

## The Tomlinson's (2011) Principles Based Assessment of the English Textbook "Pathway to English" for the Twelfth Grade Students at Senior High Schools

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**Abstract:** The availability of instructional materials is essential to support teaching and learning activity. In Indonesia, textbooks become the popular instructional materials used in English Language Teaching (ELT). Unfortunately, textbooks are sometimes developed for commercial purposes only. Further, the textbooks are not always appropriate with the condition of the classroom. Thus, assessing textbooks becomes necessary to be done to know their values. This study is intended to know whether or not the materials in the textbook "Pathway to English" for the twelfth grade students meet Tomlinson's (2011) principles. The researcher applies qualitative content analysis as the research design. The findings show that the materials in the textbook (especially chapter 9) meet the ten Tomlinson's (2011) principles. Based on the findings, the textbook can be a useful source of learning materials and help the students, especially EFL students, in learning English.

**Keywords:** English textbook, assessment, Tomlinson's principles.

### 1. Introduction

As one of the mostly used instructional materials, textbook has an important role in helping the students learn English. In Indonesian context, English textbook is often regarded as the main source of learning materials in the classroom. The teacher depends on the textbook because it provides the students with language materials and learning tasks as well. Unfortunately, textbooks are not always suitable with the condition of the classroom (Indriyati and Sa'jaun 2009). Textbooks can be inappropriate for the students' level that can mislead them in learning language (Anshar, Emilia, Damayanti, 2014). Another problem is that the textbooks are sometimes intended for commercial purposes only (Tomlinson, 2008). The

materials developers focus on how to make money rather than on how to provide materials that can facilitate the learners in acquiring the language. Seeing those two problems, assessing the textbook becomes necessary to be done in order to find out the value of the textbook itself.

The present research is about assessing one of the most popular English textbook used in Indonesia, "Pathway to English". The objective of this research is to know whether or not the materials in textbook "Pathway to English" for the twelfth grade students meet Tomlinson's (2011) principles. Tomlinson's (2011) principles are used as the guidelines in assessing the textbook since the principles are used as the framework in developing materials. Further, they are developed based on the principles of Second Language Acquisition and teaching and learning principles as well as Tomlinson's self-experience in ELT context. Assessing the textbook by using the Tomlinson's (2011) principles can enable the researcher to look at the quality of the textbook from another perspective.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Theoretical framework on the Principles of Material Development*

There are sixteen principles of materials development proposed by Tomlinson (2011). The principles are developed based on Tomlinson's teaching experience in ELT, learning principles and the principles recommended by most SLA researchers. In this study, the researcher only focuses on ten principles as the guideline in assessing the textbook and excludes PMD 1,2,3,4,6 and 14. The following information is about the ten principles used and the reason dealing with why some principles are excluded in this research.

*PMD 1: "Materials should achieve impact."* This principle shows that impact can be achieved when learning materials can attract students' attention and curiosity to

the materials. The first principle suggests that learning materials should be interesting for the students to attract students' attention (Tomlinson, 2011). However, the first principle is not included in the present study. Since the principle relates to "impact" that only is able to be seen when the learners pay attention to the materials, thus, observation of the implementation of the materials is needed. Direct observation is necessary to be done to find out whether or not the materials can attract students' attention and can achieve impact.

*PMD 2: "Materials should help learners to feel at ease."* This principle shows that helping learners to feel at ease means helping them feel comfortable and relaxed in learning activities. The second principle suggests that the learning materials used should make students feel comfortable and relaxed with the materials by providing lot of white space and providing examples for the learners before doing the task (Tomlinson, 2011). But this principle is excluded because in order to know the availability of the second PMD, it is not enough to assess the manuscript of the textbook only, it also requires further investigation about the implementation of the materials in the classroom to know the students' thought about the materials: whether or not they enjoy learning the materials.

