three tools were used to analyze the data quantitatively, namely Lexile Text Analyzer® Professional, LencsBox, and English Vocabulary Profile in Text Inspector. This study found that the relative complexity of reading passages in the coursebooks for grades 10th and 12th is slightly more difficult than the expected language proficiency level for vocational high school graduates. On the other hand, the relative complexity of reading passages in the coursebook for grade 11th is slightly easier. However, in terms of vocabulary profiles, the three books seem to indicate emphasis on the target vocabulary at the expected level (B1) as suggested by Directorate of Vocational High School Development. In addition to those findings, it is important that teachers also consider other factors outside the scope of this research—like learners' proficiency levels and interests or other qualitative data about the books—to determine whether the coursebooks are appropriate for their classes.

Keywords: textbook evaluation, English for vocational high school, text difficulty, Lexile framework for reading, English vocabulary profile

Intisari

Santi, D. O. (2022). *Evaluating EFL textbooks for vocational high school in Indonesia: A corpus-informed and Lexile-based model* (Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis). Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana: Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tingkat kesulitan teks dan profil kosakata yang terdapat pada serangkaian buku Bahasa Inggris untuk sekolah menengah atas dan kejuruan di Indonesia. Selain itu, studi ini juga menganalisis bagaimana tingkat kesulitan teks dan profil kosakata di buku-buku tersebut sesuai dengan tingkat kecakapan Bahasa Inggris yang ditargetkan kepada lulusan sekolah menengah kejuruan (SMK). Studi evaluasi buku ini sepatutnya dilakukan karena rangkaian buku tersebut diterbitkan oleh Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan dan ditujukan untuk digunakan secara nasional oleh guru Bahasa Inggris SMK di Indonesia. Sebuah model corpus-informed dan Lexile-based digunakan sebagai desain penelitian ini. Tiga instrumen digunakan untuk menganalisis data studi ini secara kuantitatif yaitu Lexile Text Analyzer® Professional, LancsBox, dan English Vocabulary Profile di Text Inspector. Studi ini menemukan bahwa kompleksitas teks bacaan di buku ajar kelas 10 dan 12 secara keseluruhan agak lebih sulit dibanding tingkat kecakapan yang ditargetkan kepada lulusan SMK. Sementara, secara keseluruhan kompleksitas teks bacaan di buku ajar kelas 11 sedikit lebih mudah. Meski demikian, dalam hal profil kosakata, ketiga buku tersebut tampaknya mengindikasikan adanya penekanan pada target kosakata di level kecakapan (B1) sesuai yang diharapkan oleh Direktorat Pembinaan SMK. Selain temuan tersebut, penting untuk diakui bahwa guru juga perlu mempertimbangkan faktor lain di luar cakupan studi ini—seperti level kemampuan siswa, minat siswa, dan aspek kualitatif lain dari buku-buku tersebut—dalam menentukan apakah buku-buku tersebut sesuai untuk dipakai di kelas mereka.

Kata kunci: *evaluasi buku ajar, Bahasa Inggris untuk sekolah menengah kejuruan, tingkat kesulitan teks, Lexile framework for reading, English vocabulary profile*



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes how the approximate difficulty level of reading passages in a set of students' textbooks correspond with the expected proficiency level and how the lexical items in the same set of textbooks conform with the ideal vocabulary profile suggested by the Directorate of Vocational High School Development. This chapter presents the background of this study, the research questions, the research objectives, and the research benefits.

A. Research Background

Since 2016, Directorate of Vocational High School Development (*Direktorat Pembinaan SMK*) of Indonesia has set a target for the vocational high school graduates/final year students to acquire language proficiency which is equal to TOEIC intermediate level (Direktorat Pembinaan Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan, 2017; Khurniawan & Wahidiat, 2019). They set the target in order to improve the vocational high school graduates' competitiveness in global job market. Some efforts were put into the enhancement of vocational high school students' English proficiency such as subsidized TOEIC test for vocational high school students and implementing blended learning program in several vocational high schools. Although Directorate of Vocational High School Development realized that instructional materials or textbooks are likely to affect students' language learning (Direktorat Pembinaan Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan, 2017), evaluation of English textbooks for vocational high school and their relevancy to the target proficiency set by Directorate of Vocational High School Development are still rare. Therefore, this study seeks to examine a set of EFL textbooks which are published by the Center for Curriculum and Books of Ministry of Education and Culture and how suitable they are to serve the targeted proficiency level of vocational high school graduates.

