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## LEXICAL DENSITY IN EFL INDONESIAN TEXTBOOKS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

*The lexical density is known as the component determining the complexity level of the text. Hence, lexical density measurement is needed to determine how challenging a particular text is to read. However, it is important to know that the lexical density in English reading materials especially in Indonesian EFL textbooks between the Government Publisher and Non-Government Publisher is still less explored. This research will employ the Quantitative design to investigate how dense the lexical items are found in these two EFL Textbooks. The result showed that the lexical density of the non-government textbook is denser in all of the genres of the text compared to the government textbooks. In brief, by knowing the lexical density in the text, the teacher should have known what the appropriate text level should be taught to the students which is neither too low nor too high.*

**Keywords:** *Lexical Density, EFL, Textbooks*

### INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are the most frequently used resources in the teaching and learning process. They become the primary source that is the most easily obtained and directly aid pupils in getting clear conceptions of the topic matter. In Indonesia's educational system, moreover, textbooks are regarded as the primary component of the curriculum reflecting the curriculum's requirements in a single package encompassing the material, methods, and processes for teaching and learning in the classroom. It also gives teachers a methodical syllabus to follow when teaching a specific subject. Furthermore, approved publishers create textbooks based on the most recent curriculum. Once the Educational Ministry of Indonesia has announced a newly developed curriculum, numerous competitive publishers,

including experts in instructional material, will design and build new textbooks that comply with the curriculum.

In general, assessing EFL textbooks, particularly in terms of linguistic density, is required to verify that the textbooks utilized properly facilitate teachers' instructional objectives. Furthermore, measurement of lexical density is needed to find out how challenging a particular text is to read. As a result, it will be easier to catch what aspects of the text that tend to be key factors making the text complex such as the sophistication of vocabulary, the sentences and syntax aspect, and the measurements of the coherence as a whole text, etc. (Brown and Kappes, 2012).

However, it is important to know that the lexical density in English reading materials in Indonesian EFL textbooks between different publishers, particularly the comparison of Government and Non-Government publishers, is still less explored, and therefore a thorough investigation is needed as the different publishers tend to represent the lexical density level variously. Therefore, this recent study will investigate the lexical density level found in two EFL textbooks from two different publishers by focusing on three aspects of analysis such as the comparison of the lexical density index, the lexical items, and the genre.

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **EFL Textbooks**

A textbook is one of the instructional media that plays a significant part in the teaching-learning process. A textbook is a type of teaching material that serves as the subject matter as outlined by the curriculum. It is the primary source used to guide learners/students in learning the subject knowledge.

Despite the increasing diversity of educational resources and technologies, textbooks continue to be the single most essential source of support for teachers and students. According to Cunningsworth (1995), textbooks provide important roles in the teaching-learning process functioning as an effective tool for independent learning, an efficient resource for presentation material, a reference of ideas and activities, a reference

source for students, a syllabus in which pre-determined learning objectives are reflected, and assistance for less experienced teachers who have yet to feel more confident.

Cunningsworth (1995) also suggested four qualities of a successful textbook. To begin, a good textbook should correspond to the demands of the learners as well as the goals and objectives of the language learning program. Second, they should represent the subject's practical application for the students. Good textbooks in language learning should prepare students to utilize language effectively for their purposes. Third, a good textbook should consider students' learning needs and support their learning process without prescribing a strict "system." Last, they should have a clear function in facilitating learning. According to Harmer (2007), the most crucial part of textbook utilization is for teachers to engage students with the topic they will be dealing with.

Hence, in EFL scope, textbooks become such important components of the teaching-learning English as a foreign language. It can be used as a main guide, either as instructional media or as curriculum-based lesson materials.

### **Lexical density**

According to Johansson (2009), lexical density is the term that is usually used to describe the proportion of lexical words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and often also adverbs) to the total number of words. Similarly, Gerot and Wignell (1994) defined lexical density as a measurement of the amount of content information in a clause or text calculated by dividing the number of lexical words in and the total number of the clause. Nevertheless, this classification is not a definition of lexical density but it implied how the lexical density is measured or calculated. Therefore, it is safe to define lexical density as the degree of richness of a text in terms of meanings, ideas, and information presented. Moreover, Halliday (1989) defined lexical density as the appearance of how dense information/idea is presented and realized by content words or lexical items, not by the function word or the grammatical items.

