

# A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF SPEAKING AND WRITING SKILLS IN *PROJECT LEVEL 1* (4<sup>TH</sup> EDITION) AND *ACHIEVERS A1+*

Lee Sun Min<sup>1</sup>, Flora Debora Floris<sup>2</sup>

Email: [dominicasunminlee94@gmail.com](mailto:dominicasunminlee94@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [debora@petra.ac.id](mailto:debora@petra.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

English Department, Petra Christian University

Surabaya, Indonesia

**Abstract.** This study is intended to find out about the two basic skills which are speaking and writing skill presented in Project level 1 (4th edition) and Achievers A1+ textbook. The textbooks were evaluated by using the theoretical framework as proposed by Cunningsworth (1995). 4 criteria were used to evaluate the presentation of the speaking skill and 9 criteria were used to examine the writing sections. The findings of this study show some interesting similarities and differences that both textbooks have on the presentation of speaking and writing skills.

**Keywords:** textbook evaluation, speaking, writing

## INTRODUCTION

Coursebook has a vital role for many teachers and students of English. It serves as a framework for teachers to achieve the aims and objectives of the course through different activities, readings, and explanations (Tok, 2010). Coursebook is often considered as a very important source of input by students (Bardovi-Harlig (1996) cited in Matsuda (2012)). The evaluation of coursebook has a key role in education because such evaluation helps teachers go beyond impressionistic assessments to acquire useful, accurate, systematic and contextual insights into the overall nature of coursebook material (Ellis, 1997). Coursebook 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, p. 14). The most important thing is that the textbook evaluation must be done regularly and continuously.

In this present study, we would like to analyze 2 English textbooks which were published in 2013 and 2015: Project level 1 (4th edition) and Achievers A1+. The target audience for these 2 textbooks is those who are in their beginner level. To our knowledge, these textbooks are widely used in many private schools and language courses in Surabaya, the second biggest city in Indonesia where we are currently staying in. This is also confirmed by 2 staff of reputable bookstores Mentari and Fenros(N.N., a staff of Mentari bookstore, personal communication, March 19, 2016 and NN a staff of Fenross bookstore, personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Our present study focused on the evaluation of speaking and writing skills published in Project level 1 (4th edition) and Achievers A1+. We focused on these 2 skills because both speaking and writing skills as are important parts of communication. In that sense, textbooks are needed to help both teachers and students develop their speaking and writing skills to be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in written and spoken language. To evaluate the skills, we used the following criteria:

Table 1. Checklist for Evaluating Speaking Skill

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How much emphasis is there on spoken English in the coursebook?</li> <li>2. What kind of material for speaking is contained in the course? This may include:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. oral presentation and practice of language items</li> <li>b. dialogues</li> <li>c. role-play</li> <li>d. communication activities (information)</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Are there any specific strategies for conversation or other spoken activities, e.g. debating giving talks?</li> <li>4. Is any practice material included to help learners to cope with unpredictability in spoken discourse?</li> </ol> |
|--|

Cunningsworth (1995, p. 70)

Table 2. Checklist for Evaluating Writing Skill

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How does the material handle<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. controlled writing</li><li>b. guided writing</li><li>c. free or semi-free writing?</li></ol></li><li>2. Is there appropriate progression and variety of task?</li><li>3. Are the conventions of different sorts of writing taught? If so, which ones, and how are they presented?</li><li>4. Is paragraphing taught adequately?</li><li>5. Is there emphasis on the style of written English? At advanced level, is there attention to different styles according to text type?</li><li>6. Is attention given to the language resources specific to the written form, such as punctuation, spelling, layout, etc.?</li><li>7. How much emphasis is there on accuracy?</li><li>8. Are learners encouraged to review and edit their written work?</li><li>9. Is a readership identified for writing activities?</li></ol>
---

Cunningsworth (1995, p. 84)

## METHOD

The data for this study was taken from two different English textbooks entitled *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* and *Achievers A1+ (Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition))* was published by Oxford University Press in 2013; and it has 6 chapters: *Introduction, Friends and family, My world, Time, Places, and People* (Hutchinson, 2013). *Achievers A1+* was published by Richmond in 2015, and there are 9 units available: *Free time, School is cool!, Party time!, Wonderful world, Let's go out, Long ago, Wild world, Getting away, and Digital world* (Barraclough et al., 2015). We focused on the skill sections for speaking and writing that are provided in these two different English textbooks. We referred to Cunningsworth's checklist (1995) as we evaluated the skill sections. Any identified interesting features or points along with the examples were then noted down.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section would present some findings on (1) the evaluation of speaking skill in *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* and *Achievers A1+* textbooks, and (2) the evaluation of writing skill in those 2 textbooks. For each section, there would be a discussion on similarities and differences found in both

textbooks.