It is widely accepted that instructional materials play an integral role in EFL teaching and learning process. In several EFL classes, textbooks become the reference/source for learning language aspects and features such as grammar,

vocabulary, and pronunciation (Cunningsworth, 1995). He also noted that textbooks are used by learners to provide activities for practicing the target language. Moreover, Richards (2001) saw that well-developed textbooks potentially provide effective language models and input. Renandya (2013) highlighted course materials (textbooks) as one of the main sources of language input for students besides their English teachers. In other words, textbooks serve as the language input and sources of activities to practice the target language. Richards (1993) wrote that school textbooks or coursebooks usually reflect the existing curricula. In Indonesia, textbooks become the main learning sources to achieve the national learning goals, and textbooks for vocational high school are no exception (Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2016). As most of EFL teachers in Indonesia are non-native English speakers, textbooks become an alternative source of precise language input. Indonesian teachers can indeed make use of textbooks published by the Center for Curriculum and Books of Ministry of Education and Culture since they are published specifically to address the goals of national curricula.

As mentioned above, the Ministry of Education and Culture provides textbooks (hard-copy and electronic format) for most subjects taught in all school levels based on the implemented curricula. The textbooks function as some sort of guidance for learners and teachers in running the class (Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2008). In general, the copyright of such textbooks is usually bought by Ministry of Education and Culture so they have authority to share the electronic textbooks (*Buku Sekolah Elektronik*) nationally and both schoolteachers and students can access the textbooks freely (Hasnita et al., 2014; Irawan et al., 2011; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017). In the present study, a set of English coursebooks for high schools was analyzed. Those selected coursebooks are intended for both senior high school and vocational high school (Widiati et al., 2016). The publication years are in the range of 2016-2018 and first editions were published around 2013-2014. This indicates that the textbooks were published for the first time before Directorate of Vocational High School Development set a targeted English proficiency level for vocational high school graduates. Although

schools can decide which textbooks they will use (Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2008), the selected textbooks analyzed in this study were the only English textbooks for senior/vocational high schools published by Ministry of Education and Culture. In addition to that fact, these books were selected because they were presumably more widely used by Indonesian vocational high school teachers compared to other similar books which are not published by Ministry of Education and Culture. It is very likely the case due to the scarcity of English coursebooks specifically developed for vocational high school in the Indonesian context.

Based on the significance of the selected textbooks and their potential contribution to students' English learning, evaluating the content of this set of textbooks entitled *Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X* (English for Senior High School/Islamic Senior High School/Vocational High School/Islamic Vocational High School Grade 10th), *Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas XI* (English for Senior High School/Islamic Senior High School/Vocational High School/Islamic Vocational High School Grade 11th), and *Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas XII* (English for Senior High School/Islamic Senior High School/Vocational High School/Islamic Vocational High School Grade 12th) is necessary. More importantly, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, through their statements written on the early pages of each book, are inviting any feedback and evaluation for the improvement of these books (Widiati et al., 2016). For determining the suitability of textbooks and selecting material for their classes, teachers also need this kind of information which is based on empirical evidence about the books (Nurhamsih, 2017). It is aligned with Murphy (2013) who confirmed that teachers need such information for finding suitable texts for their students since they frequently face some challenges in looking for learning material with the right level of text difficulty. Thus, this study analyzed the books' content in terms of the text difficulty levels, vocabulary profile, and their conformity with the expected English proficiency level of vocational high school graduates. As posited by Renandya (2013), students' language input like vocabulary comes largely from course material, and vocabulary comprehension often contributes to

the test performance of a learner. In line with that, Zahrani et al. (2020) found that the ability to understand vocabulary in TOEIC reading and listening questions prominently affect the VHS students' workflow in taking TOEIC. All the above-mentioned factors have encouraged the researcher to explore the vocabulary and reading passages presented in the selected EFL textbooks to determine their conformity with the targeted English proficiency level of vocational high school graduates.

B. Research Questions

1. What are the approximate difficulty levels of reading passages in the students' textbooks?
2. How do the approximate difficulty levels of reading passages in the students' textbooks correspond with the expected English proficiency level?
3. What are the English Vocabulary Profiles of the students' textbooks?
4. Do those English Vocabulary Profiles correspond with the expected proficiency level of Vocational High School graduates?

C. Research Objectives

1. Explore the approximate difficulty levels of reading passages in the students' textbooks.
2. Analyze how the difficulty levels of reading passages in the students' textbooks correspond with the expected English proficiency level.
3. Identify the English Vocabulary Profiles of the students' textbooks.
4. Analyze if the English Vocabulary Profiles of the students' textbooks correspond with the expected proficiency level of Vocational High School graduates.