*PMD 3: "Materials should help learners to develop confidence."* In other words, confidence in English language teaching has an important role in learning activity as it can increase students' opportunity to be successful because the students are willing to challenge themselves to communicate using the language. In relation to the third principle, Tomlinson (2011) suggests to provide activities that try to 'push' the learners slightly beyond their ability in the form of challenging tasks but still achievable. From the suggestion, it is known that looking at the manuscript of the learning materials is not enough. Direct observation is needed to find out learners'

current proficiency to identify whether or not the activities trying to “push” the learners slightly above their ability. Therefore, the third principle is left out for the assessment.

*PMD 4: “What is being taught should be perceived by learners as relevant and useful.”* The fourth principle relates to the learning materials in the textbook that should be relevant and useful for the students. The learners usually think certain materials are relevant to them when they are familiar to the materials itself. Then, they think the materials are useful for them when they can apply what they have learnt from the materials both inside and outside the classroom. From the explanation, it is obvious that to identify the principle in a certain textbook, it requires observation of the implementation of the materials. Since the present study is only about assessing the manuscript of the textbook, the fourth principle is not included.

*PMD 5: “Materials should require & facilitate learners’ self-investment.”* This principle suggests that materials and learning activities in the textbook should arouse learners’ attention, interest, and effort. In order to make it happen, Tomlinson (2011) suggests some ways to facilitate learners’ self-investment. The first way is by providing choices of focus and activity. The second way is by involving them in mini projects. The last way is by asking them to find additional materials from other resources to support the main materials they learn as well as offering opportunities to the learners to choose text and how to use them.

*PMD 6: “Learners must be ready to acquire the points being taught.”* This principle shows that readiness in learning activity is needed because the learners cannot perform well when they are not ready (Tomlinson, 2011). Based on the sixth

principle, learner' readiness can be achieved when the materials presented are comprehensible and slightly above the learners' current proficiency. In order to identify the availability of the sixth principle, direct observation about the implementation of the materials is demanded. The researcher needs to know about the learners' current proficiency to decide whether or not the materials fulfill the indicator in which the materials should be slightly higher than the learners' current proficiency. Therefore, the sixth principle is not included as it requires direct observation of the implementation of the learning materials.

*PMD 7: "Materials should expose learners to language in authentic use."* This Authentic use of a language deals with the use of the language in the real life. Dealing with the seventh principle, Tomlinson (2011) suggests language materials should contain many types of authentic materials, such as articles in newspaper or in news site, recipe, manuals and song in order to expose the learners to the authentic use of a language. The authentic materials for the learners should have variation in style, mode (either spoken or written form), media (e.g. newspaper, recipe, magazine and advertisement) and purpose (e.g. informing the readers and convincing someone to buy something) (Tomlinson, 2011).

*PMD 8: "The learners' attention should be drawn to linguistic features of the input."* This principle shows that linguistic features in English relate to the use of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanical aspects of writing (Budiharso, 2006). Based on the eight principle, an effective way to draw students' attention to the linguistic feature of the input is by using experiential discoveries where the students are lead to respond to the content of a text first and make discoveries by themselves about the form and function of a certain feature (Tomlinson, 2013). Another way is by using a form focused approach; the learners focus first on the

meaning of a text then move on to the form and function of a particular feature in the text through instruction (Tomlinson, 2013)

*PMD 9: "Materials should provide learners with opportunities to use target language to achieve communicative purposes."* The ninth principle focuses on the materials in the textbook should provide opportunities to make the learners use the target language for communication (Tomlinson, 2011). There are some ways in providing opportunities for the learners to achieve communicative purposes (Tomlinson, 2011). The first way is through information or opinion gap activities in which the learners are required to communicate with their peers or their teacher to complete the information. The second way can be done through post-listening and post-reading activities. The third one is through creative writing and creative speaking like composing a story or having classroom drama activity.

*PMD 10: "Materials should take into account that the positive effects of instruction are usually delayed"* This principle shows that positive effects refer to the learners' ability in using the language for communication. According to Tomlinson (2011), the learners cannot learn a new feature and be able to use it effectively in the same time. They can still produce the language right after they learn it or when the materials are prompted by the teachers but they may forget it after a while. In relation to the tenth principle, the learning materials in the textbook should be rich of exposure to achieve the positive effects of instruction. Tomlinson (2011) suggests that "the learners cannot be forced into premature production of the instructed materials because they will get them wrong". The materials developers should provide frequent and plenty of tasks for the students to practice in order to prepare them before producing the language or having test.

