Strategic Competence in Developing English Textbooks for Senior High Schools in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT
Strategic competence is paramount to be developed in English textbooks for senior high school students to achieve English communicative competence. This qualitative content analysis research aims to investigate the extent to which the English textbooks for senior high schools (SMA) in Indonesia have contained the strategic competence to help senior high school students use English communicatively and fluently in real-life communication. Content analysis research method was used to conduct this research from May to July 2021 in Indonesia with the data collected from English textbooks for Senior High Schools (Grades X, XI, and XII) developed by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Indonesia to be used nationwide. NVivo R1-5 software was used to process the collected data and to help the researcher analyse and interpret the data processing results. The findings of this research demonstrate that the three English textbooks (Grades X, XI, and XII) do not provide the material equally for the students to obtain strategic competence. Book X provides more material for *strategic competence* than Book XI and Book XII do. *Kappa reliability test* in NVivo R1-5 was used to test the trustworthiness of this research, the result of which is excellent with the value of >0.75. Because Book XI and Book XII still lack the material for the students to achieve strategic competence as a required competence to promote their English communicative competence, it is recommended that all the three books need to be revised for future use.

Keywords: English textbook, communicative competence, strategic competence

INTRODUCTION

English as a school subject in junior and senior high schools in Indonesia is designated as a foreign language as stipulated in Law Number 24 of 2009. This policy becomes an obstacle for students in communicating fluently and communicatively in English in their daily life because students are not exposed to English outside the school environment after they finish their lessons at school. To help students communicate fluently in English in Indonesia, even though English is a foreign language, the Indonesian Government through the Ministry of Education always strives for every new school curriculum to contain English communicative competence. This policy enables the English textbook writers to develop the English textbook content to promote students' English communicative competence as reflected in the 2013 Curriculum which is currently in effect throughout Indonesia.

Communicative competence is defined as a language speaker's ability to use English well in real-life communication (Celce-Murcia, 1995; Richards, 2001; Richards & Schmidt, 2010; Strazny, 2011). This idea implies that to be able to communicate in English fluently and appropriately, an English learner needs to be communicatively competent. The concept of communicative competence has been widely implemented in communicative English learning-teaching since it was firstly used by Dell Hymes in response to Noam Chomsky who does not consider social aspects as linguistic elements. Hymes argues that sociolinguistic competence and linguistic competence are inseparable and therefore need to be mastered by a language learner, an idea which is opposed by Chomsky (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

Writers of English textbooks for senior high schools in Indonesia had instilled communicative competence in the English textbooks they developed. It is expected that such an effort helps the English learners in Indonesia, particularly senior high school students, to speak English well in their real communication both outside and at school. This goal certainly requires the English textbook writers to design and develop the content of the textbooks to cover the supporting competencies, one of which is *strategic competence*.

Strategic competence plays a very significant role in making a language speaker use English smoothly because, as stated by Savignon (2018), strategic competence becomes a way or a strategy that a speaker uses to solve the problems emerging when he or she gets involved in a communication. In this context, when a speaker does not understand a word, or when he or she finds it very difficult to communicate fluently due to grammatical or vocabulary problems or lack of related knowledge, he or she knows what to do. It is in this context that strategic competence is badly needed to keep on communicating well in English. Preliminary research results, based on the brief interview with some senior high school teachers using the textbooks, indicate that students still find it difficult to be communicatively competent in English. It is suspected that the lack of material or content related to strategic competence in the English textbooks triggers the senior high school students in Indonesia to be unable to communicate in English communicatively.

Problems that the students in Indonesia frequently face in English spoken communication is not only connected with vocabulary and grammar mastery but also related to the communication strategies that they are supposed to have to overcome any English barrier in communication. Thus, these communication strategies should have been well developed in the English textbooks for senior high school students through words, phrases, or expressions that students can use when they experience difficulty in communicating their ideas. It is

expected that the results of this research enlighten related parties in Indonesia in developing English textbooks for senior high schools in terms of providing the textbook content related to strategic competence.

