CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The background of the study

Reading serves a wide range of purposes in the lives of different categories of people who are literate. In school, it is the basis for learning different subjects. Good textbook contains material that is not only in accordance with the curriculum, but also must be written with a high level of readability. English textbook with a high level readability will support the student's achievement. Moreover, textbook providing the discourse with high reading level will also increase the ability of students in the learning process.

Reading material is one of the contents of the textbook besides theexercises, writing task and conversation script. Reading material is usually in the form of text that is used to teach reading like comprehending contain of the text, getting vocabulary, and also understanding of grammar. From the text, the students can get information and knowledge, and also vocabulary and grammar.

In the reading section, some students usually get difficulties in comprehending a long text or a dense text such as narrative, descriptive, and recount texts. They get bored easily when they find a long text with many paragraphs. This statement was supported by researcher's observation in St.Thomas 1 Senior High School Medan, where the researcher found that some of the students' score in reading test could not reach the KKM in that school. It can be seen from the table 1.1

Table 1.1Students' Score in Reading Assessment

Semester	KKM	Narrative		Descriptive		Recount	
		Below kkm	Above kkm	Below kkm	Above kkm	Below kkm	Above kkm
I	75	70%	30%	80%	20%	75%	25%
II	75	75%	25%	73%	27%	75%	25%

The scores above were taken from the reading text quiz that the teacher has conducted to them. In this study, the X-B class was taken as sampe of the observation. There were 40 students in the classroom. From the table, the researcher concludes that more than 50% students could not reach the KKM in English Reading Test. This finding supportsthe statement above that many students get difficulties in comprehending a long text.

Based on the data above, the researcher has interviewed the students who get low scores in classroom regarding the reason on why they cannot reach the KKM score for their quiz. Some of them stated that the texts on the textbook are too long and have many unfamiliar words. It makes them need more time than usual to finish the quiz. It has also been found the reason why teacher choose *Meaning in Text* textbook as her teaching material. It was because this text book is fit to the syllabus of "peminatan" class in 2013 curriculum. But, it has some problems in using this book. It found that the students require more times than what they have to figure out the meanings of some sentences or words that's

contained inside of the text written in the textbook, also, most of her students get bored when they learn from the textbook. Hence, from the explanation above, the study will focus to analyze*Meaning in Text*, year X textbook published by Bina Media Perintis used by St. Thomas 1 Senior High School.

Meaning in Text, English textbook is one of series of English books for senior high school. The book is published in line with the 2013 curriculum. All activities in this book cover four language skills namely; listening, speaking, reading and writing. They encourage students to develop their competence in phonological/graphologycal and lexicogramatical levels, as well as their discourse and cultural levels. However reading is one of the most important skills in learning language. In other words, reading is considered as one of the most important skills which language students should obtain, particularly as it helps to build vocabulary and leads to lifelong learning and improvement in first and second language skills. Reading is an activity to get understanding from the written text and the construction of the meaning of written text through an interaction between readers and text, Neil (1992:15). The main purpose of reading is comprehension. Comprehension is the essence of reading because the goal of producing a written language is communication of messages.

Based on the description above, teachers and the schools need to choose suitable textbooks and material for students. Since a good textbook should be readable for learners to make our intent transmittable to the intended learners. How well authors succeed depend on the readability of the text they produce because the suitability of textbook and students' reading level would help students

in comprehending reading text. If the student could understand the text easily, it could make them get a better achievement in reading skill. It means that the textbook should be readable for readers.

Gray and Leary, cited in Dubay (2004: 18) identify four factors affecting readability, namely: content (including propositions, organization, coherence), style(including semantic and syntactic elements), design (including typography, format, and illustrations), and structure (including chapters, heading and navigation). Those reasons make the selection of textbook used by teachersbecome relatively crucial. The textbook has to fit the current curriculum, schools syllabus along with student's needs and also the aims and goals of teaching. Therefore, teachers have to choose the appropriate and ideal textbook as beneficial for both students and teachers as possible.

Readability or text difficulty is an important applied linguistics. Establishing text difficulty is relevant to the teacher and syllabus designer who wish to select appropriate materials for learners at a variety of ability levels. It is also critical to test developers in selecting reading texts at appropriate levels for inclusion into the reading sub-tests of examinations. Writers of text for various audiences also need guidance related to the range of factors which make texts more or less accessible.

There are many formulas that can be used to measure the readability of textbook. They are Flesch Reading Ease Formula, Flesch-kincaid Grade Level, SMOG Readability Formula, Gunning FOG Index Fry Readability formula, etc. However the researcher will only use one of them, the Flesch Reading Ease

Formula. This formula is more accurate and simple and it is primarily used to assess the difficulty of a reading passage written in English.

In line with the description above, the readability formula can be used to examine the readability of the text. The text is easy to read by the students who have high readability. Readability of text is very different from primary until senior high school student because age differences can affect students in understanding the text. As Flesch (1948) states in his readability score, the suitable level for students depends on the text. This formula is numerical value between 0 and 100. The higher The Flesch Reading Ease score, the greater the number of people who can comprehend the document easily. For example, if the score 50-60 is fairly difficult that is suitable for 10th – 12th grade of senior high school. It means that the text is appropriate for student and they can learn the text easily. If the score of text in a textbook in is not suitable for their grade or more difficult than their grade so they do not understand what the content of the text. It means that the textbook has low readability.

