

TEXTBOOK EVALUATION: AN ANALYSIS OF LISTENING AND READING SKILL IN PROJECT LEVEL 1 (4TH EDITION) AND ACHIEVERS A1+

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Abstract: The present study evaluates the presentation of listening and reading skills in *Project level 1 (4th edition)* and *Achievers A1+* textbooks. The textbooks were evaluated by using the theoretical framework as proposed by Cunningsworth (1995). This research used qualitative content analysis as its research method. The results of this study show that both textbooks met the evaluation criteria proposed by Cunningsworth (1995) regarding the presentation of the listening skill. As for the presentation of the reading skill, *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook was considered as adequately met the requirement; while *Achievers A1+* might be more relevant to the evaluation criteria.

Keywords: *textbook evaluation, listening, reading*

INTRODUCTION

It is a general understanding that textbook is an essential component in teaching learning. For that reason, using the best or the most appropriate textbook for teaching and learning is very essential.

One of the ways to select the right textbook is through coursebook evaluation. The evaluation can be conducted “before a coursebook is used (pre-use evaluation), during its use (in-use evaluation), or after its use (post-use evaluation), depending on circumstances and the purposes for which the evaluation is being undertaken” (Cunningsworth, 1995: 14). Evaluating a textbook continuously and constantly is necessary in teaching and learning process.

Based on our experience working at some language courses in Surabaya for the past 5 years, we would say that some courses overlooked the importance of textbook evaluation. The current language courses that we worked at the time when we conducted this study, for example, had not evaluated their textbooks for more than 5 years. This further inspired us to do a research on textbook evaluation. We particularly would like to help the language courses that we worked at in finding new and appropriate English textbook to be used for their beginner learners.

This study focused on the evaluation of listening and reading skills published in 2 best sellers books for beginners, i.e. *Project level 1 (4th edition)* and *Achievers A1+*. We selected these 2 books because the course books have been the best sellers and used by many private schools and language courses in Surabaya and neighboring cities (N.N., a staff of *Mentari* bookstore, personal communication, March 19, 2016 and NN a staff of *Fenross* bookstore, personal communication, March 24, 2016).

We focused on listening and reading skills because these receptive skills are needed to develop learners' vocabulary, grammar and comprehension especially in the early stages of learning (see Renandya 2013 for further details). To evaluate the listening and reading skills presented in *Project level 1 (4th edition)* and *Achievers A1+*, we used the criteria proposed by Cunningsworth (1995) as follows:

Table 1. Checklist for Evaluating Listening Skill

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What kind of listening material is contained in the course?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Does listening form part of dialogue/conversation work?- Are there specific listening passages?2. If there are specific listening passages, what kinds of activities are based on them – comprehension questions, extracting specific information, etc.)?3. Is the listening material set in a meaningful context?4. Are there pre-listening tasks, questions, etc.?5. What is the recorded material on audio-cassette like in terms of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- sound quality- speed of delivery- accent- authenticity?6. Is there any video material for listening?7. If so, is good use made of the visual medium to provide a meaningful context and show facial expression, gesture, etc.?
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Cunningsworth (1995: 68)

Table 2. Checklist for Evaluating Reading Skill

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Is the reading text used for introducing new language items (grammar and vocabulary), consolidating language work, etc.?2. Is there a focus on the development of reading skills and strategies?3. Is the reading material linked to other skills work?4. Is there emphasis on reading for pleasure and for intellectual satisfaction?5. How many reading texts are there, and how frequently do they occur?6. How early on in the course (at elementary level) do reading texts start to

appear?

7. How long are the texts? Do they encourage intensive/extensive reading?
8. How authentic are the texts?
9. Is the subject matter appropriate (interesting, challenging, topical, varied, culturally acceptable, unlikely to date)?
10. What text types (*genres*) are used? Are they appropriate?
11. Are the texts complete or gapped?
12. Does the material help comprehension by, for example:
 - setting the scene
 - providing background information
 - giving pre-reading questions?
13. What kind of comprehension questions are asked:
 - literal (surface) questions
 - discourse-processing questions
 - inference questions?
14. To what extent does the material involve the learner's knowledge system (knowledge of the world)?

Cunningsworth (1995: 80)

METHOD

The data for this study was taken from two different English textbooks entitled *Project level 1 (4th edition)* and *Achievers A1+ (4th edition)* consists of 87 pages and 6 units. The author of the textbook is Tom Hutchinson; and the textbook was published by Oxford University Press in 2013. *Achievers A1+* consists of 153 pages and 9 units. The textbook was written by Carolyn Barraclough, Martyn Hobbs, and Julia Starr Keddle and published by Richmond in 2015.

We analyzed the presentation of listening and reading skills in the textbooks by referring to the guideline proposed by Cunningsworth (1995). We first overviewed the content of the textbook; then employed content analysis which is defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (printed matter, recorded speech, visual communications, works of art, artifacts) or other meaningful matter to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004: 37). We identified the presentation of listening and reading skills by seeking the term “listening”, “listen”, “reading” and “read” or other terms that correspond to listening and reading in each chapter and each section of the textbook. Then we categorized the identified presentations according to the guideline or checklist proposed by Cunningsworth (1995).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section would be divided into 2 sub-sections. The first one is on the discussion of the presentation of the listening skill in *Project level 1 (4th edition)* and *Achievers A1+* textbooks; and the second section would discuss the reading


skill in those 2 textbooks. For each section, there would be a discussion on any similarities and differences found in both textbooks.