Besides, this research is considered important due to the fact that some research evaluating senior high school textbooks in Indonesia do not specifically discusses the strategic competence for English communicative purpose. Some studies related to analysing the content of English textbooks for senior highs schools in Indonesia have been conducted by, for instance, Noviyanti et al. (2015) and Sholihah (2022), but their focus is not on researching the strategic competence.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia provided all senior high schools all around Indonesia with English textbooks that students can download freely from the Internet. The free English e-textbooks help the senior highs school students nationwide during the Covid-19 pandemic because they can access the electronic English textbooks from their homes freely. This program protects students from the possibility of being exposed to Covid-19. Providing these free English textbooks online helps the Indonesian Government's program of Learning from Home runs quite well. In this case, students do not need to go to bookstores to find and buy the English textbooks they need for their English subject. The schools that cannot access the textbooks online due to bad internet connection can still get them because the government distributes the books to all schools in Indonesia although with a limited number of textbooks.

The fact is that the English textbooks are not as expected by the senior high school teachers and students in terms of the provision of textbook content in connection with strategic competence as reported by the English teachers in the preliminary study. As determined in the Indonesian 2013 school curriculum, English is taught at school to make the students be able to communicate well in English. However, students still face difficulties in promoting their English communicative competence because they do not know the solution to their problems in real communication. Students, for example, do not know what to do in their real communication when they have problems related to grammatical expressions or unknown vocabulary. In short, they have no way out when they have problems in expressing their ideas in real daily communication. Such problems will certainly be solved if the content of the English textbooks provides strategies through English expressions that can promote students' strategic competence. Thus, the English textbooks must contain the material for the students to learn to promote their strategic competence.

In brief, to be communicatively competent in English communication, students of senior high schools in Indonesia are advisable to be provided with English textbooks that contain the material or expressions related to the strategic competence. Based on the preliminary study result related to the content of the English textbooks selected for this content analysis study, the content of the selected textbooks was not well developed in terms of the topics or the materials that the learners can learn to promote their strategic competence. The English textbooks for this study seem to ignore the content that contains the strategies for the students to overcome the obstacles they face in their real communication. Such a condition becomes the important basis for this research to be conducted. Therefore, this research aims to investigate whether or not and to what extent the English textbooks for senior high school in

Indonesia have been developed to provide the material for the students to learn in order to enhance their strategic competence. The result of this research is expected to give a significant contribution to related stakeholders: global English textbooks writers to develop good English textbooks and Indonesian English textbooks for senior high school students, in particular, to revise and develop the textbooks with better content, English teachers to teach with reliable textbook content, senior high school students to learn better, and the Indonesian Government to make a good decision in connection with curriculum and textbooks development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic competence is one of the English competencies that a learner needs to acquire to have English communicative competence. Strategic competence by Littlewood (2011) is categorized as sociolinguistic competence because it provides students with the knowledge that they need in order to use a language appropriately in the social context. Strategic competence, which is stated by Celce-Murcia (1995; 2007) to become one of the competencies to promote students' communicative competence, aims to help the students strategically deal with any problems that they have in their communication. What is implied from the above-mentioned points is that students need the material for them to learn from the available English textbooks they use in their lessons at school. They need to learn the ways of solving communication problems occurring in their real-life communication.

The other conceptual meanings about strategic competence are formulated by several scholars. Ayedoun et al. (2019) formulate that strategic competence is meant as students' ability to communicate in a language appropriately. This concept is similar to what Jin (2017) says that strategic competence is considered as a metacognitive strategy that helps a speaker to be able to use a language contextually. Bachman and Palmer (2010) also add that strategic competence as a non-linguistic aspect helps learners or speakers of a language to communicate appropriately.

The importance of strategic competence for English learners to achieve is also supported by Canale (2013) and Canale and Swain (1980). They argue that strategic competence plays a role in enhancing speakers' communication. In line with this notion, Bachman (1995) says that strategic competence deals with cognitive processes that connect with language use. Strategic competence as part of a cognitive process is also discussed by Cheng et al. (2020) who consider it beneficial for students in their situational or contextual language use. Fernandez (2018), who researched IELTS test takers' speaking performance, supports that strategic competence helps the speaking test takers to speak well and manage the problems they face during the speaking test. They can respond to the examiner's questions because they know the strategies to answer.