In fact, the low readability of the English reading textbook, the length of sentences and many unfamiliar words which cause low text readability can be found in a textbook. Most of students complain about the choice of textbook because the book is difficult to read and to understand. It is because the content and the grammar are difficult and presents the unfamiliar ideas to the student. Peng (2015:37) states that though many factors can lead students to not read the textbook, one of the endogenous variables that instructor can control is the readability of the textbook. It can be seen from the example below:

> The silky smooth sound of IwangNoorsaid's key boardduring the evening opening number "menggapai langit" intoxicated the 2000 strong audience that packed into the festival venue down at Pasar Triwindu, Solo's famous flea market.
>
> This third Solo City Jazz, which has held from September 21 to 22 proved to be a far cry from the high – end bustle and partying of java jazz 1. For a start, the festival was free to attend and the audience had to enjoy some seriously classy jazz performances.
>
> The fact that the festival took place at markets was intended to combine social classes of people, the trendy youths and women in traditional long blouses and sandals. Nobody missed out the fun offered by the two day solo city jazz shows. The deliberately chosen markets of Gede, Klewer and Triwindu became places for all social classes, government officials and ordinary citizens mingle and rub shoulders in those markets. The musicians felt comfortable playing Jazz compositions. Diah Ayu and Zarro sang ethnic songs, like Suwe Ora Jarum, familiar to the ears of the assembled market traders and shoppers. (Taken from Meaning in Text, 2014:64)

From the example above it can be seen that the sentences are too long and the paragraph contains of complex sentences. Also it is found that many unfamiliar words in some sentences such as "intoxicated, bustle". The text has most content carrying lexical item such as verb, noun, adjectives and adverb. The more content carrying lexical items the text has, the more difficult the student has. Actually the sentences can be separated into simple clause and use familiar word to make student understand the text. It makes students assume that reading text is difficult.

There are some conditions to determine that a textbook is having appropriate readability level. First, it can be seen from how many kinds of text contained in the textbookand then, the level of the texts readability in the textbook. For example; if the texts have lower readability level than the higher

one, it will not be appropriate enough for a certain school level, in this case it can be senior high school students. Because as flesch (1948) stated, the suitable level for the students depends on the text.

Some studies have been conducted to investigate readability to analyze texts to find the right fit between students and texts. One of them wasHandayani (2014) the research about *Readability Level of Science Book for Junior High School Year VIII*, published by Ministry of National Education Directorate General Management of Primary Education Directorate of Junior Secondary High school Development 2009. It was found that the lexis used contain many unfamiliar words and new ones for the students. In terms of grammatical complexity of the sentence it was found that the complexities are quite high with an average sentence length of 14 words per sentence. The complexity of lexis and grammar in the Science book affected the students understanding although the students have a good enough background of English mastery.

In conclusion, based on the results of the research is the Science book: Student's book for Junior High School Year VIII levels is less appropriate for junior high school students. The level of complexity of the sentence in the book is suitable with the level of students, but the lexis used, foreign words and new words; cause the students difficulty in understanding the existing discourse in the book.

Further, based on description above, the researcher was interested in conducting the research to readability of text in English textbookfor senior high school grade X that is published by Bina Media Perintis, the title is *Meaning in*

Text. The reasons the researcher chooses this textbook are because, the text book is released with the current curriculum. Second, it is used in one of the famous Senior High School in Medan named St. Thomas 2, so it is important to know whether the texts wereappropriate for the students or not. Third, the writer wants to know readability of texts from the lexical density of reading text in the textbook since the readability of reading text in the textbook since the readability of reading text affects the students' mastery quality upon text's content.

B. The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems were formulated as the following:

1. What were the levels of text readability in *Meaning in Text*textbook?
2. What type of genre that has the highest level of readability found in the reading text in *Meaning in Text*textbook?

C. The Objectives of Study

The objectives of the study were formulated as in the following:

1. To investigate the levels of text readability in *Meaning in Text* textbook.
2. To describe how the levels of the texts readability are realized among the genre based texts contain in *Meaning in Text* textbook

D. The Scope of the Study

This study focused on text readability that was realized in *Meaning in Text* textbook for grade X of senior high school textbook published by Bina Media

Perintis. The researcher analyzed the genre-based texts in the textbook.It took two texts from each genre.

In this research, the readability text was determined by using Flesch Reading Ease Formula. Thus, there were seven levels and frequencies score of the text readability.

E. The Significance of the Study

After conducting this research, the researcher expected that the result of the study would give these following benefits:

1. Theoretically, the result of the study would enrich and strengthen the knowledge of the theories on readability of English reading texts in the teaching of reading comprehension.
2. Practically
   a. For Teachers

      It could give a new perspective for the English teachers in using, selecting, adapting, or designing reading text materials that are suitable for the students' educational level.

   b. For the Researchers of Textbooks

      It could give them consideration on how to make good materials for reading that are appropriate for the target students.

   c. For Other Researchers

      It would inspire other researchers to conduct studies in similar fields.