Listening Skill

Project Level 1 (4th edition)

The listening skills in *Project Level 1 (4th edition)* textbook focus on two different ways, as part of general oral work and specific listening passages. One of the examples of listening practice for general oral work can be found on page 5 (exercise 6a and 6b). In these exercises, the learners are first asked to read, listen, and complete the dialogue, and then they are asked to practice the dialogue with their partners. In this case, listening is just a part of the overall activity to help the learners learn how to greet other people.

6 a  **1.6** Read and listen. Complete the dialogues.



Molly 1 _____, Andy.
Andy Oh, 2 _____, Molly. How are you?
Molly I'm fine, thanks. And you?
Andy Fine.
Molly OK. 3 _____.
Andy Yes. 4 _____.

Figure 1

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, (2013: 5)

Another example for general oral work is related to pronunciation practice. The general oral work in this textbook also covers pronunciation practice. An example of such activity is repeating the pronunciation of the vocabularies after listening to it. Such activity shows that the main focus is not listening but more on pronunciation (speaking).



Figure 2
Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, (2013: 10)

The textbook also includes specific listening passages. The kinds of activities that are provided for specific listening passages are comprehension questions to check the understanding, extraction of information, and lead-in discussion.

Listening

7 2.11 Listen and complete the chart.

	pet	name	colour
1	Ollie		
2	Phoebe		
3	Salim		
4	Alice		


Figure 3
Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, (2013: 33)

The listening materials in this textbook are presented in meaningful context. There are pre-listening tasks such as Q & A or games that draw learners' attention to the topic that is going to be discussed.

Listening, speaking and writing

6 a Look at the chart. Work with a partner. Ask and answer. Point to a clock.

- What's the time, please?
- It's quarter to four.

b  2.24 Listen to the dialogues. Match the activities to the days and times.



Activity	Day	Time
the volleyball match 	Monday	
Annie's dance lesson 	Tuesday	

Figure 4

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, (2013: 41)

Moreover, the listening materials in this textbook are often linked to other skills' works. The example below shows that the students are first asked to listen to short statements about greeting. Then, they have to repeat (speaking) and read (reading) in exercise 5b. Finally, in exercise 5c, they are asked to make dialogues (writing) related to greetings.

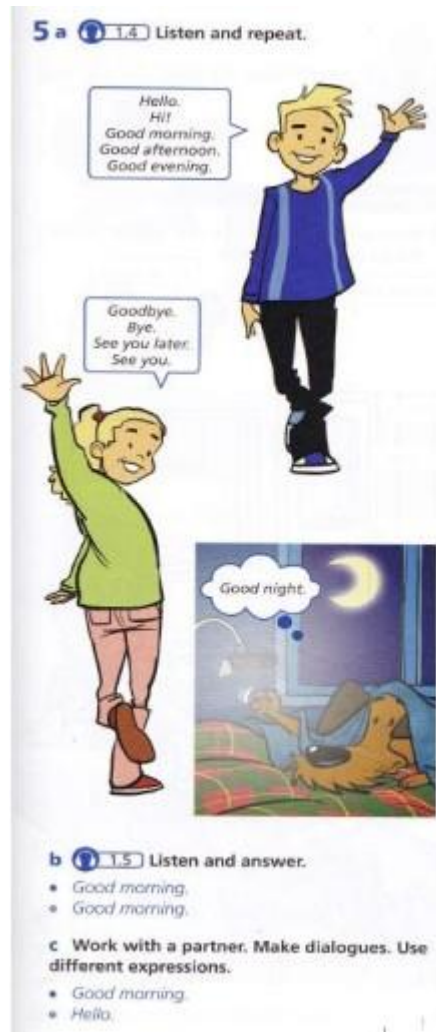


Figure 5
Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, (2013: 5)

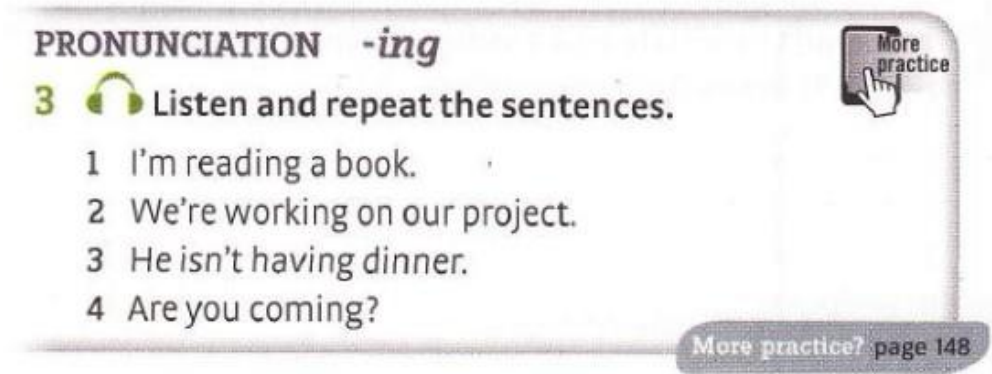
The *Project Level 1 (4th edition)* textbook has both audio-cassette and video materials; but they are sold separately. There is also free audio material which is available on the official website of *Project level 1 (4th edition)*, Oxford University Press (<http://goo.gl/jAPzwP>). For this study, we analyzed the free online audio materials only.