The functional definition of strategic competence is also formulated by several scholars. Canale and Swain (1980) argue that strategic competence functions to compensate the students' lack of linguistic ability or linguistic knowledge when they communicate in a language. A similar functional notion of strategic competence is summarized by Rabab'ah (2016) who says that strategic competence is considered as any technique or strategy that students use in their daily communication to help them keep on being able to communicate when they lack linguistic knowledge. *Strategic competence* is important as one of the bases for the students to gain communicative competence for their real communication. These ideas imply that students as

language users try to solve their problems in their English communication by using strategies through the expressions or English textbook content that they have learnt.

Strategic competence as a useful strategy in English communication is also proposed by several experts. Zhu et al. (2019) say that strategic competence can improve students' speaking ability. In UKEssays (2018) it is stated that strategic competence can be defined as the method used by speakers of a language when they experience language difficulties so that communication between them continues to run well and both speakers are still able to understand each other. Strategic competence is useful for students to communicate well even though they might have communicative problems (Wang et al., 2015). The important role of strategic competence for students to achieve is argued by Canale (2013) that strategic competence helps speakers to use correct and appropriate utterances or expressions in an appropriate social context. It is the same as what Dornyei and Thurrell (1991) say that strategic competence is needed by users of any language, both first and second languages because communication disorders or difficulties can occur in all languages. However, the most dominant difficulty faced by a language user or by a student is when communicating in a foreign language because of the lack of knowledge of the foreign language user in communicating. These difficulties can be overcome if a student has strategic competence (Dornyei & Thurrell, 1991).

Specific categorization of the function of strategic competence is formulated by Canale and Swain (1980) by dividing it into three components: psycholinguistic, interactional, and communication continuity components. As a psycholinguistic component, strategic competence is a kind of verbal plan that speakers or learners of a language use to solve the problems they have when planning and executing the steps to gain the language communicative purpose. Strategic competence as an interactional component provides the learners with problem-solving strategies, namely a variety of meaning negotiation and correction systems. Strategic competence as communication continuity provides the learners with strategies to make the communication keep going despite some difficulties and to help the learners to think of and get alternative ways in their communication.

Referring to the ideas elaborated by the experts above, it can be said that strategic competence is an ability that must be possessed by language users in the form of strategies or ways that they can use so that they can get out of the linguistic problems they face in their real communication. Strategic competence is so important that it is recommended that English textbook writers develop materials related to strategic competence. Thus, students can learn the ways or strategies and be able to apply them as a solution when they have problems in communicating in English.

Strategic competence is grouped by Littlewood (2013) in the pre-communicative-activity stage of English teaching and definitely in English textbook development. The objective of the activities in the pre-communicative stage is to provide the learners with necessary linguistic knowledge in the form of expressions for the students to learn and master so that they will be able to achieve strategic competence. In this context, the students are expected to know how to use relevant strategic-competence-oriented expressions to be competent speakers.

In line with what Littlewood says above, Celce-Murcia (2007) argues that the materials that need to be developed in an English textbook for the students to learn to have strategic

competence are *self-monitoring-related expressions, metacognitive-oriented material, cognitive-related material, stalling* or *time-gaining-oriented material, memory-related* and *interacting-oriented material*. The *time-gaining-oriented* materials are, for example, *let me see, well, I think, uh, let's see, actually, as a matter of fact, um, er, hmm, basically, seriously, totally, clearly, literally, you see, you know, believe me, I guess, okay, so, right, uh huh, where was I?*

To provide the students with *memory-related* content of the English textbooks, Celce-Murcia (2007) suggests that there should be materials provided for the students to remember what they have learnt in the textbooks. Such materials can be presented in the form of knowledge-oriented or task-oriented materials. The task-oriented material can be in the form of practice activities or exercises for the students to practice using the language in real communication.