Based on the explanation above, it is synthesized that lexical density is one kind of measurement to know how rich and how dense the text information or ideational meaning is presented. In measuring lexical density, it is important to know some word

compositions that appeared in the text. Eggins (2004) stated that a text consists of two major proportions of words which are the content-carrying words (lexical items) and grammatical function words (grammatical items). Content words or Lexical Items consists of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverb of manner while grammatical items consist of pronoun, determiners, auxiliary verbs, preposition, and conjunction. However, only the lexical items are measured in determining lexical density because the lexical items or content words are words that deliver the high information that determines whether the text is easy, moderate, or hard. Hence, the classification of lexical items is listed below as stated by Eggins (2004).

In the discourse, nouns are generally functioning as the subject or object of a clause sentence or the sentences. The noun can be the form of the names of things, places, persons, professions, activities, events, etc. In detail, there is some classification of nouns. Firstly is the common noun. The common noun refers to common vocabularies, which can be persons, places, or common things in general and it is not capitalized. Secondly, is the proper noun, which is the opposite of a common noun, normally used to state a specific detail and it always appears in the capital formation in the beginning letter. The proper noun can be the specific names of someone, places, or other things. The next type of noun is the Compound noun which is the combination of two or more words that is functioned together as a single noun. Other types are gerund and nominalization in which the base verbs are added by some kind of prefix or suffix to form a new lexical meaning of the noun.

Next, Verbs or precisely the Lexical verbs are generally functioning as the predicative sign of a clause or a sentence. A verb identifies the happening, action, or state of something which have a significant role in any part of clauses or sentences. In detail, there are some categorizations of lexical verbs. It can be formed by base verbs, regular/irregular verbs, and transitive/intransitive verbs.

Others lexical items are Adjectives and Adverbs of Manners. In the text, these two kinds of words act importantly to give additional information to the subject, predicate, and object of the clause or sentence. Generally, adjective functions to modify the subject or the

object which are nouns, or noun phrases. While the adverb of manner functions to modify the lexical verbs acted as a predicate in a clause or sentence.

Several studies have shown the analysis of lexical density in EFL textbooks. To and Mahboob (2017) examined the lexical density of textbooks used in TEFL using the SFL approach. After analyzing 24 readings, the result showed that the more complex the language feature, the more advanced the levels of the books.

Putra and Lukmana (2017) also investigated the complexity of reading text in English textbooks. They discovered that the complexity of the three textbooks, consisting of several aspects of analysis, namely, lexical density, lexical diversity, and grammatical intricacy, grew consistently from one grade level to the next level. Mulyanti & Soeharto (2019) also investigated the lexical density of reading text in the case of English junior-high-school textbooks. In contrast with other studies, they found out that the textbooks have an inconsistent development from lower to higher grades. Specifically, the reading materials in secondary grade textbooks are more complex than others in this case.

Similar to the previous study, Sari (2016) investigated the lexical density in three EFL textbooks graded from classes X, XI, and XII. The result showed that there are inconsistencies in lexical densities among grades and class XI has the lowest lexical densities among the rest. In other words, higher levels of texts do not necessarily guarantee higher lexical density indexes.

Prawinanto and Bram (2020) explored lexical density in an English Textbook for senior high school students by focusing on adjective and noun clause appearance. Results showed that there were three lexical density levels found in those adjective and noun clauses. The three levels were low, medium, and high.

Pintubatu and Gultom (2021) assessed the lexical density score in several texts in Look Ahead Textbook for Grade XII. The result of the study found that the level of lexical density of four out of six reading texts is low and the other two texts are considerably high.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the quantitative descriptive design will be employed. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework was used in this study to conduct a linguistic analysis of reading comprehension passages from the EFL textbooks selected.