From our detail analysis, it can be seen that the sound of free audio material is very clear. The speed of delivery is approximately 70 words per minute. This seems to be suitable for the target learners of this textbook, i.e. beginners. The only accent being used for all recorded material on audio-cassette is British accent. This is probably because the publisher of *Project level 1 (4th edition)* is Oxford University Press, UK. Most of the recorded materials, however, are not authentic.


Achievers A1+

The listening material in *Achievers A1+* textbook includes both general oral work and specific listening passages. The general oral works that we found in this textbook are in the form of repeating the pronunciation of vocabularies and


sentences. The main focus is not to practice listening skill but more on speaking skill. The exercise 3 on page 30, for example, requires the learners to listen to the correct pronunciation first and then repeat it.



PRONUNCIATION -ing

3  Listen and repeat the sentences.

- 1 I'm reading a book.
- 2 We're working on our project.
- 3 He isn't having dinner.
- 4 Are you coming?

More practice?  **More practice**

More practice? page 148


Figure 6
Source: *Achievers A1+*, (2015: 30)

There are also specific listening passages provided in this textbook. The types of the activities for specific listening passages are comprehension questions, extraction of information, and lead-in discussion. There are also different types of questions written in the textbook: multiple choices, short-answer-completion, and true/false.

We also found that the specific listening passages in *Achievers A1+* textbook are not only presented in the listening sections but also in the speaking sections. One of the examples is on page 16 exercise 2 and 3.

WELCOME TO THE UK

1 Look at the picture. Where are the people? Why are they there?



2 Listen and answer the questions.

- 1 Where is Hannah's flight from?
- 2 What is the name of Jessica's father?
- 3 What is her mother's name?
- 4 Who is Josh?

3 Listen and decide if the sentences are true or false.

- 1 Jessica is an exchange student.
- 2 Eric is in the same class as Jessica at school.
- 3 Hannah's favourite band is Haim.
- 4 Eric doesn't like Bruce Springsteen.

4 Look at *Express yourself*. Then listen again and note the expressions you hear.

5 Look at the expressions below and write *Formal* or *Informal*.

- 1 Good morning. *Formal*
- 2 Hello, Mr Jackson.
- 3 See you.
- 4 Not bad.
- 5 Pleased to meet you.

YOUR TURN TO SPEAK

6 Imagine you are an exchange student like Jessica. Write the following information about you.

Name _____

Country _____

City _____

Age _____

7 It is your first day at your new school. Work in small groups. Follow the instructions below.

- Introduce yourself to another student.
- Ask and answer questions.
- Introduce that person to another student.
- Use expressions from *Express yourself*.

IN THE MORNING




Figure 7

Source: *Achievers AI+*, (2015: 16)

Achievers AI+ textbook presents the material in meaningful context. The textbook provides pre-listening tasks that allow an element of prediction, draw the learners' attention to the topic, and make the learners familiar with the topic that is going to be discussed. Sometimes the learners are assigned to look for some information presented in listening material; sometimes they are asked to have discussions regarding the topics, passages, or pictures given. One of the examples is shown below.

4

LISTENING Follow a discussion about what to do on a holiday

1 **Happy holidays!**



2



3



1 The Morrison family are on holiday. Read the clues and look at the photos. Can you guess where they are?

- Some people say it's the world's fastest growing city.
- It's very hot because it's on the edge of a desert.
- The tallest building in the world is here. It's 828 m high and has 164 floors!

Figure 8

Source: *Achievers A1+*, (2015: 43)

The listening materials are also linked to other skills' works. In the example below, the students are first asked to discuss with their partners about TV programs. Then, they will listen to the passage talking about TV programs. After that, they need to finish a reading exercise in which the learners have to read the expressions and put it into dialogue. Lastly, the students are asked again to discuss with their friends about their favorite TV programs.

LISTENING Understand a dialogue about TV programmes

1 In pairs, look at the TV screens. Think of an example of each kind of programme in your country.

2 Listen to five people talking about TV. Match the names to the type of TV programme they talk about.

3 Listen again and decide if the sentences are true or false.

- Elena's favourite programme is *The Simpsons*.
- Mandy likes the programme she talks about.
- Karl's favourite time is Saturday evening.
- Matt likes animals.
- Leila watches a lot of TV.

4 Read the expressions in *Face 2 Face*. Go to page 146 and put them into the dialogues. Listen and check.

FACE 2 FACE

- your turn
- I agree
- Go ahead

Dialogues page 146

5 In pairs, discuss the questions.

- What type of TV programme do you like watching?
- Which types aren't you keen on? Why not?
- What's your favourite TV programme?
- Who is the main actor or character?

A movies E sports programmes
 B cartoons F comedies
 C dramas G documentaries
 D reality TV shows H talent shows

11

Figure 9

Source: *Achievers AI+*, (2015: 11)

The *Achievers AI+* textbook has both audio-cassette and video materials; and those CD and DVD are sold separately. There is no free recorded material; and at the time when we conducted the study, the CD and DVD were unavailable.

Similarities and Differences

Both textbooks have general oral works and specific listening passages. For general oral works, both textbooks deal with pronunciation by repeating the vocabularies and sentences. However, *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook does not only cover pronunciation practice for general oral works but also in other types of activities as mentioned above (exercise 6a and 6b, page 5).