Celce-Murcia (2007) further says that the materials containing the metacognitive component are expected to be in the form of homework-oriented, self-evaluation-oriented and meaning-guessing-oriented materials. Cognitive-related materials can be strategies for the English learners to logically and analytically learn English to be able to outline, make a summary, take notes, manage and relearn the learning content. The self-monitoring-related materials are the expressions like *I mean …, what I mean is …* or *what I'm trying to say is that …* These expressions function to self-repair the students when they communicate to each other. Interacting-oriented materials are strategies to clarify, negotiate meaning, confirm, understand each other, ask for permission, request for advice, make an offer, and give permission and advice.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is qualitative-content-analysis the objective of which is to reveal whether or not the English textbooks for senior high schools in Indonesia have been developed comprehensively for the students to achieve their communicative competence, one particular of which is the strategic competence. The procedure of this research began with selecting the English textbooks for senior high schools in Indonesia, which were written based on the 2013 Curriculum and were used nationwide by all senior high school students in Indonesia. These English textbooks were selected on the basic reason that such textbooks are compulsorily used by all senior high school students all around Indonesia. Based on related references on English material development and students' communicative competence in general in strategic competence in particular, all the processes of collecting data and analysing data were done with the help of NVivo R1-5 software.

Bazeley and Jackson (2013) convince that processing and analysing data of content analysis research can be conducted well with the help of NVivo software. This research, therefore, used the newly-released NVivo R1-5 version. The stages of handling the data with NVivo R1-5 in this research were: (a) importing the English textbooks as the data source into NVivo; (b) coding the data which include open coding, axial coding and selective coding; (c) querying to visualize the findings and (d) analysing data findings.

The notional meaning of content analysis and qualitative content analysis is defined by some experts in this field. Content analysis can be viewed as a method, a technique, a procedure to collect, manage and analyse data from a text like words, phrases, meanings or the other kinds

of text content (Chelimsky, 1989; Weber, 1990; Krippendorff, 2004; Rose et al., 2015; Neuman, 2014). Qualitative content analysis is described by Drisko and Maschi (2016), Zhang and Wildemuth (2005) and Mayring (2014) as a technique of analysing and elaborating the content of any written text. This is the reason why the content analysis method was used to do this research. Qualitative content analysis research always needs the units of analysis and the unit of context. The unit of analysis is a part of a text that becomes the focus of analysis, while unit of context is a physical limit from which the data are taken (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005; Chelimsky, 1989). The unit of analysis of this research is the content related to strategic competence in the English textbooks for senior high schools in Indonesia, while the units of context are the English textbooks for senior high schools (Grade X, XI and XII) which were written based on 2013 Curriculum and were compulsorily used all around Indonesia.

The materials for strategic competence which are supposed to have been developed in the textbooks become the objects of this study. The English textbooks as the purposive sampling for this study are the digital English textbooks developed for and used by all senior high school students in Indonesia. The textbooks are: *Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK X by* Utami Widiati, Zuliati Rohmah, and Furaidah (Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, 2017), *Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK XI by* Mahrukh Bashir (Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, 2017), and *Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK XII by* Utami Widiati, Zuliati Rohmah, and Furaidah (Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, 2018).

As described earlier in this study, such English textbooks were selected because they were purposefully designed, developed and determined by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Indonesia to be used in all senior high schools all over Indonesia as regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 8 of 2016 concerning the Textbooks Used by Each Education level in Indonesia.

The technique of gathering data for this study was *document analysis technique*. The English textbooks as the documents from which the data were gathered were the 2013 Curriculum-based English textbooks for senior high schools in Indonesia as already stated above. The researcher was the instrument to collect the data as suggested by Heigham and Croker (2009) because the researcher knew the aspects related to the research context and setting. Besides, NVivo R1-5 was used to process and interpret the data as well as to make the final research writing. Analysing and interpreting the data were conducted with the help of query program in NVivo R1-5 based on the data-coding results. The query program in NVivo R1-5 and *cross-case analysis technique* were also used to compare categories from the coding results related to the strategic competence in the three textbooks.

