

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Teaching English as foreign language in Indonesia involves four integrated skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is an important skill and plays a dominant role among the four skill used in the learning of the English language (Alhaisoni, 2017: 30). Reading is a receptive skill, it means readers receive the language and interpret the meaning to get the information. In junior high school level, the standard competency of reading in *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP) is the students are able to understand a simple genre based texts. In order to reach the goal, teachers usually use textbook as one of the main media in teaching and learning process.

In Indonesia, textbook has always been a media used in all schools and all grades. Textbooks are usually distributed to the teachers and students in the first month of academic year. In this case, most of the schools or teachers will choose a textbook which is appropriate with the curriculum. Teachers usually use textbook as the media to facilitate the teaching and learning process. A textbook is expected to make learning easier and more enjoyable because it contains the syllabus for the course with a set of exercises, such as reading materials, listening tasks, stories, clear instructions, games, tests, assessment rubrics, glossaries, etc. By using textbook, students can learn not only in the classroom but they can also repeat the materials and prepare themselves for the next material at home.

It can be said that reading and textbook has strong relationship. As mentioned above, reading material is one of the content of a textbook. Textbook provides reading materials which are expected to enhance reading ability of the students. In reading section, reading a text and answering some questions are some common activities that teacher asked the students to do. A reading text is usually arranged in some paragraphs. Questions are arranged for the purpose of assessing their comprehension about the content of the text.

Based on researcher's observation in SMPN 1 Tanjung Pura, the researcher found some information by interviewing the teachers and the students. The teachers said that the students have difficulty in understanding reading texts because they have limited vocabularies. This situation relates to lexical density of the text. Lexical density talks about how information a text is by analyzing the content words (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb). Furthermore, the students said that some texts are too long and there are many unfamiliar words in a text. They have to look for the meaning of many words by using dictionary. It wasted a lot of time. Some teachers often help them by giving the meaning of the text in bahasa Indonesia. This problem relates to readability of the text. Readability talks about the level of ease or difficulty a text to the particular reader.

Those two problems lead the researcher to investigate the lexical density and the readability of reading texts in a textbook because it relates to the students' comprehension. These two terms are caused reading difficulty (Nesia, 2014, Lestari, Kifli 2016).

Lexical density is a way to measure how dense the text is. It is often used for describing the proportion of content words to the total number of words (Johansson, 2008:65). Content words are also known as lexical items (nouns, verbs, adjectives and also adverb). They carry information for the readers. So, lexical density relates to the vocabularies.

Halliday (1985:63) points out that lexical items enter into open system which is indefinitely extendable. One word may have more than one meaning depends on the context. Ure's study (in Johansson, 2008:65) finds out the written texts had a density of 40% or more. Further, Lestari (2016:2) states a statement about the level of lexical density "for foreign language learners, the text which content of high content words will make students got trouble to understand the text". Consequently, the learners are potentially facing problems to comprehend the text.

The other thing that influences reading difficulty is readability. Readability is a concept that describes the degree in which a text is easy or difficult to be read (Brown, Janssen, and Trace, 2012:1). It is important to find out the level of readability to minimize the students get difficulty in reading activity. It is also supported by National Education Standards Agency (BSNP) statement which is written in Bulletin 21st edition (2007:21). They set some aspects as the criteria of textbook. One of the aspects is the feasibility of language. The indicator that considered in the feasibility of language is the readability of the text. So, readability is one of the main points for selecting reading materials in school.

The most popular way to measure readability is by using formula (Dubay, 2004:2). Readability of the reading texts can be measured by considering the number of words, syllables, and sentences. It is known as Flesch Reading Ease Formula. Flesch only uses two variables, the number of syllables and the number of sentences for each 100-word sample. He also sets a scale from 1 to 100, with 30 being “very difficult” and 70 being “easy.” The score 60-70 is described as standard/plain English which is suitable for 8th-9th grade. If the score is under 60, it is not appropriate for that grade because the text is too difficult for the students and if the score is above 70, the text is also not appropriate because it is too easy.

Based on the explanation above, it is important to find out the lexical density and the readability of textbook because it directly affects the students’ in learning process especially in improving reading skill. In this research, the researcher decides to analyze *English for Junior High School VIII* textbook which was published by Mediatama. The textbook is used for the eighth grade of students in some junior high schools. By doing this research, the researcher can provide the data that can be used as the consideration for the teacher in choosing appropriate reading texts or textbook which is suitable to the students’ level and need.

B. The Problems of the Study

Based on background of the study above, the researcher identifies the problems of the study as follow:

1. How is the lexical density of the reading texts in *English for Junior High School VIII* textbook by using Ure's Formula?
2. How is the readability of the reading texts in *English for Junior High School VIII* textbook by using Flesch Reading Ease Formula?

C. The Objectives of the Study

In relation to the problems, the objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the lexical density of reading texts in *English for Junior High School VIII* textbook by using Ure's Formula.
2. To find out the readability of reading texts in *English for Junior High School VIII* textbook by using Flesch Reading Ease Formula.

D. The Scope of the Study

In this research, the researcher focuses on analyzing the lexical density and the readability of reading texts in *English for Junior High School VIII* textbook published by Mediatama which is still used for grade VIII in some schools. There are fourteen reading texts which consist of three genres of text, they are descriptive, recount and narrative texts. To measure the lexical density, the researcher will use Ure's Formula and to measure the readability, the researcher will use Flesch Reading Ease Formula. It is important to analyze both of them to find out whether the reading texts in that textbook are suitable for students or not.

E. The Significances of the Study

This study is expected to be useful for theoretical and practical aspects.

Theoretically:

- a. this research hopefully will be useful to enrich the lexical density and the readability theories. It will add some information about the lexical density and the readability in textbook.

Practically:

- a. For teacher. The finding in this research can be a consideration for teacher to choose suitable textbook especially in selecting reading materials which is suitable for the students' level and need.
- b. For the writer of textbook. It can be a consideration in order to make and to arrange good reading texts.
- c. For other researchers. It is also hoped that the result can inspire other researchers to conduct studies in similar field.
- d. For students. The students can improve their reading ability by getting texts which is suitable with their level.

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