*PMD 11: “Materials should take in account that learners differ in learning style.”*

Learning styles deal with the preferred way(s) of the learners in learning a language (Tomlinson, 1998). Each learner may have different learning style (Tomlinson, 2011) such as visual (learners prefer to see language written down), auditory (e.g. learners prefer to hear the language) and kinaesthetic (e.g. learners prefer to do something physical, such as following instruction for a game). In this case, Tomlinson suggests that materials developers should be aware of the students’ preferred learning styles (Tomlinson, 2011). The activity in a textbook should be flexible in terms of learning activities. It should expose the learners to different kinds of activities, tasks, and projects to accommodate the different learning styles of the learners (Tomlinson, 2013).

*PMD 12: “Materials should take in account that learners differ in affective attitudes.”* In term of instructional process, affective usually relates to learners’ motivation and positive feelings towards the target language, their teachers, their peers, and the materials themselves. Each group of learners has different positive feelings. It is obvious that there is no material developer that can keep the positive feeling towards those variables. Dealing with the twelfth principle, Tomlinson (2011) suggests diversifying the materials. In other words, the materials in the textbook should be varied by having different types of texts. The materials should have different types of learning tasks and offer opportunities to the learners to share their attitude and their feelings towards the course and the materials.

*PMD 13: “Materials should permit a silent period at the beginning of instruction.”*

Silent period refers to Krashen’s concept (1982) of a period when a new English language learner is not willing to produce words in the target language orally (Cunningham & Shagoury, 2016). When they are silent, they are still learning

through listening to others; conversation, understanding what they hear, and observing what happens in the interaction. Based on this principle, the materials should not force the students to produce language at the beginning of the lesson Tomlinson (2011). It should present activities which require the students to comprehend first, such as listening comprehension and reading comprehension. It also includes introducing new vocabulary and structures through stories which can be responded by the students by using their first language.

*PMD 14: "Materials should maximise learning potential by encouraging intellectual, aesthetic & emotional involvement which stimulates both right and left brain activities."* Based on this principle, the learning materials should make the students to make use of their thought and feeling (Tomlinson, 2011). The materials should not be "trivial or banal" (Tomlinson, 2011:21). The fourteenth principle is left out after referring to what Tomlinson (2011) says in his explanation. Based on the statement from Tomlinson (2011) that the materials cannot be simple for the students, it is known that direct observation is required in order to identify the availability of the fourteenth principle. The direct observation is needed to check the learner's current proficiency.

*PMD 15: "Materials should not rely too much on controlled practice."* Controlled practices deal with dialogue practice, grammar practice, listening drills and repeating dialogues (Tomlinson, 2011). Practice activities are designed to give opportunities for the learners to practice their ability in using the target language in appropriate way (Tomlinson, 2008). Controlled practice can mean wasting of time because the learners only follow the situation created without trying to create their own situation. Based on the fifteenth principle, Tomlinson (2011) suggests reducing the frequency of having controlled practice in the learning materials. The materials for the learners should be flexible (Tomlinson, 2014). It means that the materials

offer some choices to the learners to create their own situation when practicing their language.

*PMD 16: “Materials should provide opportunities for outcome feedback, especially feedback on the effectiveness of use of language rather than accuracy of language.”*

Feedback can be considered as information produced by an agent such as teacher, peer, book, parent, self or experience dealing with the aspect of someone’s performance or understanding (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). There are two main functions of feedback such as to let the learners know that they do the right thing and to encourage their motivation in learning the language. Based on the sixteenth principle, materials should provide a lot of opportunities for the learners in order to gain feedback. In this case, the opportunities deal with the learners’ attempts in using the target language in communication (Tomlinson, 2008, 2011). The feedback should focus first on the effectiveness of the output produces by the learners (i.e. does it achieve the learning objective?).