D. Research Benefits

a. Directorate of Vocational High School Development

This study provides a model of quantitative analysis, and hence quantitative findings, to evaluate the conformity of VHS textbooks with the targeted proficiency level. It potentially becomes a valuable reference for Directorate of Vocational High School Development in formulating a framework for assessing text difficulty levels and vocabulary profiles of learning material for VHS graduates.

b. Vocational High School English Material Developers

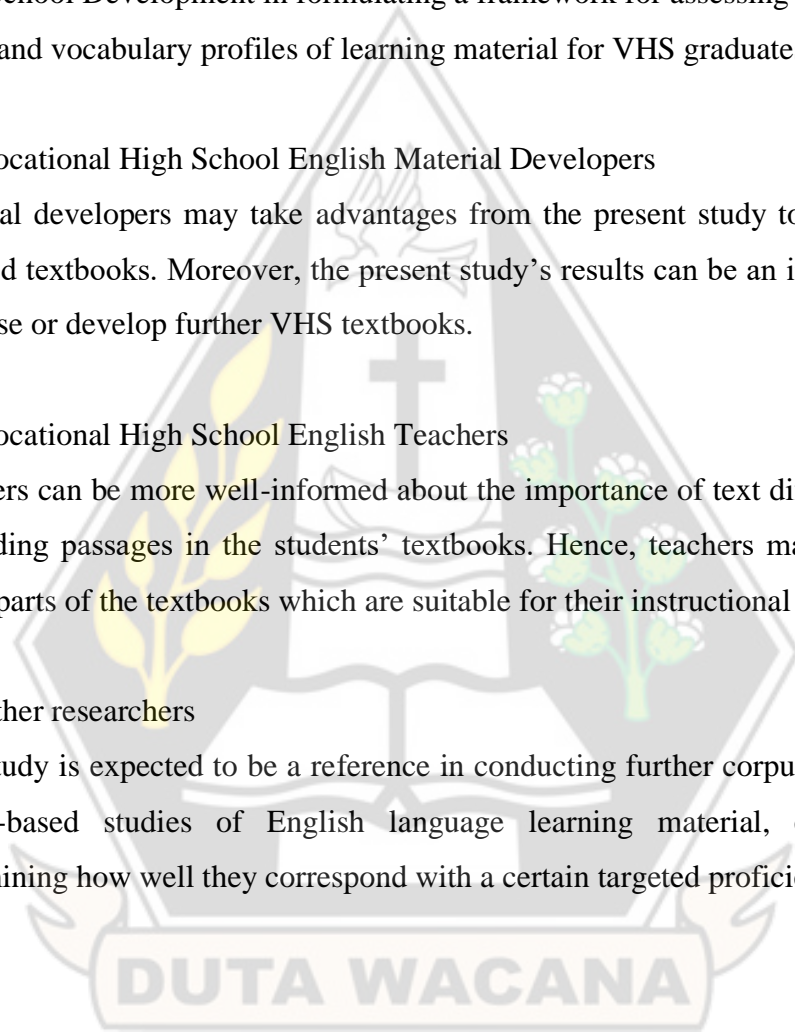
Material developers may take advantages from the present study to evaluate the selected textbooks. Moreover, the present study's results can be an input for them to revise or develop further VHS textbooks.

c. Vocational High School English Teachers

Teachers can be more well-informed about the importance of text difficulty levels of reading passages in the students' textbooks. Hence, teachers may effectively select parts of the textbooks which are suitable for their instructional needs.

d. Other researchers

This study is expected to be a reference in conducting further corpus-informed or Lexile-based studies of English language learning material, especially in determining how well they correspond with a certain targeted proficiency level.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A. Summary

The corpus of this study consists of three Electronic English Course Books for Senior and Vocational High School grade 10th, 11th, and 12th. The results of this study indicate that most reading passages presented in the course books for grades 10th and 12th are more appropriate for B2 readers. On the other hand, the course book for grade 11th primarily consists of reading passages in A2 category. It can be concluded that the relative complexity of reading passages in the course books for grades 10th and 12th is slightly more difficult than the expected language proficiency level for VHS graduates, while reading passages in the course book for grade 11th is slightly easier. As mentioned earlier, the expected English proficiency level for VHS graduates set by the Directorate of Vocational High School Development (*Direktorat Pembinaan SMK*) is equal to the B1 level of CEFR.

Another objective of this study is to identify the English Vocabulary Profiles of words in those three course books and analyze their correspondence with the expected proficiency level of VHS graduates. This study finds that the percentages of the vocabulary presented in the three books can be stated in the following order (from the largest to the smallest): A1 → B1 → A2 → B2 → C1 → C2. The three textbooks indicate an increase in their B1 percentages from those of the preceding and more basic A2 vocabulary. This finding is an anomaly considering that more basic level words tend to have more percentage (appear more frequently) than the higher level (more advanced) words. Therefore, it can be concluded that those three books might have emphasized the target vocabulary at the expected level (B1) as suggested by Directorate of Vocational High School Development.

B. Implication and Contribution

Referring to the results of this study, there are some implications for teachers and material developers. First, although the reading passages in the course books for grades 10th and 12th are slightly more difficult than the expected language proficiency level for VHS graduates whereas those in the coursebook for grade 11th are slightly easier, the book authors still need to consider other factors like learners' proficiency levels and interests to determine whether the reading passages are appropriate for the learners. Second, the findings which suggest that some reading passages in textbooks are slightly more difficult or easier than the expected language proficiency level for VHS graduates can be an input for material developers in evaluating these coursebooks and/or developing a new set of coursebooks for VHS students.