**SPEAKING**

**Project Level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)**

*Project Level 1 (4th edition)* textbook seems to focus more on speaking skill compared to other skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing). It can be proven by seeing the number of the exercises given for speaking. Seeing from the Table of Content of the book on page 2 that there are 21 exercises in total for speaking, while for listening there are 15 exercises, for writing 10 exercises, and for reading 7 exercises.

Moreover, the practice materials for speaking can be found easily in other skills' exercises or in other sections such as, comprehension and grammar. For example, the listening exercise on page 23 (exercise 6) presented below is integrated with speaking.

Figure 1

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, 2013, p. 23

**Listening**

**6 a**  **1.53** Listen to two more dialogues. Answer the questions.



1	What is his / her name?	_____	_____
2	Who is the record for?	_____	_____
3	When is his / her birthday?	_____	_____
4	How old is he / she then?	_____	_____
5	Where are they?	_____	_____

**b** Work with a partner. Act the dialogues. Use the chart.

**c** Work with a partner. Make your own dialogues.

At first, in exercise 6a, the learners are asked to listen to the dialogues to answer some questions provided. After they fill in the answers, in exercise 6b, the learners are asked to act the dialogues in pairs by using the chart that they have answered.

The materials to practice speaking skill in this textbook includes dialogue, communication activities (information gap), and other kinds of activities including, asking and answering, describing, interviewing, playing games and acting out stories. All kinds of materials mentioned above, except for interviewing, are found in speaking sections, while in other sections, we found dialogue and interviewing.

*Project Level 1 (4th edition)* also introduces specific strategies for conversation and other spoken activities to the learners. The specific strategies in this textbook refer to some vocabularies and useful expressions which can help the learners to speak using different kinds of expressions in different situations. The textbook also present some exercises that should be used to practice using the vocabularies and useful phrases discussed.



Figure 2

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, 2013, p. 7

Figure 2 shows an example in Exercise 5 on page 7. This section presents vocabularies and phrases that can be used in giving instructions or directions. Another example is Exercise 8 on page 7. This exercise gives an opportunity for the learners to practice using the vocabularies and phrases to give instructions to other people.

Other than specific strategies, there are also some practice materials found in the textbook to help the learners cope with unpredictability in spoken discourse. The practice materials given in the textbook are in a form of having conversations, interviewing, giving instructions, and also playing games.

Figure 3

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, 2013, p. 31

**Speaking and writing**

**5 a** Work with a partner. Look at the pictures.  
**Student A:** cover one picture.  
**Student B:** cover the other picture. Now ask and answer. Use the cues.

1 a skateboard	6 a book
A Mickey's got a red skateboard in my picture. Is it red in your picture, too?	7 a mobile
B No, it isn't. He's got a green skateboard in my picture.	8 a cap
2 a T-shirt	9 a radio
3 a bag	
4 a watch	
5 a pencil	

**A** **B**

E

Exercise 5a on page 31 shown above is an example of the practice material. The learners should predict what their partner will say about the picture. This kind of material includes element of uncertainty and unpredictability where the learners cannot predict what their speaking partners will say. Thus, by having kinds of exercises in a form of having conversations, interviewing, giving instructions, and also playing games, the learners can practice their speaking skill in unpredictable situations.

### Achievers A1+

Achievers A1+ textbook also pays attention to the speaking skill. Each unit provides section for speaking; and there are various kinds of speaking activities provided. Moreover, speaking is integrated with other skills mostly listening and reading.

