

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Reading is one of those four skills which is important to be learned by students. This skill enables them to gain more information from a text such as books, articles and newspapers. In teaching learning process, a textbook is a main source of information for students to increase their knowledge. Reading skill is a requirement to access the whole information that is written in school textbook. Gu in Javed (2015) states that reading is the most important skill amongst others regarded to the English Language teaching.

Brown (2004:185) stated that reading is arguably the most essential skill for success in all educational contexts. However, reading is a little bit difficult skill to be attained by students. This happens because reading is not only about spelling the letters or pronouncing the words, it needs a reasoning sense to understand the meaning of a certain text. In a learning process, materials of reading are presented to improve students' reading comprehension. These reading materials are combined in an appropriate textbook for a certain grade level of student. The materials usually related to the genres of texts. Students will be taught how to read and construct a certain genre based on its structure. But, the fact says not all of them always understand about what they read. Most students which experience a deadlock while reading a text on English school textbook choose to stop and forget what they have read about. But actually, it is

impossible for them to have a good English skill without previously mastering the reading skill as a basic.

Student's inability to interpret the meaning of a text cannot fully illustrate that she/he faces a learning problem. Sometimes, the selection of textbook that is inappropriate with student's knowledge level can make them confused to interpret the passage of the text. It usually refers to the kinds of used vocabulary inside the text or the length of the word.

In a process of learning which uses a printed learning material as a source, the readability become a specific problem. Teacher should focus on it because readability will determine whether the textbook is appropriate for students or not. The analysis of reading materials are required to keep learning process stay on the way to attain the learning goal. To know the level of a book, there should be a measurement for that. The thing that should be measured is the readability level. Readability refers to the level of written materials can be read and understood (Richards and Schmidt, 2010:482). By knowing the readability level of a textbook, a teacher will be easier to determine a proper textbook for students.

This study attempts to examine whether the teacher used an appropriate textbook for the student. Based on the internship program of the author in SMP Swasta Nasrani 1 Medan. It is found that the ninth grade students use a textbook entitled "Interactive English 3" that is published by Yudhistira. During the program, the author had some chances to substitute the teacher in ninth grade. It was found that the students have a standard reading score. A short interview

with some students have been also conducted. From the interview, few of them indicated that the reading materials in their English textbook are difficult to learn while the rest said the materials are easy to be understood.

One text from the textbook had been taken and analyzed by using SMOG Grading Formula, then it was found that the text had 22 polysyllabic words in 11 sentences. Hence, the calculation showed that the average count was suitable for the eleventh grade. The teacher has said that the chosen textbook for the ninth grade students were already good enough because it has been used for couple years. In the other side, it can be assumed that the teacher use this textbook based on its background that is published by a famous publisher. But, this statement and condition cannot represent the quality of the reading material inside the textbook. There should be an analysis to measure its readability. Whether the texts are easier or harder to understand. Therefore, it is interesting to conduct the research on the readability of reading materials in “Interactive English 3” textbook.

B. Identification of the Problems

From the background of the study above, the problems that can be identified are:

1. Some students face a difficulty in understanding the text of the chosen English textbook.
2. The vocabularies that exist in the chosen English textbook are not fully appropriate for the students' grade level.

3. Teachers gets a little hesitation on the readability level of the English textbook which is used by students.

C. The Scope of the Study

There are some problems that have been stated in the identification above. But, the research only focuses on examining a kind of textbook entitled “Interactive English 3” for the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Nasrani 1 Medan as one kind of learning material. It is related to the analysis of reading material which is compared to the requirements of School-based Curriculum including the indicators, genres, social functions, generic structures and language features. The genres that will be examined in this textbook are procedure text, report text and narrative text. The SMOG Grading Formula is the tool to analyze the genres in the textbook.

This book is chosen in this research because there is not a similar study has been conducted yet to solve the readability matter in reading materials on this grade level.

D. The Problem of the Study

The problem of the study is formulated in question form as follows:

How are the readability levels of reading texts in “Interactive English 3” textbook for the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Nasrani 1 Medan according to the SMOG Grading Formula?

E. The Objective of the Study

Based on the formulation of the research problem above, the objective of this study is to investigate the readability level of reading materials in “Interactive English 3” textbook for the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Nasrani 1 Medan.

F. The Significance of the Study

After conducting this research, it is expected that some of benefits of the research are aimed for both theoretical and practical implementation. Here are the detailed explanations:

1. Theoretically

The readability result of reading materials in this research will give new information and advice in determining the quality of English textbook.

2. Practically

- a. English teachers, to inform them to decide whether the chosen textbook is good or not for students.
- b. Other researchers, to make this technique to be a reference for conducting a similar study.
- c. Students, to increase their interest on reading the textbook, because they have understood about the meaning of each polysyllabic word (more than 3 syllables) that exists in the textbook.