## 2.2. Previous Research Review

There were some previous studies dealing with textbook analysis used in this research. The first one is from Iswidiyanti (2009) in which the research findings showed that the writing materials in the textbook “The Bridge English Competence” published by Yudhistira were not exactly relevant with the standard and basic competences in the School-Based curriculum. Further, Wahyuningsih (2012) in her research notes that the reading materials in the textbook “English in Focus” did not fulfill all the points dealing with the aspect of content, aspect of presentation, aspect of readability, and aspect of relation between chapters suggested by *Pusat Perbukuan*, Ministry of National Education. The next one was from Novianti’s (2014) work on textbook analysis that showed the English textbook

“Bright” for the seventh grade students fulfilled twelve principles out of the sixteen principles Tomlinson (1998).

The present research was almost the same as the third previous study mentioned above because the focus of both researches was assessing material in English textbook by using Tomlinson’s principles. But, there were some different aspects in terms of the principles used and the textbook being assessed. The previous study used all the sixteen principles while the present study focused on using ten principles that did not demand any direct observation of the implementation of the materials. In addition, the previous study analyzed the whole chapters of the textbook “Bright” for the seventh grade students at junior high school while the present study assessed one representative chapter of the textbook “Pathway to English” for the twelfth grade students of senior high schools.

### **3. The Study**

#### *3.1. Research design*

The design of this research was qualitative content analysis. Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, (2012 pp. 478) says that “content analysis is a technique that enables researchers to study human behaviour in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communication”. It is commonly used to analyse data in the form of text (Wahyuni, 2015). The text data can be in the form of verbal, print or electronic that can be from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus group, observations, or print media like articles, books, or manuals (Kondracki and Wellman 2002 in Wahyuni 2015).

### 3.2. *Research context*

The research was conducted in the context of EFL (English as a foreign language) where the students learning the language did not use English to communicate with their friends, parents and even their teachers outside their classrooms. This study focused on assessing the manuscript of textbook “Pathway to English”. The textbook was developed for Indonesian’s students where English is regarded as a Foreign Language (EFL). The textbook was widely used in Indonesia and became the “Top Brand for Teens”. It was developed by Sudarwati and Grace (2015) for grade XII students of senior high school for general program and was published by Erlangga. The textbook consisted of twelve chapters and was developed based on the current curriculum: curriculum 2013.

Meanwhile, this research focused on assessing chapter nine of the textbook. Analysing one chapter was considered representative since each chapter consisted of similar aspects and only the topic is different. The materials in chapter nine was about delivering information about events of the day and newsworthy events to audience. The main material was news item texts. Further, there were also materials about eye-catching words used in the news, passive voice, headline news and direct-indirect sentences.

### 3.3. *Research data and analysis*

The method for collecting data was through documentation. The research data were collected through labeling and coding system concerning the suggested aspects of Tomlinson’s (2011) principles of material development and some components in the chapter and tabulated the data in the form of table. The research instrument used in this study was a qualitative codebook. It was a table containing a list of codes that were designed beforehand for coding the data. The codes were derived from

Tomlinson's (2011) principles of material development. Besides containing a list of codes, the codebook also had a brief note of the explanation of each code.

## **4. Research result and Discussion**

### *4.1 The availability of Tomlinson's (2011) in the Chapter 9*

The fifth principle, "materials should require and facilitate learners' self-investment", related to the fact that students can gain profit if they invest their attention, effort and interest in learning activities. The chapter met the principles as it provided many types of learning activities such as: 1) *Activity 6*, "Listen to the recording again and imitate the radio broadcaster reading the news. Remember! // is for a pause and / for a short pause"; 2) *Activity 7*, "Analyze whether these two headlines have fulfilled the elements of what, who, where, when, why and how"; 3) *Activity 12*, "The following text tells us about the attitudes of a certain community in Yogyakarta towards pollution and global warming. Read it and then answer the questions"; 4) *Activity 38* "Perform a dialogue based on one of the following situations"; and 5) *Activity 40* "Write a newsworthy event into news"

The chapter also met the second indicator of the principle by providing small project in activity 31 "Practice writing attribution with your partner. Use correct punctuation" and also in activity 38 "Perform a dialogue based on one of the following situations". The chapter also enabled discovery learning for the students in activity 28 "Answer the following questions based on your analysis" and activity 29 "How to change an active sentence into a passive one?" It also met the need to involve the students to find supplementary materials in activity 9 by asking the students to find a piece of news in Bahasa Indonesia then compare its elements with the one in English news.