For specific listening passages, *Achievers AI+* textbook has specific listening passages not only in listening sections but also in other section such as speaking sections. *Achievers AI+* textbook has few different kinds of questions

(i.e. multiple choices, completion, and true/false.). *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook only has specific listening passages in listening sections; but it has more various types of questions (i.e. completion, true/false, matching, ticking (✓), and drawing).

The listening materials in both textbooks are set in a meaningful context. There are pre-listening tasks provided to focus learners' attention on the topic that is going to be discussed. Moreover, the listening material in both textbooks is linked to other skills' works.

Although both *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook and *Achievers A1+* textbook have pre-listening tasks, there are some differences. *Achievers A1+* textbook has more variation of pre-listening tasks; while *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook gives pre-listening tasks only in a form of discussions (question & answer) and game. In addition, *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook also provides vocabulary sections to make the students familiar with the topic and the essential vocabularies that are going to be discussed in listening sections.

In terms of recorded material, both textbooks provide audio-cassette and video material that need to be bought separately. In addition, *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook provides audio material (audio-cassette) for free on its official website.

Reading Skill

Project Level 1 (4th edition)

The reading texts provided in *Project Level 1 (4th edition)* textbook are used to introduce new language items especially on grammar and vocabularies. The vocabularies listed on each vocabulary section of the unit, for example, are related to the reading text discussed in that particular unit. The reading texts are also used to introduce the grammar rules.

Comprehension

1 **2.48** Look at the picture. Read and listen. Which of the places in blue is not in the picture?

This is our house.
 Upstairs there are three bedrooms - my bedroom, my sister, Vama's bedroom and our parents'. There's a bathroom upstairs, too.
 Downstairs there's a hall, a living room, a dining room and a kitchen. There isn't a cellar under my house. The dining room is next to the kitchen. There's also a toilet under the stairs.
 In this picture, I'm in the living room. Vama is in her bedroom, and our parents are in the kitchen. Our dog, Jack, is in the hall.
 Outside there's a garden and we've got a garage for our car, too.

2 a Read the text again. Label the parts of the house.
 1 upstairs
b **2.49** Listen, check and repeat.
3 **2.50** Listen. Which room is Ravi in?
 He's in the bedroom.

Grammar

4 Copy and complete the table.
 We use There is and There are ... to describe places.

There is / are + room	(+ part of house)
There _____ a bathroom	upstairs.
There _____ three bedrooms.	
There _____ a cellar.	
There aren't two bathrooms.	

5 Look at the picture of Ravi's house again. Complete the sentences.

- 1 There's a television in the l_____ r_____.
- 2 _____ four rooms u_____.
- 3 _____ a bathroom d_____.
- 4 _____ four b_____.
- 5 _____ a toilet under the s_____.
- 6 _____ two people in the k_____.
- 7 _____ a dog in the h_____.
- 8 _____ a TV in the d_____.
- 9 _____ a car in the g_____.
- 10 _____ two bikes in the g_____.

Figure 10
 Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, (2013: 54)

The reading text on page 54 shown above serves as a good example for this point of discussion. This reading text introduces some key vocabularies related to the parts of a house such as the word, bedrooms, bathrooms, toilet, and kitchen. At the same time, this reading text introduces the pattern or the format of preposition of place such as written on the 5th line 'There isn't a cellar under my house.'

There are 3 reading texts in *Project Level 1 (4th edition)* textbook that are used for stimulating oral work: describing, discussing, and acting. *Figure 11* below, shows exercise 3 that encourages the learners to discuss their own school subjects and compare theirs with what Joe, the character in the reading text, has in his school.

3D

This is our Maths class with our Maths teacher, Mr Woods. He's very nice, but I'm not very good at Maths. My favourite subject is Science.

Tuesday afternoon is great. We've got double PE.

We've got four lessons of Science a week. We do one science each term. This term it's Physics, last term it was Chemistry and next term it's Biology.

This is my school. I'm in year 8. There are thirty students in my class. We wear a uniform. It's blue and black.

Speaking and listening

3 Compare your school to Joe's. Answer the questions.

- 1 What class are you in?
- 2 How many students are there in your class?
- 3 Do you wear a uniform?
- 4 Have you got the same subjects as Joe?
- 5 What is your favourite day? Why?
- 6 Do you have registration and assembly in the morning?
- 7 When is your lunch?
- 8 Have you got lessons on Saturday?

4 Work with a partner. Ask and answer. Use the cues.

- 1 English / Wednesday
 - Has Joe got English on Wednesday?
 - Yes, he has.
 - Have we got English on Wednesday?
 - No, we haven't.
- 2 PE / Tuesday
- 3 History / Monday
- 4 Art / Friday
- 5 ICT / Thursday
- 6 Science / Monday
- 7 Music / Friday
- 8 PE / Thursday
- 9 Maths / Tuesday
- 10 Geography / Wednesday

5 **2.13** Look at Joe's timetable in exercise 2. Listen. What day is it?

35

Figure 11

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, (2013: 35)

During the data analysis, we also figured out that the reading materials in this textbook are supporting the learners to improve their reading skills and strategies. In the reading section, the textbook provides exercises for the learners to practice and develop skills such as, recognizing words (vocabulary) and recognizing grammatical functions of words through the reading texts. There are also some exercises that focus on introducing the learners to the use of reading strategies such as skim-reading in order to answer comprehension questions (post-reading), extracting specific information from texts and pre-learning about unfamiliar key vocabularies. An example is provided below.