EFL textbooks taken in this study consist of two textbooks in total. Both are from the 2013 curriculum (K13), namely *Pathway to English*, Published by Erlangga (Non-Government), and *Bahasa Inggris*, published by Kemdikbud (Government). All textbooks are tenth-grade level in which widely used as primary EFL textbooks in many senior high schools in Indonesia. There is a total of twenty texts analyzed, ten are from government textbooks and the other ten are from the non-government textbook.

In collecting data, this study employed Halliday's lexical density measuring formulas which counted the total number of lexical items divided by the total number of the ranking clause.

$$\text{Halliday's LD} = \frac{\text{total number of lexical items}}{\text{total number of ranking clause}}$$

Halliday (1985) found out that a typical average lexical density for written texts is between 3 and 6, depending on the text's formality. The higher the index, the more difficult the text is. Conversely, If the index ranged between 1.5 and 2, it will be considered the typical text for spoken language.

The levels of Lexical Density	Lexical Density index appearance
High	>7
Medium	3-6
Low	0-2

For Lexical density analysis, there are several procedures employed in this research. The following steps outline the procedure for assessing lexical density in the texts used for this study. First, ranking clauses of the text will be determined. Then, lexical items for each text will be identified and manually counted based on the classification of lexical items and grammatical elements. After determining the total words, lexical items, and ranking clauses, Halliday's lexical density formulas will be used to calculate the lexical density index. The same lexical density analysis would be applied to the rest reading texts in this study. Lastly, the results of lexical density calculations will be displayed in tables.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Lexical Density Index

#### *Descriptive*

Publisher	Descriptive Texts	$\Sigma$ Lexical items	$\Sigma$ Sentences	$\Sigma$ Ranking Clause	LD index	LD index Mean
Government	Text 1: Tanjung Puting National Park	199	22	39	5,1	5,1
	Text 2: Taj Mahal	137	17	26	5,3	
	Text 3: Niagara Falls	206	31	42	4,9	
Non-Government	Text 1: Soeharto	86	13	15	5,7	5,3
	Text 2: Semarang City	116	17	21	5,5	
	Text 3: Bali	79	11	17	4,6	

#### *Recount*

In reference to the table presented, it is stated that the Lexical Density index in the Descriptive genre showed the variation of six descriptive texts analyzed. In gov textbook, the highest index is the *Taj Mahal* text and the lowest is the *Niagara Falls*. In the non-gov textbook, the highest index was *Soeharto* and the lowest index was *Bali*. Interestingly, from both publishers, the last part of the descriptive text session tends to be easier than the previous texts. However, an overview of this table emphasizes that the descriptive genre in Non-Government textbook is slightly denser than the government textbooks although the texts in the government textbook are longer.

Publisher	Recount Texts	$\Sigma$ Lexical items	$\Sigma$ Sentences	$\Sigma$ Ranking Clause	LD index	LD index Mean
Government	Text 1: Meeting My Idol	144	26	45	3,2	4,2
	Text 2: Heroes Day	120	14	25	4,8	
	Text 3: B.J Habibie	215	31	46	4,7	
	Text 4: Cut Nyak Dhien	252	37	63	4,0	
Non-Government	Text 1: Peace Treaty and Mou	102	16	23	4,4	4,7
	Text 2: The Apollo Mission	115	15	21	5,5	
	Text 3: The Invention of penicillin	86	10	19	4,5	
	Text 4: The Invention of the telephone	82	11	19	4,3	

## Narrative

The table above illustrated the Lexical Density index in the Recount genre that showed some different indexes from the texts analyzed. In gov textbook, the highest index is *Heroes Day* text and the lowest is *Meeting My idol*. In non-gov textbooks, the highest index is *The Apollo mission* and the lowest index is *the invention of the telephone*. Furthermore, from both publishers, the second part of the Recount text session tends to be more complex than either the previous text or the texts presented ahead. Nevertheless, an overview of this table indicated that the recount genre in the NonGovernment textbook is denser than the government textbooks although the texts in the government textbook are a little bit longer.