In the seventh principle, “material should expose to language in authentic use”, there were three indicators as a whole such as the applicability of authentic, rich and various materials. The chapter provided authentic materials in the form of texts that were taken from The Jakarta Post. The chapter also provided rich feature as it explained the students about the construction of eye-catching newspaper headlines, the tenses used in headlines, and attribution of the texts. The materials were also varied in terms of mode (using the recording taken from the actual news program but also the texts that were also taken from the actual news site) and media (the materials were taken from radio broadcasting and newspaper).

Based on the eighth principle, “the learners’ attention should be drawn to linguistic features of the input”, focused on the approach of teaching grammar to the students that should be based on form focused approach. The indicator was met by the chapter. The materials of grammar, especially passive voice and headline news were taught indirectly. The materials were presented through the text that had been discussed before. However, there was no material of direct and indirect speech included in the chapter.

As to PMD 9, there were three indicators to meet: providing information or gap activity, post listening and post reading activity, and also activity for creative writing and speaking. Information gap activity was found in activity 19 part B “Complete the sentences with the information from the news above”. Post reading activities was available as well, for example in activity 13 where the students were asked to discuss about the ways to reduce pollution and to slow down global warming the topic that still has relation with the previous text. The chapter provided creative writing activity in activity 41 where the students needed to recall

the recent event happening in their school, neighborhood or their country as their idea then write the news about the event.

As regards the tenth principle, there were two indicators to meet: providing rich exposures to prepare for language production and not forcing premature language production. The chapter met the first indicator as it exposed the students to many activities such as completion, answering WH questions, True-False items, role playing and writing news at the end of the activity in the chapter. Furthermore, the students were not forced into the premature production of the language. The students were introduced to how to read a piece of news and how a newsreader read a news program to prepare them for speaking activity. Then, they were exposed to some activities such as analyzing the aspects of news, the text organization and language features of a news item, reading some texts to let them know about the news vocabulary, writing down newspaper headlines, practicing to write attribution, composing newsworthy events, rearranging background events into the correct order. At the end, they had to produce their own news item.

PMD 11 suggested that the materials in the textbook should contain various learning activities to cater different students' learning style. The materials in the chapter 9 were appropriate for visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. There were many written texts provided for visual learners. It also fit auditory learners by providing listening activity, and discussion among the students. The chapter also provided activity for kinaesthetic learners in the form of role playing activity (activity 38).

As to the twelfth principle, the learning materials should provide varied types of text types and learning tasks as well as provide stimulating activities. The chapter

especially focused on news item texts with different topics e.g. flood, robbery and global warming. It also had various types of activities, for example answering WH questions, true false items, discussion, doing role play and writing their own news. It also provided stimulating activities such as in activity 9 in which the students were asked to find news in Bahasa Indonesia then compared it with the news in English, then to have discussion with their partner about the differences and similarities between the news in Bahasa Indonesia and in English.

As regards PMD 13, there were two indicators to fulfill: the availability of comprehension activities before language production and introducing new vocabulary and structure. The chapter allowed the students to have comprehension activity at the very beginning. The activities started from listening section in the form of completing the script, answering some questions, and completing some information based on the monolog. Then the students were asked to answer questions which demanded their comprehension about the monolog and the texts for reading activities. Finally, they had to produce language by doing role play and produced their own writing dealing with newsworthy event. The chapter also met the second indicator in which the students were introduced into some unfamiliar words used in English news. For the structure, the students were introduced to passive voice. The structure was introduced through text where the students were asked to analyze the structure based on the sentences in the text they had read.