Vocabulary

1 2.25 Listen and repeat the expressions in blue.

Comprehension

2 2.26 Read and listen to Molly's day. Put the things in the correct order.

bus dinner homework lunch
book breakfast TV shower
teeth bed

A  I get up at half past seven and I have a shower.

B  At ten to eight I have breakfast in the kitchen and I listen to the radio.

C  Then I brush my teeth and put on my coat.

D  At quarter past eight I go to school with my friends. We take the bus.

E  Lessons start at quarter to nine.

F  We have lunch at school at half past twelve. I have a packed lunch.

G  We finish school at half past three and go home.

H  I do my homework and go on the Internet before dinner.

I  We have dinner at six o'clock.

J  After dinner I watch TV or listen to music.

K  I go to bed at half past nine. I read a book or a magazine for half an hour and then I go to sleep.

Figure 12

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, (2013: 42)

The reading materials in this textbook are linked to other skills work, especially to listening and speaking skills. Reading is linked to speaking when the learners are asked to describe something which is related to the reading texts or when the students are asked to perform in class by acting out after reading a story. The exercise on page 71 below shows an example on how reading is linked to speaking. The learners are provided with the recorded material and they are asked to listen to the story and check their answers. After that, the learners will have to act the story in a group.

Reading and speaking

6 a Look at the pictures and answer the questions.
 1 What is happening in each picture?
 2 What is the king wearing in Picture A?

It's Saturday, and the Royal Show is starting. The king is on his white horse. The people are in the street. They know about the king's clothes.

A I can't see the clothes, but I don't want to look stupid.

Look at the people. They're singing and shouting. They can all see my beautiful new clothes.

One day two men come to the royal palace. They say they are tailors and they want to show the king their clothes.

B We've got some beautiful clothes for the king. They're magic clothes.

Only clever people can see these clothes. Stupid people can't see anything.

C Why are you laughing?

Look at the king. He isn't wearing any clothes!

b Read the story. Put the pictures in the correct order.

c Listen and check.

Your Majesty, look at this red jacket ... this white shirt ... these black trousers ... and these blue shoes.

Are they holding any clothes? I can't see them, but I don't want to look stupid.

D Oh, they're beautiful! I can wear them for the Royal Show on Saturday.

E It's true I'm not wearing any clothes. I really am stupid!

F Why is everyone laughing at me? Are they all stupid?

Ha ha ha! The king isn't wearing any clothes!

In a country far away lives a king. He loves clothes.

G Look at the king. He's wearing a big red hat, too. He always wears beautiful clothes.

7 Work in a group. Act the story of the king's new clothes.

Figure 13

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, (2013: 71)

Another interesting finding from this current study is that the reading texts provided in this textbook are targeted for intellectual satisfaction. There is no emphasis on reading for pleasure because the reading is not provided for the learners to read for enjoy or relax. All the reading texts are provided in order to teach the learners about English and do tasks or exercises afterwards.

All in all, there are seven reading texts found in this textbook. The average length of the texts published in *Project Level 1 (4th edition)* is 80-230 words.

The reading texts published in the textbook are mostly not authentic and encourage intensive reading rather than extensive reading. All texts have specific learning aims and reading tasks such as, answering comprehension questions and doing oral works which require high degree of understanding of the text in order to answer the questions given.

The reading texts provided in this textbook, in our opinion, are appropriate in all aspects. The topics might be interesting because the reading texts are presented in various familiar daily topics such as, school, daily routines, and places. The texts are universally culturally acceptable because there is no taboo topic presented. The texts are also unlikely to date because the subjects are very common things being talked about, especially among students.

The texts are short, simple and appropriate to the students' level (beginner). The comprehension questions given for the learners to answer after reading the texts are all literal questions. The answers to those literal questions are likely to be found in the texts.

Moreover, none of the reading texts included in this textbook is gapped. There is no reading text that has of blanks or requires the learners to complete the missing parts in the texts. The reading materials in fact help the readers' comprehension by providing the setting of the scene, background information, and pre-reading questions. Regarding the types of the reading texts, *Project Level 1 (4th edition)* textbook only uses two genres which are narrative and descriptive texts. An example is below.

Comprehension

1 2.48 Look at the picture. Read and listen. Which of the places in blue is not in the picture?

This is our house.
 Upstairs there are three bedrooms - my bedroom, my sister, Vama's bedroom and our parents'. There's a bathroom upstairs, too.
 Downstairs there's a hall, a living room, a dining room and a kitchen. There isn't a cellar under my house. The dining room is next to the kitchen. There's also a toilet under the stairs.
 In this picture, I'm in the living room. Vama is in her bedroom, and our parents are in the kitchen. Our dog, Jack, is in the hall.
 Outside there's a garden and we've got a garage for our car, too.

Grammar

4 Copy and complete the table.

We use *There is* and *There are ...* to describe places.

<i>There is / are</i>	+ room	(+ part of house)
There _____	a bathroom	upstairs.
There _____	three bedrooms.	
There _____	a cellar.	
There aren't _____	two bathrooms.	