The image shows a page from an English textbook with several exercises and informational sections. Exercise 1 asks students to look at photos and discuss questions. Exercise 2 involves listening to a tour and completing information. Exercise 3 is a multiple-choice listening exercise. Exercise 4 asks for ideas about Aztec skills. Exercise 5 involves reading dialogues. Exercise 6 is a pair-work writing exercise. There are two fact sheets: 'THE SUN STONE' and 'AZTEC FACT SHEET Cocoa beans'. The page number 63 is visible in the bottom right corner.

**1** Before you listen, look at the photos and discuss the questions.

- What can you see in the photos?
- What do you think connects them?

**2** Listen to the first part of the tour and complete the information.

### THE SUN STONE

- The stone has two names, the sun stone and the ... stone.
- An Aztec artist made the sun stone in ...
- The Aztec calendar had ... months.
- There were ... days in a week.
- The names of days include the Aztec words for flower, water and ...

**3** Listen to the second part of the tour and choose the correct answers.

- How did the Aztecs use wheels?  
A for toys      B for toys and transport  
C for transport
- What transport did Aztecs use?  
A a type of boat      B a type of animal  
C a type of wagon or cart.
- How many people lived in the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán?  
A 100,000      B 200,000      C 300,000

**4** What were the Aztecs good at? What can you remember? Listen again and check your ideas.

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

### FACE 2 FACE

Excuse me?      Right?  
Really?

Dialogues page 146

**6** Work in pairs. First, use your Aztec fact sheet to write sentences. Then present the information to your partner.

**Student A:** Look at the information below. Present your information to Student B.

**Student B:** Go to page 151 and look at the information. Present your information to Student A.

### AZTEC FACT SHEET

## Cocoa beans

Cocoa beans were very important to the Aztecs. What did they use them for?

- use / as money
- make / chocolate drink / with chilli
- one Aztec ruler / have / 50 cups of chocolate drink each day!
- a married couple / drink / on their wedding day

Figure 4

Source: *Achievers A1+*, 2015, p. 63

In the listening section on page 63, for example, there are speaking exercises (exercise 1 and 6) in which the learners are asked to discuss some questions and exchange some information with their partners.

The speaking materials provided in this textbook are in the form of dialogue, role-play, communication activities (information gap), discussions in pairs or groups, oral presentation, describing, telling stories, and interviewing. The types of materials that the writer found in speaking sections are in the form of dialogue, role-plays, and discussions. Meanwhile, the types of materials that the writer found in other sections (such as in reading and listening sections) are communication activities (information gap), oral presentations, discussions, interviewing, describing, and storytelling.

*Achievers A1+* textbook offers specific strategies for conversation and other spoken activities in a form of useful phrases that can be used to teach strategies and skills of speaking. These useful phrases can be found in each speaking skill section, particularly in one sub-section named '*Express yourself*'. The sub-section provides some useful phrases or expressions that can be used in real unpredictable situations. '*Express yourself*' sections can be found on pp. 16, 26, 36, 48, 58, 68, 86, 90, and 100. One of the examples of '*Express yourself*' section is shown below.

There are many speaking activities provided in this book. On p. 100 (exercise 6), there is an activity in which the learners must make requests using some useful phrases provided on '*Express yourself*' section. By having this kind of practice, the learners can develop their speaking ability to speak in real situations.

**INTERACTION** Making requests

*Express yourself*

**Interrupting**  
Excuse me.  
Sorry, but ....

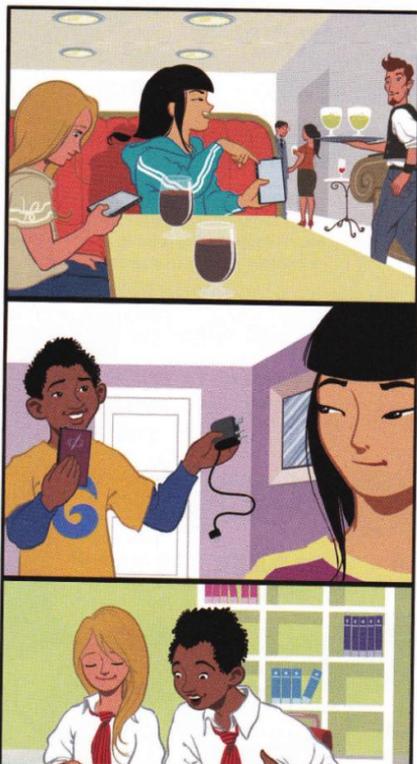
**Asking for permission**  
Can I use ... , please?  
Could I borrow ... , please?  
Could you tell me ... , please?