Trustworthiness of qualitative research including is very important. Thus, to get the trustworthiness of this study, which consists of *credibility*, *confirmability*, *dependability* and *transferability*, the *Kappa statistic test* in NVivo R1-5 was used in addition to the other techniques like using thick and rich data description and audit trail. The *Kappa statistic test* in NVivo R1-5 was implemented to ensure that the reliability agreement level for data processing was achieved. The Kappa statistic test in NVivo was done by comparing two sets of data coding results of two independent coders. The agreement and disagreement level of the test was measured based on the standard proposed by Fleis et al. (2003), as presented below:

Poor agreement   = < 0.40
Fair to good agreement   = 0.40 – 0.75
Excellent agreement   = > 0.75

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings connected with the materials for *self-monitoring, metacognitive, cognitive, stalling* or *time-gaining, memory-related* and *interacting* which become the components of strategic competence are presented in Figures 1 and 2 below.
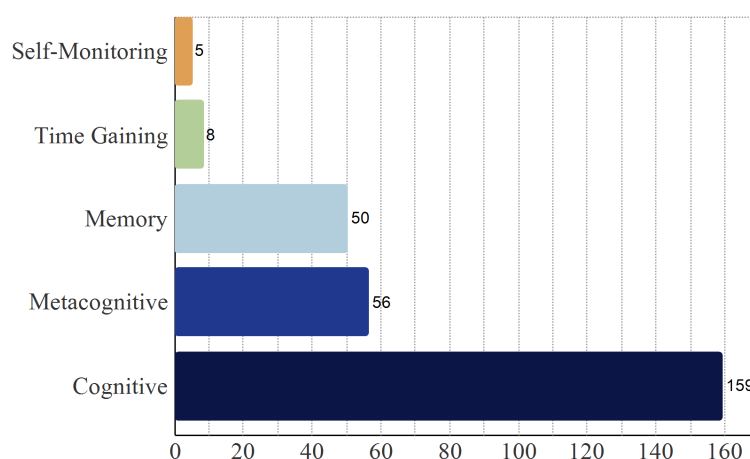

Figure 1: Overall-material coverage for strategic competence in Books X, XI and XII

Figure 1 above demonstrates that the cognitive-related materials are dominantly provided in the three English textbooks. The materials for metacognitive and memory-related purpose are also sufficiently developed in the three textbooks. The lowest number of materials are related to self-monitoring and time-gaining purposes. The portion of the content of the textbooks which is very dominant in the materials oriented to the cognitive abilities of students is closely related to one of the functions of learning English in senior high schools in Indonesia, which is oriented towards enabling the students to understand the relationship between language and culture. In addition to this function, before the National Examination was abolished in Indonesia, students were directed to be able to understand the national final exam questions which of course were closely related to the ability to analyze a problem, not to be able to orally communicate in English. The memory-related materials and metacognitive-related content are not far different from the cognitive-oriented materials. The self-monitoring and time gaining-oriented materials, in contrast, are less emphasized even though both of them are clearly directed to helping students be able to orally communicate in English.

The content related to self-monitoring and time-gaining materials as components of strategic competence as seen in Figure 1 above should have been developed in the three levels of the textbooks. Such materials are very important because, as explained in the literature review above, they can function to help the students overcome the hindrance in English communication. With such materials, the students are accustomed to practicing expressing their ideas in English so that their ideas can be well understood and received by others.

The materials for interacting purpose were not optimally developed either. The materials for certain aspects of interaction among speakers in communication were even not provided as presented in Figure 2 below.
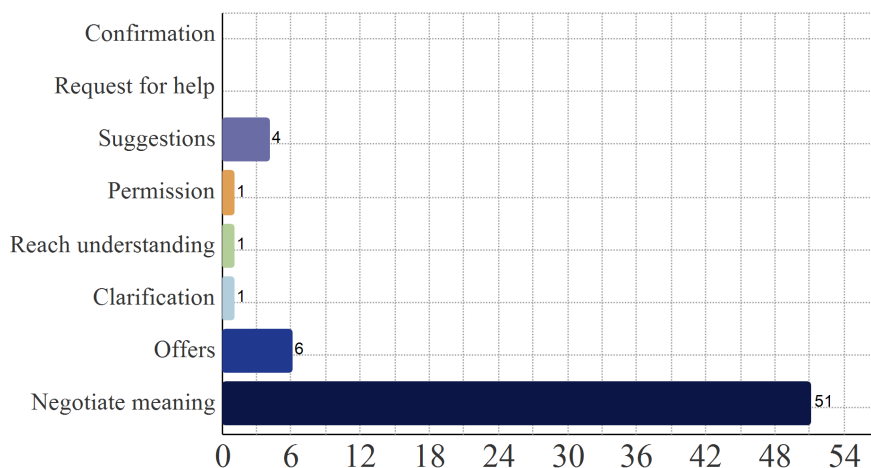