The fifteenth principle emphasized that the textbook should not provide much controlled practice. The controlled practice found in the chapter such as listening practice in which the students were asked to imitate the way the announcer reading news (activity 6), practicing to write correct attribution with their partners (activity 31), and creating newsworthy events based on the provided information (activity

33). Since the number of the controlled practice was limited, less than the one quarter of the total learning activities, it was known that the chapter met the fifteenth principle.

The focus of the sixteenth principle was on how the materials could give many opportunities for the students to gain and provide feedback. The chapter met this principle since it provided the students with some activities for the students to have discussion that enable the students could provide and gain feedback from the teacher and their friends as well. Further, the students also could gain feedback in activity 41 where they were asked to write a newsworthy event into news based on the students own experiences. They should consult their work with the teacher then they were required to check each other works, among the students, using the provided checklist in the chapter.

#### *4.2. Discussion*

The finding of this study provided evidence that the materials in the textbook, especially in chapter nine, met the Tomlinson's (2011) principles of material development as it provided the suggested aspects as explained in the principles. By meeting the principles, it was known that the materials in the textbook, especially in chapter nine were theoretically appropriate for facilitating the students in learning English. Further, the result of the analysis argued against the idea that the textbook sometimes was developed based on commercial purposes only.

Based on the result of the analysis, it was known that the result of this study was different from the previous studies. Isdiwiyati's (2014) work showed that writing materials in the textbook "The Bridge English Competence" were not exactly relevant to the School-based Curriculum. Wahyuningsih's (2012) also mentioned

that reading materials in textbook “English in Focus” did not fulfil the aspects of textbook from Pusat Perbukuan. Those two studies only focused on assessing certain materials in the textbooks for certain skills (i.e. writing and reading) by using the standard curriculum while the present study used Tomlinson principles to assess the content of the materials. Moreover, the result of the present study was also different from the third previous study by Novianti (2014) although both of the studies used Tomlinson’s principles in assessing the materials. The present focused on assessing one chapter by using ten principles among the sixteen principles only while the previous study assessed the whole chapters of textbook “Bright” by using the whole principles. The previous study showed that the textbook only fulfilled twelve principles among the sixteen principles while the present study showed that the materials assessed met the ten principles.

By looking at the analysis, there were some strengths of the chapter being assessed. First, it provided the students with many types of learning activities such as imitating monolog (pronunciation), analyzing the elements of news headline, and performing dialogue (speaking) as well as writing a newsworthy event into news based on their experience. Second, it made the students to master one by one aspect before producing language by exposing the students to how a newsreader read a news program at the very beginning, then building their understanding about texts, the organization of the news item, the attribution, and the idea of the news before they wrote their own news. Third, the chapter had follow up activity after reading activity in the form of students’ discussion about the topic being discussed in the texts. Fourth, it gave opportunities for the students to gain feedback from other students through discussion and also checking each other’s writing. Fifth, the students were exposed to grammar indirectly by comprehending texts first before moving to the feature of the text.

However, the materials in the chapter also had some weaknesses as well. First, there was no follow up activities for listening. The material developers only provided follow up after reading activity. Second, there was no image provided in the text that could strengthen students' understanding about the content of the text. Third the material developers did not include materials of direct and indirect speech in the chapter. Fourth, the presentation was less interesting because the colors were only black, white, and orange at some aspects.

## **5. Conclusion**

This research was done in order to assess the content of textbook "Pathway to English" especially the content of chapter nine by using some of the principles of material development composed by Tomlinson (2011). It can be concluded from the research finding that the materials in chapter 9 met the ten principles of material development from Tomlinson (2011). The chapter being analysed could be used as a source of learning materials and could help the students in learning English since it met the suggested aspects from Tomlinson (2011).

The present study confirms that the textbook "Pathway to English" for the twelfth grade students was not developed based on the commercial purposes only. The textbook was theoretically appropriate with the principles of material development from Tomlinson (2011). However, further investigation that involves direct observation about the implementation of the materials can be conducted to strengthen the present research. The further investigation is needed to confirm the idea whether or not the materials of the textbook fit the classroom condition.

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