**Accepting and refusing**  
Yes, of course.  
Sure, go ahead.  
I'm sorry, but ....

**Thanking**  
Thank you very much.  
Thanks. That's very /  
really kind of you.

**TECHNOLOGY TROUBLES**

1 Look at the three pictures. What do you think is happening in each? What are the people saying?



2 Listen to the first conversation and complete the sentences.

- 1 The wifi password is ...
- 2 Hannah wants to ... Jessica's phone to send a text.
- 3 She asks Jessica to put in her ...

3 Listen to the second conversation. Answer the questions.

- 1 What does Eric want to borrow?
- 2 When does he want it?
- 3 Why can't Hannah lend him hers?

4 Listen to the third conversation and complete the sentences.

- 1 Eric wants to borrow Jessica's ...
- 2 He doesn't want to take books because they are too ...
- 3 Jessica says 'Be ...'

5 Listen again to all the conversations. Note the expressions in *Express yourself* that you hear.

**YOUR TURN TO SPEAK**

6 Work in pairs. Take it in turns to make requests, choosing from the items below. Follow the instructions.

- When you make a request, give a reason.
- When you refuse, give an explanation.

- a phone
- a memory stick
- a wifi password
- an e-reader
- a tablet
- a phone charger

Can I use your phone, please?  
I have to call my mum.

I'm sorry but I'm using it.

That's OK.

Figure 5

Source: *Achievers A1+*, 2015, p. 100

The textbook also provides practice materials which can help the learners to cope with unpredictability in spoken discourse. The practice materials given in the textbook are in the form of interviewing, presenting or sharing in class, and also having discussions in pairs or groups. These activities contain element of uncertainty and unpredictability, which are presented in

genuine conversations or discussions. Through such exercises, the learners can practice their speaking skill in unpredictable situations. Exercise 4 on page 35 will be shown below as an example of the practice material.

**DO THE CHALLENGE**

**4**  **Work in pairs. You have very similar pictures, which contain a number of differences. Follow the instructions.**

**Student A:**

- Your picture is on page 150.
- Describe your picture to Student B.
- Stop when Student B says *stop*. Listen to the difference in his / her picture.
- Now, look at your picture and listen to Student B's description.
- When you hear something that is different in your picture, say *stop*.
- Continue like this until you have all the differences.

**Student B:**

- Your picture is on page 152.
- Look at your picture, and listen to Student A's description.
- When you hear something that is different in your picture, say *stop*. Tell Student A the difference.
- Now, you describe your picture.
- Continue like this until you have all the differences.

*There is a barbecue.  
It is on the left.*

*Stop! In my photo, the  
barbecue is in the middle.*

Figure 6

Source: *Achievers A1+*, 2015, p. 35

### Similarities and Differences

In general, *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook and *Achievers A1+* textbook emphasize on speaking skill. It can be seen from the number of the exercises provided in the textbooks and those exercises are mostly integrated with speaking skill. Moreover, based on the evaluation, it is very likely to find

speaking activities not only in speaking sections but also in different skill areas, too.

Both textbooks include dialogues and communication activities for speaking material and provide activities that the learners can use to practice. However, *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook does not provide role-play as one of the speaking materials or any other material that can encourage the learners to practice speaking in front of or to other people. The speaking materials in *Achievers A1+* textbook include role-play and other materials that might encourage the learners to practice speaking in front of other people.

Other than that, both textbooks provide specific strategies for conversation or other spoken activities. *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* and *Achievers A1+* provide some vocabularies and useful expressions which aim to teach strategies and skills of speaking. *Achievers A1+* textbook has its own sub-sections called ‘*Express yourself*’ which focuses on giving useful phrases or expressions, while *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook does not cover such section and focuses more on giving new vocabulary rather than giving useful expressions in a form of phrases.

Both textbooks have practice materials to help learners cope with unpredictability in spoken discourse; however the *Achievers A1+* textbook provides more practice materials than *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook.

