CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

The term "text" refers to any instance or language, in any medium, that makes sense to someone who knows the language. We can distinguish two main angles of view text: one, focus on the text as an object in its own right; two, focus on the text as an instrument for finding out about something else (Halliday 2004:3). A textbook is one of the material references used by teacher at school. The teacher has responsibility to select the textbook that is used as a material in teaching learning process. Finocchiaro (1974:49) argues that teacher should be able to decide whether the contents of the textbook are suitable with the current curriculum or not.

The importance of exploring the language of textbooks has become more and more recognized. However, as Nathan, Long and Alibali (2002) argue, although textbooks are the main learning tool, "analyses of their composition and organization are often neglected in research on learning from text". As teachers do not normally possess the linguistic knowledge necessary to realize the challenges the language can pose, they "need help to become aware of the language difficulties present in school textbooks" (Moss, 2006:889).

Textbooks can be explored from many various ways. As for the complexity of texts, there have been numerous studies concerning vocabulary difficulty (lexical density and lexical variation of texts) (Gibson, 1993; Ventola, 1995) and readability (the comprehension difficulty of texts) (Bruce & Rubin,

1988; Johnson, 1998). Chall and Dale (1948; 1995) developed a formula to measure the readability of school texts and rated texts used in U.S. schools to determine the reading level.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (often abbreviated to SFL) is increasingly recognized as a very useful descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic, making-meaning resource (Eggins, 2004:1-2). Then, Language has three main kinds of meanings simultaneously: ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings (Halliday, 1985). Sinar (2007:56) states that metafunction of language are inherent in every language use in social contexts. In conclusion, there are three metafunctions of language i.e. ideational, interpersonal, and textual function which have the same status and used in social context. It means that those metafunctions have the same status.

With regard to the textual elements, the text complexity of school textbooks, among other things, could be considered one key element in determining the students' success in grasping the ideas contained in the textbooks. By having an appropriate level of complexity, the texts will be comprehended well by the students and thus stimulate their development in learning both the subject and the language.

Text complexity is among the linguistic features of written texts that can affect the level of difficulty. Linguistic or text complexity is fundamental to the current science; however, its precise definition has still been an open issue (Kwapien, Drozdz & Orczyk, 2010). In addition, while the notion of complexity is central to literacy and language education, there is no standard linguistic measure towards it (Rimmer, 2008).

Text complexity in this study was observed through lexical density and grammatical intricacy. Lexical density of texts is recognized as an important factor of complexity of written language (Halliday, 1985). Lexical density can be observed by using Ure's and Halliday's method. In this study, Ure's method will be employed.

In order to get a better picture of text complexity, grammatical intricacy was measured. Grammatical intricacy refers to how often a clause complex appears in a text in comparison with simple clauses. Although grammatical intricacy tends to be used for the analysis of complexity of spoken language as argued by Halliday, it is worth including in the measurement of written text complexity since it can show the complexity not only at the level of words but also at the level of clauses.

Based on the preliminary observation conducted by writer during October to November 2017 in some junior high school in Medan, it is commonly found that there are some textbooks for grade VIII utilized in the process of teaching-learning English such as: "English in Context Grade VIII" for junior high school grade VIII published by Bumi Aksara. By interviewing some teachers, the reasons why they utilize Bumi Aksara's book are because that book are easy to find in the bookstore and the contents of it are suitable and easy to be taught to students.

To exemplify, here is presented one of reading texts in VIII grade English textbook that are analyzed by using lexical density and grammatical intricacy.

"***Tree is one*** *of **plants** which **thrive** in the **ground surface** of the **earth***. **Tree** becomes the **biggest plant** than other **plant**. A **tree has four major parts**.

They **are root, trunk, leaves**, and **flower**". (Taken from text How does a Tree work? in English in Context Grade VIII textbook).

From the paragraph above, we can see that the first sentence comprises of clause complexes signed by the use of relative clause "which" and "is". It means that first sentence is more intricate grammatically from second sentence which only comprises of one clause. In terms of lexical density, there are 22 lexical items (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb) in **bold** from 35 words. In Ure's method, we can calculate that the lexical density percentage in that paragraph is 62,85%. It means that the paragraph is lexically densed.

Based on the background explained in advance, it catches the writer's attention to conduct a research entitled text complexity in reading texts of grade VIII junior high school textbook.

B. The Problem of the Study

In line with the background of study, the problems of the study are formulated as the following:

1. How is lexical density percentage presented in reading texts of grade VIII junior high school textbook?

2. How is grammatical intricacy index presented in reading texts of grade VIII junior high school textbook?

C. The Objective of the Study

In accordance to the problem of the study, the objectives of the study are as the followings:

1. To discover the lexical density percentage presented in reading texts of grade VIII junior high school textbook

2. To discover grammatical intricacy index presented in reading texts of grade VIII junior high school textbook.

D. The Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited into reading texts covering exposition and descriptive texts found in the textbook "English in Context Grade VIII" for junior high school grade VIII published by Bumi Aksara and it will be analyzed by using lexical density and grammatical intricacy theory to find out the complexity of the text.

E. The Significances of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be beneficial both theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to be useful for broadening and enriching the horizon in discourse analysis and related theories.

Practically, the research findings of this study are expected to be useful for:

➢ English teacher, when choosing a textbook in order to be used in teaching-learning process.

➢ Book writer, it can be used as the source of consideration in designing the appropriate dialogue for junior high school student

➢ Other researchers, it can contribute to further studies related to interpersonal function and textbook analysis.