Publisher	Narrative Texts	$\Sigma$ Lexical items	$\Sigma$ Sentences	$\Sigma$ Ranking Clause	LD index	LD index Mean
Government	Text 1: Issumboshi	281	51	78	3,6	3,3
	Text 2: The Legend of Malin Kundang	165	28	45	3,7	
	Text 3: Strong Winds	148	35	57	2,6	
Non-Government	Text 1: Miller and His son	150	15	39	3,8	3,8
	Text 2: Si Pahit Lidah (south sumatra)	163	24	38	4,3	
	Text 3: The Green Knight	165	32	50	3,3	

In the Narrative genre, it is stated that the Lexical Density index varies among the six texts analyzed. In gov textbook, the highest index is *Malin Kundang* and the lowest is *Strong Winds*. In the non-gov textbook, the highest index is *Si Pahit Lidah*, a fairytale from south Sumatra, and the lowest index is *The Green Knight*. Interestingly, from both publishers, the last part of the Narrative text session tends to be less dense than the previous texts. However, an overview of this table showed that the Narrative genre in the Non-Government textbook is denser than in the government textbook.

Aspects of Comparison	Publishers		More Complex
	Government	Non-Government	
LD Descriptive	5,1	5,3	Non-Government
LD Recount	4,2	4,7	Non-Government
LD Narrative	3,3	3,8	Non-Government



LD Total	12,5	13,8	
LD Average	4,2	4,6	Non-Government

The table above highlighted the summary of the Lexical Density of all genres in both publishers. In general, the lexical density of the non-government textbook is denser in all genres compared to the government textbooks. Halliday (1985b) found out that a typical average lexical density for written texts is between 3 and 6, depending on the text's formality. The higher the index, the more difficult the text is. Conversely, If the index ranged between 1.5 and 2, it will be considered the typical text for spoken language. From the table above, it is found that the majority of written texts showed LD scores in the range of 4. It means that the level of the written text in both textbooks is considered average. However, even though the level of lexical density of both textbooks is considered average, it is safe to say that the non-government textbook is a little more complex in terms of its lexical density than the government one in this case.

### Lexical Items Appearance

#### *Descriptive*

GENRE	Lexical Items Density					Total
	Noun		Lexical verbs	Adjectives	Adv, Manner	
	Common Noun	Proper Noun				
GD1	124	15	35	18	7	199
GD2	79	15	19	22	2	137
GD3	125	25	35	20	1	206
<b>TOTAL DESC.</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>542</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	60,5%	10,1%	16,4%	11,1%	1,8%	100,0

In a descriptive genre in the government textbook, *common nouns* highly dominated more than half per cent followed by *Lexical verbs* at 16,4 %, *Adjectives* at 11,1 %, *Proper Noun* at 10,1%, and closed *adverbs of manner* at 1,8%.

GENRE	Lexical Items Density	Total
JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy), ISSN 2598-8530, February, Vol. 7 No. 1, 2023		129

	Noun		Lexical verbs	Adjectives	Adv, Manner	
	Common Noun	Proper Noun				
	NGD1	51				
NGD2	55	32	15	11	3	<b>116</b>
NGD3	35	22	12	8	2	<b>79</b>
<b>TOTAL DESC.</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	50,2%	23,5%	14,6%	10,0%	1,8%	100,0%

In the descriptive genre in the nongovernment textbook, *common nouns* dominated half of the percentage followed by *Proper Nouns* in almost a quarter, lexical verbs at 14,6%, *Adjectives* at 10,0 %, and closed by the *adverb of manner* at 1,8%.

### **Recount**

GENRE	Lexical Items Density					Total
	Noun		Lexical verbs	Adjectives	Adv, Manner	
	Common Noun	Proper Noun				
GR1	73	11	41	18	1	144
GR2	62	22	26	8	2	120
GR3	105	57	43	7	3	215
GR4	99	71	67	11	4	252
<b>TOTAL REC.</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>731</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	46,4%	22,0%	24,2%	6,0%	1,4%	100,0%

In the Recount genre in the government textbook, *common nouns* almost took half of the percentage at 46,4%, followed by *lexical verbs* at almost a quarter, *proper nouns* at 22,0%, *Adjectives* at 6,0 %, and closed by the *Adverb of manners* at a small number.