## WRITING

### *Project Level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*

Though the writing exercises provided in this textbook are handled in three different forms (i.e. controlled, guided, and free writing), there was only one free writing exercise which can be found on page 65 (exercise 7b), while all of the other writing exercises are controlled and guided. The exercise 7b on found on page 65 is shown below.

## Writing

- 7 a** Work in a group. Make your own strange family. Draw some people or cut pictures from magazines or comics.
- b** Write a description of each person.

Figure 7

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, 2013, p. 65

There is only one for free writing exercise, which can be found on page 65 in exercise 7b. The learners are asked to write a description of a person. There is no example of the writing and no guidelines. The learners are only given the instruction to write a description. Therefore, the learners have the freedom to write what they want to say.

The textbook does not provide varieties of tasks. Throughout the whole book, the learners are asked create short sentences, dialogues, and write short descriptions. There is no progression in terms of the exercises either because almost all of the writing exercises are controlled and guided.

However, in terms of the topics, there is progression because the learners are encouraged to write something from the one that they are familiar to least familiar one. Exercise 10 on page 17, for instance, requires the learners to complete the missing parts in the sentences which are about introducing oneself (name, age, city, and country) while Exercise 6c on page 21, requires the learners to write short sentences about other students. It is clearly seen that the exercises are controlled and guided but the topics are changing from introducing to describing other people.

*Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* provides an opportunity for learners to learn about the conventions of writing implicitly. In the textbook, there is no explanation given about certain writing rules or the style, instead, the textbook provides the examples of writing. In view of that, it can be considered that the textbook taught the learners about conventions of writing implicitly.

**Writing**

**7 a** Complete the DJ's text.

Our caller <sup>1</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ Mel Bradley.  
<sup>2</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ ten. The song is for <sup>3</sup>\_\_\_\_\_  
brother. <sup>4</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ name's Joe and  
<sup>5</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ twelve on Tuesday.

**b** Write texts for the girl and boy in exercise 6a and you.

Figure 8

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, 2013, p. 23

The writing exercise on page 23 (Exercise 7b) is an example of a writing task that teaches the learners about writing conventions. This exercise requests the learners to complete the writing by referring (or learning) from the previous exercise (exercise 7a).

There is no writing exercise or explanation that supports the learners to learn about paragraphing although paragraphing is considered as the basic unit of organization in written English. This maybe because the book acknowledges the standard established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), i.e. to introduce the beginners to create a short, simple text or to fill in forms with personal details, not to develop a paragraph (Council of Europe, 2016).

It seems that *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* does not emphasis on the style of written English and also on accuracy; but the textbook gives attention to the language resources that might be useful for writing. In every unit, there is vocabulary section that provides the learners some of the key vocabularies and some exercises to practice.

**Vocabulary**

**1 a**  **1.39** Listen and repeat.

			
1 Britain		7 Australia	
			
2 The USA		8 Brazil	
			
3 France		9 Italy	
			
4 China		10 Russia	
			
5 Germany		11 Greece	
			
6 Japan		12 Spain	

**b** Find the countries on the map on pages 82 and 83. Find your country.

**2 a** Where are these cities? Reorder the words and complete the sentences.

- Tokyo is in *Japan*. *paanj*
- Rio de Janeiro is in \_\_\_\_\_. *libzar*
- Sydney is in \_\_\_\_\_. *aalsrutai*
- Milan is in \_\_\_\_\_. *ilyat*
- London is in \_\_\_\_\_. *natibir*
- Paris is in \_\_\_\_\_. *racnef*
- Moscow is in \_\_\_\_\_. *ssariu*
- New York is in \_\_\_\_\_. *het sau*
- Beijing is in \_\_\_\_\_. *nahci*

**b**  **1.40** Listen and check.

Figure 9

Source: *Project Level 1 (4th edition)*, 2013, p. 16

Exercise 1 and 2 on page 16 can be seen as an example that the learners are given some vocabularies and exercises that can help them to

memorize the correct spelling of the words.

In addition, *Project Level 1 (4th edition)* textbook does not encourage the learners to review and edit their written work. There is no exercise which asks the learners to recheck their written work. Other than that, the textbook does not identify the readership for writing activities either.