5 Look at the picture of Ravi's house again. Complete the sentences.

Figure 14

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, (2013: 54)

Achievers A1+

The reading texts in *Achievers A1+* textbook are used for three purposes. First of all, the reading texts are used to introduce grammar and vocabularies. Therefore, in each reading section, there is a sub-section called as 'Word Zone' that provides some explanation on grammar rules. There is also Vocabulary sub-section which provides some key vocabularies that are related to the reading text of a particular unit.

Here is an example. As can be seen below, there is 'Word Zone' box that informs the leaders about the use of word 'so' on page 83. There is also a vocabulary sub-section that provides some essential vocabularies which are related to the topic of the reading text 'holiday'.

VOCABULARY Holidays

3 Read the webpage and answer the questions. Sometimes more than one name is possible. Who ... ?

- 1 ... is going on holiday with their parents?
- 2 ... is going to stay in different types of accommodation?
- 3 ... is going away for about four weeks?
- 4 ... is returning to the same place as before?
- 5 ... doesn't know exactly where they are going?
- 6 ... thinks they are going to be uncomfortable?

4 Read the webpage again and decide if the sentences are true or false.

- 1 Daryl is going away for five weeks.
- 2 Daryl is travelling with three other people.
- 3 Zoe is going back home in August.
- 4 Becky's holiday is going to be very active.
- 5 Becky isn't keen on staying in youth hostels.
- 6 Felix is going to visit different countries.

5 Read *Word Zone* and find the examples in the webpage. Complete the second example.

WORD ZONE

so
We use so to give a result or consequence.
The water's always freezing so I'm going to wear a wetsuit.
I'm not too happy about sleeping in a tent all that time so ...

9 Decide if each word is a place where you can stay, or a type of holiday.

beach cottage sightseeing holiday apartment
youth hostel campervan chalet adventure
B & B (bed and breakfast) skiing tent walking
hotel campsite driving camping city

10 Complete the holiday adverts with the correct words.

Bring your own 1... or hire of one of ours. Our 2... is located in a beautiful valley. Excellent facilities including a shop and café.

One-bedroom 3... in a central location: ideal for a 4... break. Kitchen. Wifi. Sleeps 2-3. Minimum stay 3 nights.

Rent our beautiful old 5... for the perfect 6... holiday in the mountains of Wales.

Enjoy the luxury of our five-star 7... and all the fun of a 8... holiday on the golden sands of Haven Bay.

Figure 15
Source: *Achievers A1+*, (2015: 83)

The second purpose is that the reading texts are used for stimulating oral works. In all reading sections, there are oral exercises such as, discussing and describing. The exercise 1 on page 64, for example, demands the learners to discuss the questions with their classmates.

READING

1 In groups, discuss these questions and make a note of your answers. Share your answers with the class.

- How far do you normally walk each day?
- How far can you walk in one day?
- Who in your group has done the longest walk? How far was it?

2 Who are the people in the pictures? How far did they walk? Read the interview quickly and find the answers.

PIONEER!

PIONEER! is a new computer game for schools. Meet Abel Wise, the historian who worked on *Pioneer!* as a games advisor.

How did you become a games advisor?
My friend is a games designer. He's working on a big project for schools, all about the pioneers – the people who travelled across the US from east to west in the 1800s. I studied this part of history, so I am helping him to get the details right.

How did the pioneers travel?
They used wagons. The journey was more than 3,000 km and there weren't any roads. There were mountains and rivers to cross, so it wasn't easy!

What problems did you find in the game?
At first, the game showed people riding in the wagons, but that didn't happen in real life. Only babies or old people sat in the wagons. Most adults and children walked next to the wagon or they rode on horses. They travelled about 20 km a day, so the journey took 5–6 months.

Did you give them other ideas?
Yes. I knew that the wagons were small so we added a new part of the game. Each player decides what things to take or leave, like real pioneers. They put heavy things, like tables and chairs, at the bottom. Some people even took their piano! The things pioneers needed for the journey, like blankets, plates, cups and food, were on top of the furniture. Then they slept on top of their things at night.

Of course, the wagons were heavy so when there was a lot of mud they got stuck. In the end, people often took the heavy furniture off the wagon. The Pioneer trail across the US was full of things that people left behind.

Figure 16
Source: *Achievers A1+*, (2015: 64)

Lastly, the reading texts in this textbook are also used for giving information and providing models for writing. The reading text on page 72, for example, provides the survival guide in a desert. At the same time, it shows a model for writing a blog page.

READING

1 What do you know about deserts? In pairs, answer the questions.

- What is a desert?
- What is the world's largest desert?
- How hot can it get in the world's hottest desert?

2 Quickly read the introduction to the blog and the first paragraph. Find the answers to the questions in exercise 1.

INTO THE WILD
A survival guide to extreme nature by MARK HAMELIN

Nature can be dangerous. There are many extreme environments from jungles to mountains, from rivers to seas. Today we're looking at deserts.

What is a desert?
It's hot and dry, right? Well, that's half right. A desert is an area of dry land that receives less than 250 mm of rain per year. This means that Antarctica is in fact the world's largest desert. But most deserts, such as the Sahara and the Sonoran, are hot. Temperatures in the Sonoran can go up to 49°C and in the Sahara to an incredible 58°C.

