

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. The Background of the Study**

Reading is one of language skill that should be mastered by students among listening, speaking, and writing. Students will get more information through reading. It is supported by Harvey (2012), states that reading as one of important skills that have to be acquired by students who learn English language. Reading is a way of getting information from something that is written. They need to master reading skill because by reading students can obtain information they need, understand important messages and consequently improve their knowledge.

One of the reading sources that is used in the learning process is textbook. According to Richards (2012), textbook is a key component in most language programs. In some situations they serve as the basis for much of the language input that the learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. It means that textbook plays an important role in helping the students learning and mastering all of the language components. The composition of each language skills and its practices should be balanced to help develop student's ability during the teaching and learning process. In other words, textbook will help teacher in conducting teaching and learning process and develop student's ability in learning language. Therefore, a teacher has to be able to select and

analyze the contents of textbook before they use it for teaching and learning process. In addition, a good textbook should not be too hard to be understood by student.

Reading material is one of the contents of the textbook besides listening instruction, some exercises, writing task and some conversation scripts. Reading material is usually in the form of text that is used to teach reading like pronouncing words, comprehending the content of the text. Through the text, the students can get information, knowledge and also the vocabulary and the grammar. It is provided in some types which are called as genre. The types of genre are arranged well based on the curriculum.

In reading text most of the students get difficulties in comprehending a long text or a dense text such as narrative text. When they found narrative text with long and many paragraph, they would get bored firstly. Getting bored makes them get difficulties in comprehending the text. But in fact the main point of difficult text is the lexical density of the text, in which the more lexical items the text has, the more difficult the text is. If the text is formed in grammatical configuration, the text is not too difficult. While if the text is formed in lexical configuration, the text is categorized in difficult text. Every student should be able to understand every reading text in the textbook which is covered in the curriculum of the unit level of education. In the curriculum, reading material should be relevant to the students' needs. The teachers have the freedom to choose the teaching media or strategy to improve the students communicative competence which is relevant to the students condition and needs. One of the

students' needs is to understand or comprehend the text based on the situation given in English subject.

One of the important things that can make the students hard or easy to understand English text is lexical density. Lexical density is a condition of the words proportion in the text. It shows the ratio of lexical items to grammatical items. Lexical items consist of noun, adjective, verb, and some adverbs while grammatical items consist of determiner, pronoun, most preposition, conjunction, finite verb, and some classes of adverb. Lexical density shows the complexity of words within text. It describes the development of lexical in the written language. The density of text is often unavailable for the students level. Sometimes, the students who are at the first level of junior high school get a text that has most lexical items which make the students difficult to understand the text. The amount of lexical items in a text can influence the length of a text and measure the level of difficulty of the text. The more the lexical items the text has, the more difficult the student has. The lexical items are known as an open system in which one word can have more than one meaning.

Zeinab (2015) states that one reason refers to lexical density in the text that hinder learner comprehension is because they do not master the lexical items in the text. It influences the ability of the students to comprehend the material. Some unfamiliar words influence the students ability to realize the importance of the knowledge the lexical density in their reading text. The text which has high lexical items is difficult to understand and with the low lexical items is not too difficult. The proportion between the lexical items and the grammatical items in the text certainly will determine the difficulty of the text. Through the lexical

density of the text, teacher can know whether the text is easy or difficult for the students. So the teacher can decide which appropriate strategy can be applied in the reading text based on the complexity of the words especially the lexical items.

Regarding the previous researcher on lexical density, various texts have been examined and different outcomes have been achieved. With reference to lexical density, Johansson (2008), found that 10-year-olds have higher lexical density in the written text than spoken text, 13-year-olds have a genre effect in their result where the narrative texts have higher lexical density than expository texts, 17-year-olds have higher lexical density in the written texts than spoken texts with no genre effect, and the adults have higher lexical density in their written text and there is no genre effect. In the other hand, Thomas (2013), investigated the lexical density and readability in English textbooks. The result shows that the text for upper-intermediate has low lexical density than other texts for elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate. Aside from written texts, lexical density has been examined in spoken texts. It is conducted by Alami, Sabbah, and Iranmanesh (2013), entitled male-female discourse difference in terms of lexical density. The result shows that male and female discourses are almost equally dense. In other words, the gender of the speaker has no effect on the lexical density of discourse.

Based on the explanations above, there are several reasons why the writer chooses the textbook. First, it is one of the textbooks that is suitable with the current curriculum. Second, it is often used by some schools in Medan so it is important to know whether the reading texts are appropriate for the students. Third, the writer wants to know the lexical density of reading text in the textbook.

Moreover, in order to comprehend the thesis, the writer will take Halliday's theory because he mentions briefly and clearly about the lexical density.

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

Based on the background of the study above, the problems of the study are:

1. What level difficulties of lexical density used in reading text of English textbook for grade XI Senior High School?
2. Why is level difficulties of lexical density used the way it is in reading text of English textbook for grade XI Senior High School?

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

With reference to the research problems, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the level difficulties of lexical density used in reading text of English textbook for grade XI Senior High School.
2. To elaborate reasons why level difficulties of lexical density used the way it is in reading text of English textbook for grade XI Senior High School.

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

This study is limited to analyze the lexical density that found in reading text of English textbook for senior high school. The book that analyze is English textbook for senior high school published by Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. in which it is used in two semester directly. It

consist of 10 reading texts and written in 3 types of genre. There are 3 text that will be analyzed which are taken from each genre.

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

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

1. Theoretically, this research hopefully will be useful to enrich the lexical density theories. The finding in this research can add new information to other researcher about the lexical density found in a textbook.
2. Practically, the findings are expected to be useful for
  - a. Teachers, to provide additional references for the teachers in choosing English textbook to their students.
  - b. Students, to improve the students' knowledge and ability in English reading text.
  - c. Textbook Writer, the result of the study can be used as a reference in writing an English textbook based on the recent curriculum, that is suited with the students' needs and suit the demands of future world.
  - d. Researchers, this research will be helpful to increase all researchers' knowledge about the genre and lexical density in reading text. For the further researchers, for the similar researchers, the finding can be used as a reference to conduct study on the same topic of different sources and develop it to be better.