GENRE	Lexical Items Density					Total
	Noun		Lexical verbs	Adjectives	Adv, Manner	
	Common Noun	Proper Noun				
NGR1	61	8	16	13	4	<b>102</b>
NGR2	63	11	24	8	9	<b>115</b>
NGR3	49	9	20	6	2	<b>86</b>

NGR4	45	13	19	5	0	<b>82</b>
<b>TOTAL REC.</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>385</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	56,6%	10,6%	20,5%	8,3%	3,9%	100,0%

In the Recount genre in the non-government textbook, *common nouns* took more than half of the percentage at 56,6%, followed by *lexical verbs* at 20,5%, *proper nouns* at 10,6%, *Adjectives* at 8,3 %, and closed by *Adverb of manners* at almost 4%.

### *Narrative*

GENRE	Lexical Items Density					Total
	Noun		Lexical verbs	Adjectives	Adv, Manner	
	Common Noun	Proper Noun				
GN1	67	17	54	25	2	<b>165</b>
GN2	51	14	64	18	1	<b>148</b>
GN3	109	29	103	37	3	<b>281</b>
<b>TOTAL NAR.</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>594</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	38,2%	10,1%	37,2%	13,5%	1,0%	100,0%

In the Narrative genre in the government textbook, *common nouns* almost took more than one-third of the percentage at 38,2%, followed by *lexical verbs* at 37,2%, *Adjectives* at 13,5 %, *Proper Nouns* at 10,1%, and closed by *Adverb of manners* at a small number.

GENRE	Lexical Items Density					Total
	Noun		Lexical verbs	Adjectives	Adv, Manner	
	Common Noun	Proper Noun				
NGN1	71	0	61	18	0	<b>150</b>
NGN2	66	31	34	27	5	<b>163</b>
NGN3	82	0	60	21	2	<b>165</b>
<b>TOTAL NAR.</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>478</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	45,8%	6,5%	32,4%	13,8%	1,5%	100,0

In the Narrative genre in the non-government textbook, *common nouns* almost took more than half of the percentage at 45,8%, followed by *lexical verbs* at 32,4%, *Adjectives* at 13,8 %, *Proper Noun* at 6,5%, and closed by *Adverb of manners* at 1,5%.

### Lexical items Comparison

#### *Descriptive*

Lexical Items	DESCRIPTIVE	
	Gov Book	Non-Gov BOOK
Common Noun	60,5%	50,2%
Proper Noun	10,1%	23,5%
Lexical Verbs	16,4%	14,6%
Adjectives	11,1%	10,0%
Adverb of Manner	1,8%	1,8%
<b>Total Percentages</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>100,0</b>

In the Descriptive genre, it is stated that the lexical item's appearance in both textbooks is highly dominated by the government textbook. The government textbooks outclassed the non-government textbooks in terms of *Common verbs*, *Lexical Verbs*, *Adjectives*, and *Adverbs of manner* except *Proper Nouns*. Moreover, from the table above, it can be synthesized from both publishers, that common noun in descriptive texts takes a dominant role with more than half of the percentage.

#### *Recount*

Lexical Items	RECOUNT	
	Gov Book	Non-Gov Book
Common Noun	46,4%	56,6%
Proper Noun	22,0%	10,6%
Lexical Verbs	24,2%	20,5%
Adjectives	6,0%	8,3%
Adverb of Manner	1,4%	3,9%
<b>Total Percentages</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

In the Recount genre, the table illustrated that the lexical item's appearance in both textbooks appears in equal numbers but non-gov textbooks took the majority of the lexical

items such as *Common Nouns, Adjectives, and Adverb of manner*. Otherwise, the government textbook is dominated by *Proper Nouns* and *Lexical Verbs*. Moreover, from the table above, it can be synthesized from both publishers, that *common noun* in recount texts takes a dominant role with a higher percentage and then followed by lexical verbs that also played important role in making clause and sentence in the recount text.