A desert trip
Deserts are inhospitable places. So when you go on a desert journey, it's important to be prepared. Here is some essential equipment:
• a spade • some extra fuel • a first aid kit • lots of water
• a wool blanket • some pieces of carpet • a signal mirror and some flares

In an emergency
Your car breaks down. You haven't got any food or water. What can you do? Well, first the good news. You can survive three weeks without food. Unfortunately, you can only go three days without water. So, you can collect rainwater. You can dig a hole in a dry river bed and look for water. Or you can drink the liquid from inside a cactus. By the way, you can eat different kinds of cactus fruit. It's an important friend!

What lives in the desert?
Lots of insects and animals live in deserts. Some animals like lizards, bats and mice are no problem. But coyotes and snakes are dangerous. And you don't want to share your sleeping bag with a scorpion or a spider. So try to keep your body clothed and off the ground!

*Have you got any questions?
Just write to Mark.*

72

Figure 17

Source: *Achievers AI+*, (2015: 72)

Our data analysis also shows that the reading materials in this textbook provide supports for the learners to improve their reading skills and strategies. Exercises 3 and 4 on page 23 for example require the learners to identify the details or notice specific details to answer the questions.

3 Read the webpage again and choose the best answer.

- 1 The weather in Australia is often ...
A sunny
B cool
C cold
- 2 School pupils from other countries can study ...
A in special schools
B in language schools
C with Australian students
- 3 Overseas students usually stay ...
A in hotels
B in a family home
C in the school
- 4 Australian families often ...
A show their visitors around
B have lots of animals
C teach their visitors to swim
- 5 Tula's opinion of her stay in Australia is ...
A good
B bad
C OK

4 Read the webpage again and find examples of these things:

- 1 a type of school
- 2 two animals
- 3 a sport
- 4 two countries
- 5 a city

Figure 18

Source: *Achievers A1+*, (2015: 23)

To improve the learners' reading strategies, the textbook provides some exercises to predict the contents of the texts through the pre-reading tasks, to answer comprehension questions (post-reading) that are related to the reading texts, and to extract specific information from the texts in order to answer the questions given. Exercise 1 on page 54 as shown below brings the learners to do a pre-reading task to practice one of the reading strategies, i.e. to predict the contents of the texts which will eventually help the learners to increase their strategies in reading.

READING

1 Look at the title of the story and the pictures.
Where are the people? How are they feeling?

happy sad nervous excited lonely

Figure 19

Source: *Achievers A1+*, (2015: 54)

The reading materials in *Achievers A1+* textbook are linked speaking, writing, and listening skills. For speaking, it is often linked to reading by

providing pre-reading tasks in the form of discussion, ideas sharing, and brainstorming. One of the examples can be found on page 12 in exercise 1 where the learners are asked to discuss in pairs.

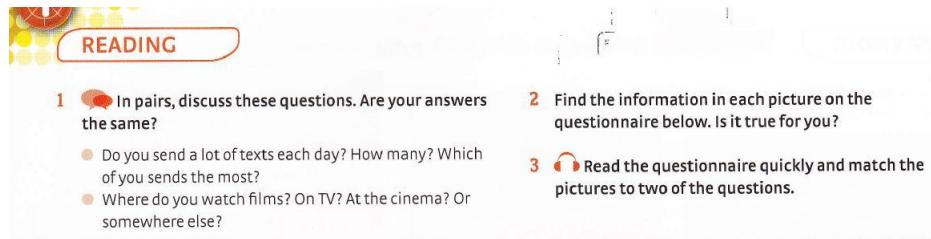


Figure 20

Source: *Achievers AI+*, (2015: 12)

To our observation, the reading texts in this textbook focus on teaching the learners to improve their reading skills and strategies and to complete tasks or exercises related with the texts given.

Achievers AI+ textbook provides 18 reading texts with two reading texts in every unit (in the very first part of the unit and in the middle part of the unit). Each reading text is about 200-300 words; and none of them is authentic material.

The reading texts found in this textbook are for intensive reading. All texts are written for specific learning aims and tasks. It requires high degree of understanding in order to answer the questions related to the texts.

In relation to the subject matter, the reading texts provided in this textbook are appropriate in all aspects especially if they are targeted for beginners. The topics presented in the textbooks are interesting and discussing about the things that are familiar to the learners such as, famous places, holidays, and technology. The texts are also culturally acceptable and unlikely to date because the topics being discussed are general, common and related to the learners' daily life. For many beginners, the texts are appropriate because they use simple appropriate words. The tasks or exercises given after reading the texts are not complicated. Most of the comprehension questions are literal questions where the learners can find the answer easily in the texts.

There are 5 types of reading texts in this textbook including narrative, descriptive, recount, information, and exposition. There is no reading text that has missing words. There is no requirement for the learners to complete the missing parts in the texts.

The textbook tries to help improving the students' reading comprehension by providing pre-reading questions or tasks for each reading text. The pre-reading questions or tasks are varied: discussing with partners or in groups, sharing ideas, or brainstorming. The example shown below is one of the pre-reading tasks in a form of sharing ideas.