This study tries to contribute to the research practices on coursebook evaluation through the assessment of text difficulty levels and vocabulary profiles. For material developers, this study is also hoped to provide some examples of tools available to assess both text difficulty levels and vocabulary profiles of their designed coursebooks. Lastly, considering the scarcity of this kind of research, it might provide an alternative method for other researchers in the field of material development or coursebook evaluation to replicate.

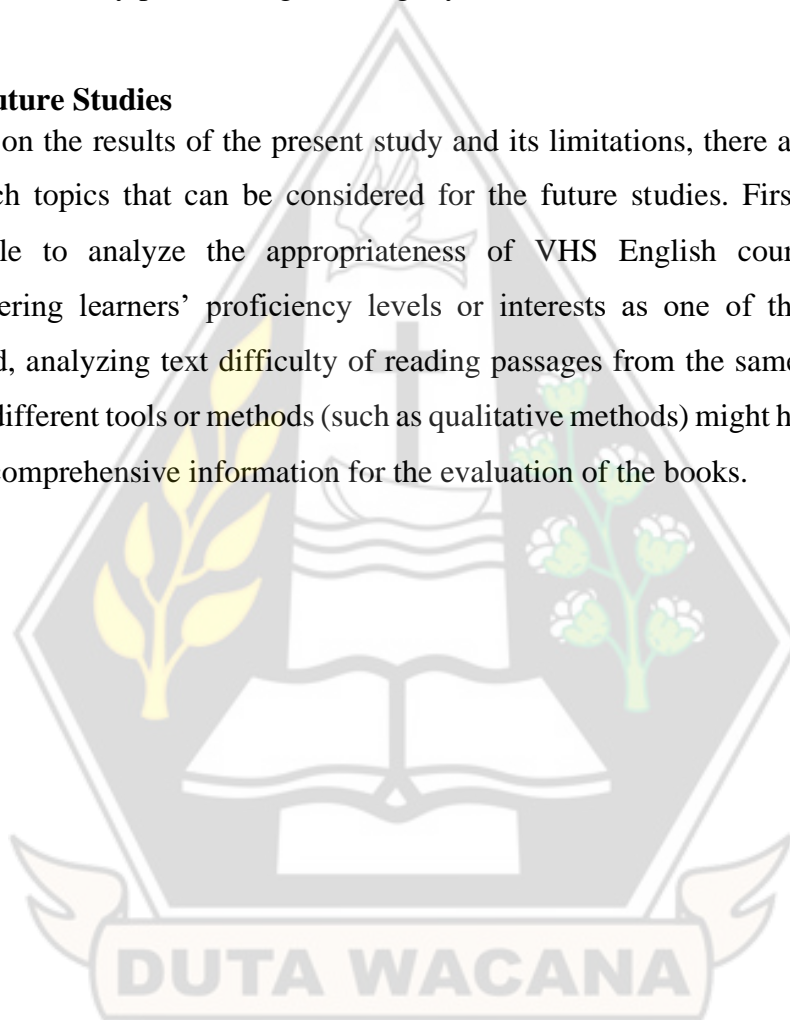
C. Limitations

Three limitations of these study are as followed. First, in some cases, the Lexile Text Measure might have some limitations due to the Lexile' inability to detect in-text definitions of words. To illustrate this, Mitchell (2018) explained that Lexile Text Measure data may be distorted by the repetition of words, especially those that are long. For instance, a text about "biodiversity" might produce a higher Lexile Text Measure score if that word containing six syllables is repeated many times. Second, this study only focuses on the quantitative analysis in determining the text difficulty level of the selected reading passages. Thus, most qualitative data and other information (e.g., nuance in word meaning, reading genres, learner's English proficiency, learner's interest, learner's language background, text layout) does not

belong to the scope of this study. Some studies noted that learner's interest, learner's language background, and text layout are significant factors which also contribute to learners' reading of a text (Campbell, 1979; Krashen, 2001; Mitchell, 2018). Lastly, the estimated vocabulary profiles generated in this study uses the lowest value of each vocabulary (English Profile, 2015b). So, it is possible that those vocabulary profiles might be slightly lower than the actual levels.

D. Future Studies

Based on the results of the present study and its limitations, there are two related research topics that can be considered for the future studies. First, it might be valuable to analyze the appropriateness of VHS English course books by considering learners' proficiency levels or interests as one of the parameters. Second, analyzing text difficulty of reading passages from the same coursebooks using different tools or methods (such as qualitative methods) might help to produce more comprehensive information for the evaluation of the books.



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