

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. The Background of the Study**

English is an international language used by most people throughout the world. English has been widely acknowledged as an international language (Tsui & Tollefson, 2006). Although there are some languages that become international language nowadays, people tend to use English rather than other languages. English in the Indonesian educational curriculum has been a compulsory subject for a long time. Even since 1994, it has been put in elementary curriculum. English has become the compulsory subject in Indonesia curriculum, because the government fully realized that it has an important role in education especially to achieve the international standard in Indonesian education. In addition, it also has been one of the subjects for the national exam. English also helps people to communicate with other people in other countries.

In Indonesia, English is the first foreign language which is taught at Primary School, Junior, and Senior High Schools up to the university level. The purpose of teaching English is to develop four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Those skills are important to be mastered without ignoring each other. For many students, reading is the important of the four skills in second language. The students will be easy to obtain information from written text by reading. Reading skill is very important things that must be learned by the student. The student need to be exercised and trained in order to have a good reading skill.

One of the reading sources that is used in the learning process is textbook. According to Dana Ferris and John S. Hedgcock, (2005) “textbooks are so pervasive in educational systems throughout the world. Textbook consists of instructional materials. The contents of the textbook should deal with the current curriculum; it might be from the genre with should be available in the textbook. Besides that, the contents of the textbook also go with the level of study. In the textbook include lexical density which is measure the proportion content words in a text.

Reading material is one of the contents of the textbook besides listening instruction, some exercises, writing task and some conversation scripts. Reading material is usually in the form of text that is used to teach reading like pronouncing words, comprehending the content of the text, getting vocabulary, and also understanding of grammar. Through the text, the students can get information and the knowledge and also the vocabulary and the grammar. Textbooks are important for students to prepare and fulfill experiences in the good process.

In reading text most of the students face difficulties in understanding text due to the different English language features from their first language. Teaching reading is conveying some important message and gets meaning from written text. Sometimes most of students have difficulties comprehending text in book. The material may be difficult to understand because the material is not served in their skill level. They don't understand the content of the material because there are many unfamiliar vocabularies found in the text. For example

when they found descriptive text with unfamiliar vocabularies, long and many paragraph, they would get bored firstly. It makes them bored and difficult in comprehending the text. On the other hand they are not aware of the elements and characteristics of the genre of the text. Furthermore they have difficulty determining what information is important in written passage of the reading text. So the goal of reading skill not achieved.

There is a gap theory with reality. Theory says that the text that is appropriate for students in accordance with the level is a text that does not have a high lexical density. But in reality there is a lot of text that is still very difficult to be understood by students and it cause of lexical density in the text.

One of the important things that can make the student hard or easy to understand English text is lexical density. Rivers in Zeinab (2015) states that one reason refers to lexical density in the text that hinder learners' comprehension is because they do not master the lexical items in the text. It influences the ability of the student to comprehend the material. Some unfamiliar words influence the students' ability to realize the importance of the knowledge that the lexical density in their reading texts will influence in learning English. The text which has high lexical items is difficult to understand and with the low lexical items is not too difficult.

Nunan in Holicatun (2011) states that "lexical density refers the number of lexical content of function words per clause". Lexical density measures of the proportion of content words in a sentence or text. In addition, lexical density is a term used in discourse (or text) analysis. It is used to measure the ratio of content

words to grammatical words in any given text (spoken or written). Based on the explanation, lexical density is the number of content words as a percentage of the total number of words. Content words as opposed to function words are words that carry a high information load such as; nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Sentences which are long and lexically dense are more difficult to understand. Those words include content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs), and grammatical function words (determiners, pronouns, preposition, conjunctions, numerals, auxiliary verbs). Texts with a lower density are more easily understood.

Lexical density is a measure of the amount of content information in a text. It shows the ratio of lexical items to grammatical items. Lexical items consist of noun, adjective, verb, and some adverbs while grammatical items consist of determiner, pronoun, most preposition, conjunction, finite verb, and some classes of adverb. Lexical density shows the complexity of words within text. It describes the development of lexical in the written language. The lexical density of text is often not suitable for the students' level. Sometimes, the students who are at the first level of senior high school get a text that has most lexical items which make the students difficult to understand the text. The amount of lexical items in a text can influence the length of a text and measure the level of difficulty of the text. The following examples of sentences that have lexical density high, medium, and low. 1) The **quick brown fox jumped swiftly** over the **lazy dog**. (High LD). 2) He **loves going** to the **Cinema**. (Medium LD). 3) She **told** him that she **loved** him. (Low LD)

Textbook has an important role in teaching and learning process. When the students failed to understand the content of the reading text, the student will not get the knowledge of the textbook. The proportion between the lexical items and the grammatical items in the text certainly will determine the difficulty of the text. Through the lexical density of the text, teacher can know whether the text is easy or difficult for the students. So the teacher can decide which appropriate strategy can be applied in the reading text based on the complexity of the words especially the lexical items.

As the previous researcher on lexical density with reference to lexical density, Johansson (2008) found that 10-year-olds have higher lexical density in the written text than spoken text, 13-year-olds have a genre effect in their result where the narrative texts have higher lexical density than expository texts, 17-year-olds have higher lexical density in the written texts than spoken texts with no genre effect, and the adults have higher lexical density in their written text and there is no genre effect. In other hand, ( siti holicatun 2011) with entitle content analysis of reading materials in *English on sky* textbook for junior high school. The result shows (quite lexical density). It means that the reading texts are quite lexical densities. It means that the text is not difficult, easy to understand and suitable for students.

Based on those explanations, the writer would like to try to analyze the lexical density of reading text found in *English Alive* textbook for 10<sup>th</sup> grade of Senior High School published by Yudhistira. There are several reasons why the writer chooses the book; First, English Alive textbook is one of books which is

suitable with the current curriculum KTSP. Second, *English Alive* textbook is used to teach English to tenth grade at some schools in Medan so it is important to know whether the reading texts are appropriate for the students. Third, the writer wants to know the lexical density of reading text in the textbook.

### **B. The Problems of study**

Based on the background of the study above, the problem of study are :

1. How is the lexical density of reading texts in English Alive textbook for the tenth grade of senior high school published by Yudhistira?
2. What type of genre has the highest lexical density found of reading texts in English Alive textbook for the tenth grade of senior high school published by Yudhistira?

### **C. The Objectives Research**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To find out the lexical density of reading text in English alive textbook for tenth grade of senior high school published by Yudhistira
2. To find out the type of genre which has the highest lexical density found in the reading texts of English Alive textbook published by Yudhistira

### **D. The Scope of the Study**

This study is limited to the analysis of the lexical density that found in reading text of English textbook for senior high school. The book that analyze is English Alive for tenth grade of senior high school published by Yudhistira in which it is used in two semesters directly. It consists of 34 reading texts and

written in 5 types of genre. There are 10 texts that will be analyzed which are taken from each genre

#### **E. The Significance of the study**

The findings of this research are expected to be useful theoretically and practically:

##### **1. Theoretically**

- a) The result of this research can be useful for the teachers so that they can select the textbook which is most suitable in teaching learning process.
- b) The result of this research can be useful for the teachers as a feedback on their teaching reading activities to know the difficulty of the text
- c) The result of this research can be used as reference for those who want to conduct a research about lexical density.

##### **2. Practically**

- a) The result of this research can useful for the researcher can be useful for the teachers in teaching reading to choose the appropriate or media for the text based on the complexity of lexical density in the text.
- b) The result of this research can useful for teaching material designers who want to design appropriate texts English teaching.
- c) The result of this research can useful for the researcher to improve her knowledge about genre and lexical density.