### **Achievers A1+**

In *Achievers A1+* textbook, the writing sections cover controlled and guided writing. One of the examples of controlled writing can be found on page 59 in exercise 5.

**4 Find the words and expressions below in Eve’s blog entry. Put them in the order she uses them.**

After that Finally First Then

**5 Complete the sentences below with the correct sequencing words and expressions from exercise 4.**

Yesterday, I had a very busy day.<sup>1</sup>... I went to the sports centre with my friend, Will at 8am. We went to the gym, we did an exercise class and we had a swim.<sup>2</sup>... I met my friend Martha in town and we went shopping in the new shopping centre.<sup>3</sup>... , we had a burger in a great burger restaurant.<sup>4</sup>... , we got the bus home at 9pm. I was exhausted!

Figure 10

Source: *Achievers A1+*, 2015, p. 59

This exercise is categorized as controlled writing because the words to be filled in the blanks have already been provided in the previous exercise (exercise 4). The learners need to fill in the missing part by choosing the

correct words.

One of the examples of guided writing can be seen on page 17 in exercise 6 as presented below.

**YOUR TURN TO WRITE**

**PLAN BEFORE YOU WRITE**

**5 Look at the headings. Think of two or three things about you for each heading. Make notes.**

- personal facts
- likes and dislikes
- free time and hobbies

**WRITE NOW**

**6 Write your profile.**

- 1 Use Adrianna's profile as a model.
- 2 Use your notes from exercise 5.
- 3 Use full stops, capital letters, commas and apostrophes correctly.

**CHECK AND CORRECT**

- 1 Check that the punctuation is correct.
- 2 In pairs, swap your profiles and check each other's work.

Figure 11

Source: *Achievers A1+*, 2015, p. 17

The exercise is asking the learners to write their personal profile. However, in writing the personal profile, the textbook gives instruction to see the Adrianna's profile (the example given on exercise 1) as a model. This kind of writing exercise is considered as guided writing because the learners are given a model to follow.

Two free writing exercises are available in the textbook; but they are presented in challenge section (page 57) and vocabulary section (page 61).

The writing exercise found in challenge section on page 57 requires the learners to create a paragraph of a story being discussed in the previous exercise (exercise 6 on page 57). The learners are only given the instruction to write a paragraph without any examples. The free writing exercise found in vocabulary section on page 61 is asking the learners to write a description about clothes. There is no model or guideline to follow. Therefore, the learners have the freedom to write what they have in their mind.

The textbook *Achievers A1+* provides varieties of writing tasks such as writing a personal profile (p. 17), describing, people and photos (p. 27), writing an article (p. 49), writing blog entry (p. 59), writing reviews (p. 69), and writing informal email (p. 101).

There is appropriate progression seeing from the topics being discussed. The topics range from the simple one or a familiar one to more complex one or least familiar. In Unit 1, for example, the learners are asked to write their personal profile), in Unit 5, the learners are asked to write a short blog, and in the last Unit, the learners are asked to write a review about a place. In terms of the writing exercises given in the textbook, there is no progression because most of the writing exercises given in writing sections are controlled and guided.

Regarding the conventions of the writing, the textbook teaches the learners about the conventions of writing implicitly. The textbook does not provide explicit explanation on how to write a descriptive paragraph, for instance. The conventions of different sorts of writing are taught implicitly through the examples of writings.

The *Achievers A1+* textbook provides examples or models in every writing section. As one of the examples, page 69 is shown below.

**YOUR TURN TO WRITE**

**PLAN BEFORE YOU WRITE**

**6** Think of a museum you know. Make notes about it. Use the ideas below to help you. If you can't think of a museum, turn to page 151.

- the name of the museum
- the number of objects you can see there
- where the objects are from
- your favourite things (say why you like them)
- something you don't like (say why)

**WRITE NOW**

**7** Write a review of the museum you chose in exercise 6.

- 1 Use Max's review as a model.
- 2 Use your notes from exercise 6.
- 3 Use expressions for giving your opinion.