Figure 2: Overall-material coverage for interacting purpose

The materials for interacting purposes as seen in Figure 2 above are not equally provided. The materials for meaning negotiation are much more dominantly developed compared to other contents. The materials for confirmation and request for help are even not provided. Such a condition is again triggered by the orientation of English learning-teaching for SMA in Indonesia, which is not purely for spoken communication but more for written communication. The content of the textbooks was not really designed for equal purpose of both written and spoken communication. The impact of this imbalanced material development for spoken and written communication is that the students have been good at the knowledge about English not the skill to communicate orally. Thus, English learning-teaching materials are supposed to be developed for both oral and written communication, which has not been accommodated in the three textbooks.

The interacting-oriented materials play a fundamental role in students' English communication. They are required to learn and master such materials because they are badly needed in the real interaction of their real communication. The materials become the strategies for the students to clarify, negotiate meaning, confirm, understand each other, ask for permission, request for advice, make an offer, and give permission and advice in real-life communication. When the students are not accustomed to such materials because the materials are not provided in the textbooks, they will surely find it difficult to interact naturally and fluently in the English communication. Thus, such textbooks should provide the materials for the next revised edition.

The development of the materials for *time-gaining, memory-related, metacognitive, cognitive, self-monitoring* purposes in each textbook was not well developed. One of the indicators for this weakness is that the materials were not developed equally and in a balanced way in each textbook level as presented in Figure 3 below.
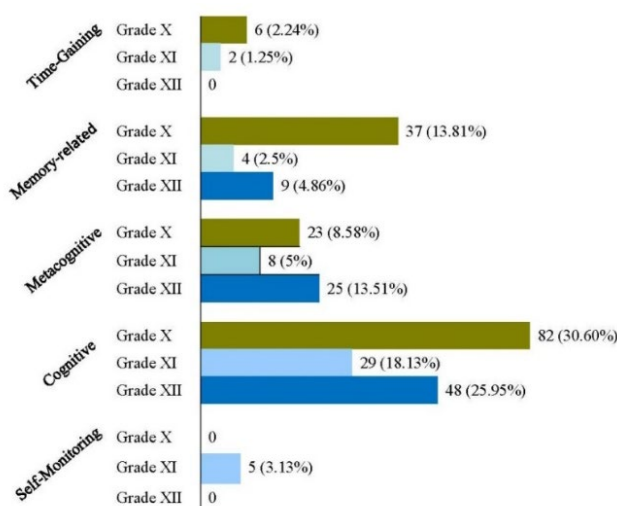
Figure 3: Material coverage for strategic competence in each book grade

The detailed coverage of the materials for strategic competence presented in Figure 3 above indicates that not all materials for each purpose are developed in each level of the English textbooks. The *stalling* or *time-gaining*-oriented materials are only provided in Books X and XI and with unequal numbers: Book X has 6 (2.24%) materials and Book XI provides 2 (1.25%) materials. Book XII does not contain the stalling-oriented materials. Stalling or time-gaining-related materials are necessary to be equally developed in all of the textbooks because such materials help the students to stall their speaking partners and to make the students not speak like a machine. The students need practice to have more time before they continue to speak when they find it difficult to communicate to their speaking partners (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

The *memory-related* materials which are necessary to help the students to remember what they have learnt (Celce-Murcia, 2007) are contained in Books X, XI and XII although the coverage is not equal. Book X has more materials, that is, 37 (13.81%) activities, than Books XI and XII, which cover only 4 (2.5%) and 9 (4.86%) materials respectively. These memory-oriented materials need to be provided well and equally in each textbook because the students can use them in the follow-up classroom activities for speaking purposes.

