

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

One of the reading sources that are used in the learning process is textbook. Textbook is an essential element in education. It consists of instructional materials and provides much information and knowledge. It is used by the teacher in the learning-teaching process as a main source. It is also available in many subject in the school such as English textbook, science textbook, social textbook, religion textbook, civic textbook, etc.

Graves (2000:151) mentions that an English textbook is a basic resource to determine the quality of language input and the language practices during teaching learning process in an English course. Its functions are not only as a guidance of teaching and learning but also as a developing material as well as a substantial and observable component of pedagogy content.

According to Nesia (2014), 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. It is provided in some types which are called as genre. The types of genre are arranged well based on the curriculum.

As Sholichatun (2011) states the aim of English teaching according to School- Based Curriculum (KTSP) is that the students of junior high school hopefully can achieve that functional level of literacy because they are preparing to continue their study to the Senior High School. Besides that, School-Based Curriculum also deals with the four language skills, such as; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In reading, it refers to the text. It means that the students are able to understand and producing various shorts functional and monologue texts, and essay in the form of narrative, descriptive, recount, procedure, and report.

Text can be called as written language and conversation as spoken language. The difference between written and spoken language is one of the density. Density is meant with which the information is presented. Halliday (1985:61) states that written language displays a much higher ratio of lexical items than spoken language. It means that the complexity of spoken language is in grammatical configuration while the written language or text is in lexical configuration. That is why density becomes one of the reasons that make the students get difficulties in comprehending the text.

Nesia (2014) explains that nowadays, every student should be able to understand every reading text in the textbook which is covered in the curriculum of the unit level of education. In the curriculum, reading material should be relevant to the students' needs. The teachers have the freedom to choose the teaching media or strategy to improve the students' communicative competence which is relevant to the students' condition and needs. One of the students' needs

is to understand or comprehend the text based on the situation given in English subject.

In reading section, most of the students have difficulties in comprehending text in book because of several reasons. As suggested by Pratiwi (2014). First, the material may be difficult to understand because the material does not served in their skill level. Second, they do not understand the content of the material because there are many unfamiliar vocabularies found in the text. Third, they may not be aware of the elements and characteristics of the genre of the text. Fourth, the meaning of the sentences and passages may become lost because the reader struggles with the mechanics of reading. Fifth, they may have difficulty determining what information is important in written passages of the reading texts.

From all the aforementioned reasons above, one of the possibilities which makes students hard or easy to comprehend text is lexical density. It influences the ability of students to comprehend the material. It can be seen from the researcher's observation in SMP Negeri 27 Medan that some of the students in the third level sometimes get difficulties in comprehending a reading text because they found the common words of the majority in textbook that are frequently used. It possibly makes it difficult for the students to comprehend text. Moreover, they lack of reading intention. 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.

To, Van and Thomas (2013:62) define lexical density is a condition of the words' proportion in the 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.

Regarding the previous researcher on lexical density, various texts have been intensively examined and different outcomes have been achieved. 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.

On the other hand, To, Van, and Thomas (2013) investigated the lexical density and readability in English textbooks. The result shows that the text for upper intermediate has low lexical density than other texts for elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate. Aside from written texts, lexical density has been examined in spoken texts. It was conducted by Alami, Sabbah, and Iranmanesh (2013) entitled male-female discourse difference in terms of lexical density. The result shows that male and female discourses are almost equally dense. In other words, the gender of the speaker has no effect on the lexical density of discourse.

Concerning the issue and the explanations above, there are several reasons why the researcher chooses the textbook. First, *English in Focus* is one of textbook that is suitable with the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP). Second, *English in Focus* used for teaching English to ninth grade level in Medan so it is important to know whether the reading texts are appropriate with the students' need. Third, the researcher use this textbook to know the lexical density of reading texts in the textbook.

B. The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the study are formulated as follows:

1. What is the lexical density of reading texts in *English in Focus* textbook for ninth grade of junior high school?
2. What text has the highest lexical density found in the reading texts of *English in Focus* textbook for ninth grade of junior high school?
3. Why does the text has the highest lexical density in the reading texts of *English in Focus* textbook for ninth grade of junior high school?

C. The Objectives of the Study

In line with the research questions, the objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the lexical density of the reading texts in *English in Focus* textbook for ninth grade of junior high school.
2. To find out text has the highest lexical density found in the reading texts of *English in Focus* textbook for ninth grade of junior high school.
3. To find out the reason of the text has the highest lexical density in the reading texts of *English in Focus* textbook for ninth grade of junior high school.

D. The Scope of the Study

The study was focused on analyzing the lexical density found in reading texts of *English in Focus* textbook for the ninth grade students of junior high school published by National Education Department in which it is used in two semesters directly. It consists of 11 reading texts which are divided into 4 procedure texts, 5 report texts, and 2 narrative texts that have been made in the textbook. These texts analyzed based on each genre that presented in the reading texts.

E. The Significances of the Study

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

1. Theoretically

- a. The result of this research can be useful for the teachers in teaching reading to choose the appropriate reading texts based on the complexity of lexical density in the texts.
- b. 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 teacher can select the textbook which is most suitable in teaching and learning process.
- b. The teaching material designers who want to design appropriate texts in English teaching or English curriculum design for junior high school level whether the text is difficult or not based on the students' needs.