

## Language Readability Levels of Reading Passages and Comprehension Levels of Exercises in *Scaffolding* English Coursebooks

Lusiana Listianingsih and Ignatius Harjanto  
Graduate School of English Education Department  
Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya

Reading passages should have language readability levels suiting to students' grade levels. Indeed, reading comprehension exercises should help students develop their competences in comprehending texts. This study investigated the language readability levels of reading passages and the comprehension levels of exercises in *Scaffolding* for Grades 7, 8, and 9. Assessed using Flesch-Kincaid formula and Fry figure, the language readability levels of reading passages in *Scaffolding* coursebooks were below the grade levels of Indonesia EFL students using the coursebooks. Judged using Barrett's Reading Comprehension Taxonomy, exercises in *Scaffolding* coursebooks were dominated by literal comprehension and reorganization exercises, and supplemented with low numbers of inferential comprehension and evaluation exercises.

*Keywords:* language readability level, comprehension level, reading passage, exercise

Bacaan dalam buku teks seharusnya mengandung bahasa (kata dan kalimat) yang dapat dimengerti siswa yang menggunakannya. Latihan yang menyertai bacaan juga seharusnya mengembangkan kemampuan siswa untuk memahami bacaan. Penelitian ini mengevaluasi tingkat keterampilan bahasa dalam bacaan pada buku teks bahasa Inggris *Scaffolding* oleh siswa, dan seberapa besar latihan yang menyertai bacaan membantu pemahaman bacaan oleh siswa. Hasil evaluasi keterampilan bahasa dalam bacaan menggunakan formula Flesch-Kincaid dan Fry menunjukkan bahwa bahasa yang digunakan dalam bacaan di bawah tingkat siswa yang menggunakan buku teks tersebut. Hasil evaluasi latihan bacaan menggunakan Taksonomi Barrett menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar latihan mengembangkan pemahaman literal dan reorganisasi, dengan sebagian kecil latihan mengembangkan pemahaman inferensial dan evaluasi.

*Kata kunci:* tingkat keterampilan bahasa, pemahaman bacaan, bacaan, latihan

*Scaffolding* English coursebooks used by many State Junior High Schools in Indonesia should instill strong foundation in developing English language skills. This is due to the fact that *Scaffolding* English coursebooks have already gained the approval by Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP), the Indonesia National Education Standards Board, whose tasks are developing, monitoring, and evaluating national education system in Indonesia. This study was conducted to assess the language readability levels of passages and judge the comprehension levels of exercises in *Scaffolding* English coursebooks.

Multiple roles have been played by coursebooks, as presentation materials, sources of learners' practice,

and ideas for classroom activities. English Language Teaching (ELT) coursebooks also function as reference sources for learners on grammar/vocabulary/pronunciation (Cunningsworth, 1995). Since ELT's materials, exercises, and activities are mostly provided by coursebooks, English coursebooks determine most of the teaching content and may act as the standardizer of the students' quality output (Richards, 2003). In short, English coursebooks should help reach the teaching's purpose, equip students with the ability to use the language effectively, and mediate learners and the target language. In regard of the roles of English coursebooks, the evaluation of coursebooks is required to ensure that proper materials are provided in the coursebooks. Yet, no study has been done to evaluate *Scaffolding* as widely used English coursebooks in Indonesia.

BSNP as the regulator of Indonesia's national education standards, including English education stan-

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Lusiana Listianingsih, Graduate School of English Education Department, Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. Jalan Kayoon 42-44, Surabaya. E-mail: listianingsih\_77@yahoo.com