Figure 12

Source: *Achievers A1+*, 2015, p. 69

In Unit 6 (p. 69), for example, in which the topic is writing a review, the learners are not told clearly about the conventions on how to write a review. Instead they are introduced to a model or an example of a good review. They also receive some clues or important information about things to consider in writing the text (refer to exercise 6); but there is no clear clarification given on how to write a review.

The writing materials in the textbook do not give focus on teaching the learners about paragraphing. In writer's opinion, the reason why this textbook does not teach about paragraphing is because the target learners of *Achievers A1+* textbook are beginners. This is in line with what the CEFR standard says about teaching writing to beginners. The standard does not acknowledge the teaching about paragraphing for beginners. Creating a short, simple postcard or sending holiday greetings and filling in forms with

personal details are the writing purposes for the beginners(Council of Europe, 2016.).

There are different types of writing tasks given based on the topic being discussed namely, writing personal profile, description, article, blog, email and review. As an example, in unit 3 (p.37), the learners are asked to create a descriptive writing and there is an example of descriptive writing for the learners to see and create a similar one.

The textbook does not focus on language resources. There is only one unit that gives attention to punctuation that is unit 1 (p. 17, exercise 3 and 4). Moreover, there is no attention given to the spelling form and layout. In terms of accuracy, the textbook does not much put emphasis on accuracy. There are only four units out of nine units that give attention to accuracy, such as the use of conjunctions on page 27, referencing words on page 49, *because & because of* on page 81, and *too & also* on page 91.

The textbook focuses more on encouraging the learners to review and edit their written works (and their friends' works). This is seen from a '*check and correct*' section found in each writing section. The textbook, however does not identify the readership for writing activities.

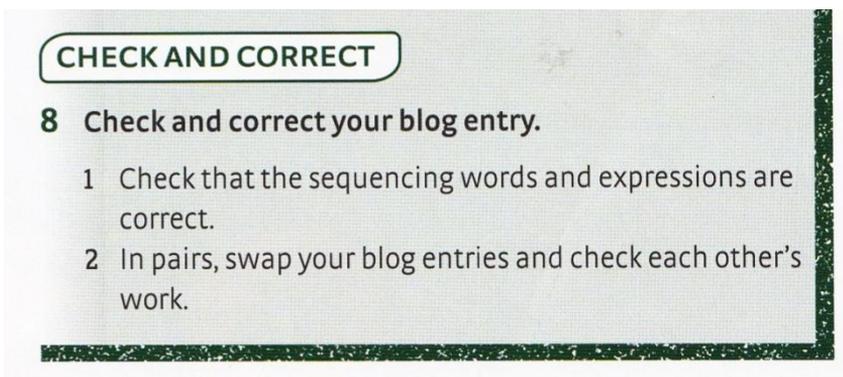


Figure 13

Source: *Achievers A1+*, 2015, p. 59

### Similarities and Differences

The first similarity that we found is regarding the way how the materials are handled. *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook and *Achievers A1+*

textbook include controlled, guided, and free writing exercises. Even though both textbooks include free writing exercises, there is no focus given on free writing. *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook only provide one exercise and *Achievers A1+* textbook only provide two exercises for free writing.

The second similarity is that both textbooks do not have progression in terms of writing exercises because the exercises are tend to be controlled and guided. However, both textbook have progression in term of the topic being discussed. It can be seen from the topics that range from the most familiar one to the least familiar one or from the simple issue to the complex one. Nevertheless, the *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook does not have variety of task, while *Achievers A1+* textbook provides varieties of writing tasksnamely, writing a personal profile, describing people and photos, writing an article, writing blog entry, writing reviews, and writing informal email.

Another similarity is that both textbooks present conventions of different sorts of writing implicitly. Both textbooks do not provide explicit explanation on how to write a descriptive paragraph, for instance. The conventions of different sorts of writing are taught implicitly through the examples of writings. Some examples are written out; and the learners are assigned to look into these examples and create their own writings which are similar to the examples provided. *Achievers A1+* textbook, however, still gives some important things that the learners should consider in their writings, for example, providing some notes to consider to help the learners in writing, while *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook does not provide that. Both textbooks, however, do not provide a specific section or exercise that introduces the learners to paragraphing. It might be because both textbooks acknowledge the CEFR standard for the beginners. According to the CEFR standard, creating a short, simple postcard or sending holiday greetings and filling in forms with personal details are the writing purposes for the beginners (Council of Europe, 2016).