### ***Narrative***

Lexical Items	NARRATIVE	
	Gov Book	Non-Gov BOOK
Common Noun	38,2%	45,8%
Proper Noun	10,1%	6,5%
Lexical Verbs	37,2%	32,4%
Adjectives	13,5%	13,8%
Adverb of Manner	1,0%	1,5%
<b>Total Percentages</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

In the narrative genre, the table showed that the lexical item's appearance in both textbooks appears in equal numbers but non-gov textbooks took the majority of the lexical items such as *Common Nouns, Adjectives, and Adverb of manners*. Otherwise, government textbooks are dominated by *Proper Nouns* and *Lexical Verbs*. Moreover, from the table above, it can be synthesized from both publishers, that *common noun* in Narrative texts still takes a dominant role although not as big as the previous genres, then followed by lexical verbs in second place that showed a higher percentage than previous genres.

To sum up, *Common nouns, Proper nouns, Lexical verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs of manner* take a different frequent appearance. In both textbooks, and among all genres, *Common Nouns* dominated around half or more percentage of total words of other lexical items followed by *lexical verbs* in second spot, *Proper nouns* in third, *Adjectives* in the fourth rank of composition and *Adverb of manners* in the last.

The common noun is so significant choice in almost all of the genres dominating around half or more percentage of the total words of other lexical items. Common nouns can act as a key in determining the orientation and information of the text. The more

common noun of the text, the more informative the text is. As a consequence, the lexical density index also increased significantly.

In the proper noun case, it depends on the genre of the text. The descriptive tended to use proper nouns frequently by stating and repeating the descriptive object such name of the place, the name of a person, etc. Similar to descriptive, the recount text also use the proper nouns frequently by stating and repeating the descriptive object such as the name of places, the name of persons, and important events. In the Narrative case, most proper nouns stated the name of persons or place at the beginning but later, it changed to pronouns (for persons) or here/there (for place). In other words, the repetition in narrative tends to be lower than in other types of genres in this study.

Lexical verbs are one of the main parts of a clause or sentence. The use of verbs will signify the action and process that will happen to the text plot. In the case of lexical verbs, the narrative text, in two different publishers, takes more verb appearance than the other two genres. This may be caused by the use of multiple speech verbs such as said, replied, answered, believed, etc. These repetitions of verbs in either direct mode or indirect mode make the narrative text produce a higher number of verb appearances. The same case also appeared to be a recount and descriptive. Descriptive text tends to use many verbs to give actions and to inform something. In recount text, verbs are mainly used to tell the information and the sequence of the events about the topic.

In the case of Adjectives, Descriptive and Narrative provide an adequate appearance of adjectives since these two genres relied much on the characteristics of actors or places that occurred in the text. In the recount text, there are fewer adjectives because many recount texts in this study told about chronological orders that depend much on verbs and nouns which highly give important information about the events. Lastly, the last lexical item is the adverb of manners. This adverb provides additional information by modifying the lexical verbs that functioned as the predicate which affects the overall meaning of a sentence or a clause. This type of lexical item is rarely used in many texts in both textbooks.

## **CONCLUSION**

In brief, the lexical density of the non-government textbook is denser in all genres compared to the government textbooks. Even though the level of lexical density of both textbooks is considered average or moderate, it is safe to say that the non-government textbook is a little more complex in terms of its lexical density than the government one in this study due to the higher index than the government textbook. Moreover, *Common Nouns, Proper nouns, lexical verbs Adjectives, and Adverbs of manner* also take different percentages of composition in the text. In both textbooks, and among all genres, *Common Nouns* dominated around half or more percentages of total words of lexical items followed by *lexical verbs* in the second spot, *Proper nouns* in the third, *Adjectives* in the fourth rank of composition, and *Adverbs of manner* in the last. The result of this study can give a contribution to EFL teaching, especially for a teacher who wants to teach text to their students by selecting appropriate text to students' level in which the text is neither too low nor too high so that the learning outcome will be achievable. For future researchers, it is suggested to investigate other EFL textbooks or reading materials by using Halliday's formula or other different methods in measuring lexical density.

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