The *metacognitive* and *cognitive* materials are developed in the three English textbooks. Book XII has more metacognitive-related activities than Books X and XI. Of the total content for this purpose, Book XII has 25 (13.51%) materials, while Book X contains 23 (8.58%) materials and Book XI has only 8 (5%) activities. Meanwhile, Book X provides more cognitive materials, that is, 82 (30.60%), than Book XI with 28 (18.13%) materials and Book XII with 48 (25.95%) activities. Metacognitive materials need to be developed in each level of the textbook so that the students can use them to organize their learning outside school and learn to guess the meaning of words and understand grammatical concepts. *Cognitive* materials are also important to be developed in the English textbooks so that the students can learn again and review all materials that they have learnt in the textbooks.

The *self-monitoring-oriented* materials are developed in Book XI only. The other two textbooks book do not cover the topics of materials for this purpose. This fact is certainly detrimental to the students because they cannot learn how to prepare themselves for self-

monitoring goal during their communication with other people. So, the three English textbooks are expected to have such self-motoring-oriented materials.

The materials that were supposed to be developed in each level of the textbooks for interacting purposes in real life communication were not provided as demonstrated by Figure 4 below.
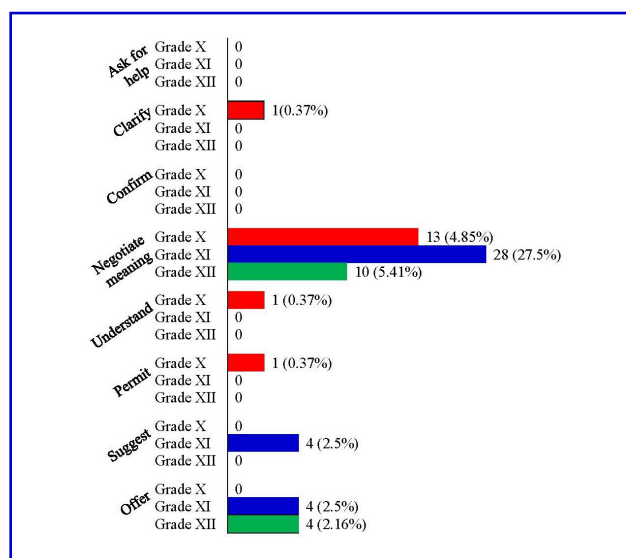

Figure 4: Material coverage for interacting purpose in each book grade

Figure 4 presents that the *interacting*-oriented materials are not developed in a balanced way in each textbook. There are not any materials in Book XI and Book XII for the students to learn related to *reaching understanding, requesting for* and *granting permissions*. Book X does not contain the materials connected with *asking for and giving advice* and *offers.* There are not any materials in Book XII related to *requesting for* and *granting advice.* Book X has one activity, 1 (0.37%), for the learners to *clarify*, *get understood,* and to *request for* and *grant permissions*. Book XI contains more materials for the students to negotiate meaning than Book X and Book XII. The materials for the students to make offers are only developed in Book XI and Book XII. The findings reveal that the materials for *strategic competence* are developed more in Book X than in the other two textbooks.

The findings in Figure 4 imply that the materials for spoken communication in the context of strategic competence were not well considered and developed by the writers of the textbooks. The materials tend to be oriented towards increasing the students' knowledge about English with the expectation that they are competent in written English. This concept certainly needs to be changed because strategic competence is important especially in spoken communication. With this competence students are able to communicate well in English.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The result of this study reveals that the English textbooks for senior high schools in Indonesia have been developed to meet the students' need in general and their strategic-competence goal in particular. Despite the lack of strategic-competence-oriented materials which are not developed equally in the three English textbooks, such English textbooks for senior high school students in Indonesia are resourceful enough for the students to develop their strategic

competence to promote their English communicative competence in their real-life communication. Therefore, it is advised that the three English textbooks for senior high school students in Indonesia are revised as soon as possible to provide the related materials for strategic competence in a balanced way. Each level of the English textbooks is recommended to be developed all materials equally for the students to achieve their strategic competence and promote their English communicative competence.

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