In addition to the similarities described above, our data analysis also found out several differences that both textbooks have. First, *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook does not focus on the style of writing, while *Achievers A1+* textbook provides examples of different styles of writings such as, writing personal profile, description, and review. Second, *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup>*

edition) textbook gives much attention to spelling. It can be seen from every unit that has vocabulary section that encourages the learners to learn about correct spelling of the words. *Achievers A1+* textbook does not give such attention. Third, *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook does not give emphasis on accuracy at all, while *Achievers A1+* textbook still gives emphasis on accuracy in its four units.

Another difference was in terms of the writing exercises which encourage the learners to review and edit their work. *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook does not encourage the learners to review and edit their written work, while *Achievers A1+* textbook provides a section called ‘*check and correct*’, where the learners are asked to check and correct their or each other’s written work. In writer’s opinion, providing exercises for learners to correct their work like a section found in *Achievers A1+* textbook called ‘*check and correct*’ is good. However, in terms of readership, both *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* and *Achievers A1+* textbook do not identify the readership for writing activities.

## CONCLUSION

It seems that *Achievers A1+* textbook meets almost all of the criteria of speaking skill proposed by Cunningsworth (1995). *Achievers A1+* textbook provides various types of speaking materials, specific strategies for conversation, and practice materials. *Achievers A1+* textbook also provides more speaking materials in the form of dialogues, role-play, and communication activities. Besides, the textbook also includes other types of speaking materials including having discussions in pairs or groups, describing, telling stories, interviewing, and oral presentation. *Achievers A1+* textbook also has more specific strategies for conversation or other spoken activities than *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook. *Achievers A1+* textbook has its own sub-sections called ‘*Express yourself*’ which focuses on giving useful phrases or expressions, while *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook does not have its own section. Lastly, in terms of practice materials, the *Achievers A1+* textbook provides more practice materials than *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook. *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook has only few practice materials to help learners cope with unpredictability in spoken discourse.

To our observation, *Achievers A1+* textbook is more correspond with the criteria of Cunningsworth (1995) because in general, the textbook is better in terms of the materials handled, variety of task, conventions of different sorts of writings, different styles of writings, and exercises or activities given. In terms of the materials handled, the *Achievers A1+* textbook provides all controlled, guided, and free writing exercises. Besides, there are more various kinds of writing exercises compared to *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook. The writing exercises found in *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook are merely creating short sentences, dialogues, and writing short descriptions; whereas the writing exercises in *Achievers A1+* textbook is more complex starting from writing personal profile, descriptions, informal letters, until writing a review by stating the learners' opinion.

Other differences include: (1) *Achievers A1+* textbook does not only give conventions of different sorts of writings implicitly but also provide some important things or some clues that the learners can consider in their writings, (2) *Achievers A1+* textbook shows different styles of writing in every writing section, and (3) *Achievers A1+* textbook provides a 'check and correct' section that encourages the learners to review and edit their own written work. These 3 book features are not provided in *Project level 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* textbook.

The writer hopes that this study would somehow inspire the classroom teachers to evaluate their current textbooks or other textbooks available on the market using certain checklist. The writer also hopes that further study involving the users of the textbooks would be conducted to find out the users' perception about the books.

## REFERENCES

- Barraclough, C., Hobbs, M., & Keddle, J. S. (2015). *Achievers A1+*. Oxford: Richmond.
- Council of Europe (2016) *Self-assessment grids*. Retrieved on 1 December 2016 from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio/self-assessment-grid>
- Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your coursebook*. Oxford: Heinemann Publishers Ltd.
- Ellis, R. (1997). The empirical evaluation of language teaching materials. ELT

Journal, 51(1), 36-42.

Hutchinson, T. (2013). *Project level 1* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Matsuda, A. (2012). Teaching Materials in EIL. In L. Alsagoff, S. L. McKay, G. Hu, and W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Principles and practices for teaching English as an international language* (pp. 168-185). New York: Routledge.

Tok, H. (2010). TEFL coursebook evaluation: From teacher's perspectives. *Academic Journals*, 5(9), 508-517.