

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. The Background of the Study

Textbook is a kind of teaching and learning media which is commonly used in every teaching and learning process. Textbook is a kind of printed materials that have an important part in teaching and learning process. In the process of teaching and learning English language, textbook plays an important role. It presents four skills that need to be learned by students in mastering English language. They are speaking, reading, listening and writing. Every material of those skills is presented as guidance for student to organize their learning both inside and outside classroom. By using textbook, student will understand the instruction from the teacher faster and better cause of direct contact with textbook. Moreover, it can be realized that textbook can make students be autonomous learner when teacher end the lesson. Students can have their practice in home to prepare their next lesson because textbook also presents instructions as substitute teacher to complete the lesson. Kasule (2011) states in many under-resourced classrooms, the textbook commands an elevated role in teaching and learning because it may be the only teaching resource on which the teachers' explanation is based.

Furthermore, textbook is the main media that support teacher in teaching and learning process. It facilitates teacher in conveying material to students which save the time and money so that teacher can have effective lesson in the classroom. Textbook is the picture of teacher planning which reflects what they teach and what students have to do. It means that textbook can be a standard goal for student in learning.

The importance of using textbooks for academic purposes encouraged many publishers to produce textbooks that will be used in schools. Therefore, there are many kinds of English textbook which are offered by publishers to various levels of students in the schools. Those are produced under the guidance of National Curriculum Standards in Indonesia. In spite of different publishers, each of them has similar topics that will be discussed by students. One of skills that are highly associated to the textbook is reading. Usually, textbook presents reading text as the reading material that will comprehend by student to get the information. But, reading text in each of textbook has different difficulty. In matter of fact, teacher has to select the right textbook for the students.

It should be realized that textbook selection is important. Textbook has to be selected by considering the good textbook criteria which are readable, understandable, and comprehensible. Besides, the teacher has to consider whether or not the materials in the textbook are appropriate with the syllabus and curriculum. The selection of textbook is important in order to help students in improving their reading skill. Based on Governmental Regulation No. 19/2005 about standard of textbook, the criteria of a good textbook is available to be used

both the content and physic of the book. Considering the readability of reading texts from three others skill materials is one of the ways in selecting textbook by teachers.

It is important to consider the readability of reading texts. Readability means how easily written materials can be read and understood (Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching). Readable text means that the reading text is appropriate with students' grade based on the formula which is used to measure the readability of current text. Each formula has its own criteria to conclude whether a text is readable or not to the learners/readers in specific target. For example, Fry formula determines text which has 142 up to 148 syllables per one hundred words, and 3.7 sentences are readable for the tenth grade. Readability measures the difficulty of reading text; in this case, the content is the one of criteria of good textbook requirement. By considering the readability level of the text, teachers can predict whether the text is difficult or easy for their students. Appropriate readability of the reading texts will lead students' enthusiasm in reading the text. As a result, it will help the learning process which the students enjoy in comprehending the reading text itself easily. Otherwise, inappropriate readability of reading text will make the students frustrated to read the text even in the first paragraph caused of the level of the text is too difficult for students. Besides, students' ability will not improve in reading because of the text is too easy. Furthermore, it will consume much time to comprehend the reading text by searching the meaning of hard words that is not suitable for student grade. Flesch (1949:147) states that if you force children to study a book that is over their heads they will not only fall

behind their education but will have a miserable time in the bargain. The importance of measuring the readability of reading text is also supported by Lem, Miller and Soro (2010:152) who state that many students who fail in school were given reading material that was beyond their instructional range for English language learners, finding text difficulty levels is very important and teachers need to design reading activities for maximal enjoyment and challenge.

Readability issue has also been studied by many researchers in many kinds of fields in the world. Tobathei and Bagheri (2013:1029), in their study about readability of some reading passages in English textbooks, found that the reading passage is too difficult for the students. Falconer et al (2011:1), in their study about readability of health education materials, found that the reading texts are too difficult for the students. From those studies, it can be concluded that not all reading texts are readable for the students. So, it is needed to measure the readability of a reading text.

There are a variety of different methods and approaches that can be used for assessing the readability levels of reading materials. The first technique is professional judgment which readability of reading material is judged by the expert by considering some criteria. The second technique is cloze procedure, which a passage is prepared by removing word and students are asked to supply the missing items. Another way is by using a readability formula involving use of average sentence length, vocabulary list, and syllable length to estimate reading difficulty level. The most common approach in assessing readability is the use of readability formulas. These formulas provide educators with an estimate of the

difficulty of books and other texts. Most readability formulas incorporate two components semantic difficulty and syntactic difficulty. Examples of these readability formulas are Flesch Reading Ease Formula, Flesch-Kincaid Formula, SMOG (Simple Measure of Gobbledygook) Formula, Dale-Chall Formula, Spache Formula, Forcase Formula, and Fry Formula. This study will implement a readability formula which is Fry Readability Formula. This technique will be used to measure the readability of reading texts from English textbook used by eleventh grade students in SMA Negeri 2 Rantau Utara.

### **B. The Problem of the Study**

Based on the background above, the problem of the study is formulated as the following:

“What is the readability level of reading texts in English textbook for the eleventh grade students in SMA N 2 Rantau Utara according to Fry Formula?”

### **C. The Objective of the Study**

In relation with the problem of the study, the objective of this study is to analyze the readability level of reading texts in English textbook for eleventh grade students in SMA N 2 Rantau Utara.



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

This study is focused to describe out the readability level of the reading texts in English textbook used by eleventh grade students in SMA Negeri 2 Rantau Utara which is entitled “Interlanguage: English for Senior High School Students XI” written by Joko Priana, Riandi, and Anita Prasetyo (2008). The English textbook is designed under guidance of KTSP curriculum. The readability of the reading text is measured according to Fry Formula.

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

Theoretically, findings of this research will contribute to either strengthening or enhancing the information of theory about readability of reading texts.

Practically, the findings of this research will be useful for:

1. The writers of textbook in giving consideration to make and design good reading text materials that are suitable for the students’ educational level.
2. The teacher in giving perspective to use and select the reading text materials which are suitable for the students’ reading level.
3. The researcher, this study could give further information for doing further research. This study would add more perspective in the theory of reading text and would motivate them to conduct the similar studies.