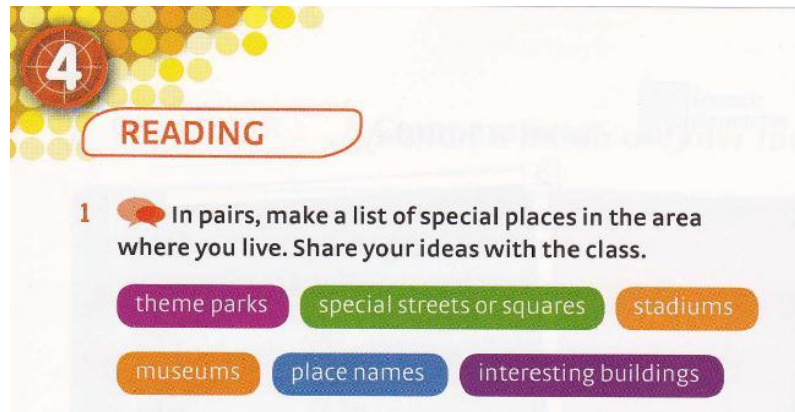


Figure 20

Source: *Achievers AI+*, (2015: 12)

Similarities and Differences

In terms of the purpose of the reading texts, both textbooks used reading texts to introduce new language items. Even so, we found that the purposes are little bit different. The reading texts in while *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook are used to introduce new language items, especially grammar and vocabulary, whereas *Achievers AI+* textbook has purposes to introduce grammar and vocabulary, stimulate oral work, give information, and provide models for writing.

Both textbooks also pay attention to the development of reading skills and strategies and they provide some exercises to train the learners. However, it seems that both textbooks focus more on developing reading strategies. The exercises given are more to help the learners improve their reading strategies such as, doing comprehension questions (pre- and post-reading or extracting specific information from texts) and providing vocabulary section before reading the texts (pre-teaching about unfamiliar key vocabularies).

Another interesting similarity is that the reading materials in both textbooks are linked mostly to listening and speaking. The reading materials in both textbooks are often linked to speaking by providing exercises such as, having a discussion about the texts; while for listening, they are linked by providing recording materials about the text. The reading materials in *Achievers AI+* textbook however are also linked to writing skill while *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook does not have such link.

The reading texts provided in both textbooks teach the learners to master reading skills and strategies and to complete the assigned tasks or exercises related with the texts given. All the reading texts in both textbooks are written for specific learning aims and tasks and it requires high degree of understanding in order to answer the questions related to the texts. In short, both textbooks encourage intensive reading.

There are still some other similarities found during our data analysis. First, both textbooks do not really use authentic texts. Second, both textbooks present common familiar daily topics which are culturally acceptable and unlikely to date. Third, all reading texts in both textbooks use simple words, present literal

comprehension questions, and require the students to complete simple tasks. Fourth, none of the reading texts found in both textbooks is gapped. Last but not least, the text types used in both textbooks are mostly under descriptive and narrative.

A significant difference lies on the total number of reading texts provided in each textbook. There are 7 reading texts found in *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook, whereas in *Achievers A1+* textbook, there are 18 reading texts. In terms of the length of the texts, the reading texts in *Achievers A1+* textbook are a bit longer

Another difference is on the presentation of the reading skill. *Achievers A1+* textbook provides more various texts types compared to *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook. *Project level 1 (4th edition)* does not have pre-reading questions; while all of the reading texts in *Achievers A1+* textbook have pre-reading questions.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In terms of listening, both textbooks are almost same and in line with the checklist criteria of Cunningsworth (1995). Both textbooks include general oral works and specific listening passages which are supported by various kinds of listening exercises to help the learners to improve their listening skill. Moreover, the listening materials in both textbooks are set in meaningful context.

Regarding the presentation of reading skill, *Achievers A1+* textbook might be better than *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook because it fulfills almost all criteria proposed by Cunningsworth (1995). First of all, the reading texts in *Achievers A1+* textbook has more purposes compared to *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook. Secondly, in terms of the integration, the reading materials in *Achievers A1+* textbook are integrated with all skills. Next, *Achievers A1+* textbook provides more reading texts with longer texts compared to *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook, which gives more opportunities to the learners to read and improve the reading skill. Furthermore, *Achievers A1+* textbook provides more various texts types compared to *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook.

Based on those findings and discussion, it can be concluded that regarding the presentation of the listening skill, both textbooks *Achievers A1+* and *Project level 1 (4th edition)* were relevant to the evaluation criteria proposed by Cunningsworth (1995) though the non-availability of audio materials for *Project level 1 (4th edition)* might be a problem in some classes. It might be a good idea for the publisher to provide online audio/video resources as supporting material that are easily accessible from around the world.

As for the presentation of the reading skill, *Project level 1 (4th edition)* textbook was considered as adequately met the requirement proposed by Cunningsworth (1995); while *Achievers A1+* might be more relevant to the evaluation criteria. It means that those who use *Project level 1 (4th edition)* as a reference to teach reading need some supporting materials such as additional reading texts with different genres and various length. They also need to prepare themselves and/or to receive assistance or training to be able to use the reading

texts available as a spring board for teaching other skills such as writing and speaking.

The results of this study make a variety of interesting suggestions and offer potential for further research. First, it would be interesting to investigate other textbooks used on the same level to see how they had dealt with the evaluation criteria as proposed by Cunningsworth (1995). Secondly, a survey that follows should be conducted to get feedback from teachers and students who have actually used *Achievers A1+* and *Project level 1 (4th edition)* in their classrooms. Instruments such as questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews of teachers and students should be used to have a full picture of the quality of the textbooks and to see more clearly the teachability and learnability of the materials. These two suggestions are probably the most important recommendations for this research to further improve the quality of the English textbooks for beginners.

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