

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Problem

Reading is one of the four language skills that should be acquired by the students in learning a language. "Reading is a language process requiring the understanding of written language" (Heilman et al.1981:50). Through reading, reader gets new vocabularies and information by trying to find out the aim that the writer wants to tell. However, to be able to read, reader needs materials that support her/him in reading. As what Alderson and Urquhart (1984, xvi) states, "... text must have readers, readers must have something to read and reading is necessarily interactive."

In school, textbooks are one of primary sources used by teachers to teach English. "Textbooks are highly organized, well-structured source of information" (McWhorter, 1990:98). Although teachers use textbooks for teaching in the classroom and master the materials in the books, it is not easy for them to create a textbook themselves. Most textbooks are composed by experts and well-qualified people. The textbook is also designed based on the curriculum implemented at that time. Although most of teachers cannot write textbooks by themselves, they are responsible to choose the textbook that they are going to use in teaching. Therefore, the chosen textbook is having good quality if it is suitable for students in the matter that they can easily understand and comprehend the information there.

The information provided in a textbook can be in form of reading text. Ainiyah (2009:7) defines reading text as any form of written material that is aimed for reading comprehension. Since teachers need to choose quality textbooks, they should be equipped with some skills of textbook evaluation. Nuttall (2005:170) states, one of the criteria for evaluating text for reading development is readability. "Readability is what makes some texts easier to read than others" (Dubay, 2004:3).

Readability test is a test assessing in what level a reading text is. According to Foulger (cited in Ainiyah, 2009:15), one of the formulas to measure the readability of a reading text is Fry readability graph. From Fry readability graph, researchers can estimate readability level according to the readers' ages and readers' grades. The graph was designed to identify the grade-level score for materials from first grade through collage. By doing this test, researchers can find out whether a reading text is suitable for certain grade level or not. Readability text is a helpful test for teachers to assess whether a reading text is suitable for students or not.

In Indonesia, readability test has been done by some researchers. Two of them are Soebijanto (2015) and Ainiyah (2009). In this study, the researcher chooses to assess the readability level of *Bahasa Inggris for Grade X* published by Kemendikbud. The researcher chooses readability because through the researcher experiences in teaching (teaching practice), some students had difficulty in doing exercises which were related to reading texts because they did not get the information there properly. The reasons were the vocabulary and

sentence difficulty. The difficulty of the vocabulary and sentence caused the texts unreadable.

In this research, the researcher only considers vocabulary and sentence difficulty in the reading texts by counting the word length and sentence length. The formula chosen is Fry readability formula.

Grade X is chosen because it is the beginning level of senior high school. This level is the transition level from Junior high school to Senior high school. In this level the English skill of the students will increase because it is the transition level from junior to senior high school which means the knowledge of the students of English will be improved.

The researcher uses the revised edition of *Bahasa Inggris for Grade X* published by Kemendikbud. It is chosen because the textbook is published by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) which is used by so many senior high schools in Indonesia. The other reason is the textbook is published in 2016; no one has ever evaluated the textbook before. From this research the researcher wants to know the readability level of *Bahasa Inggris for Grade X* published by Kemendikbud and whether the book is suitable for grade X students or not.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

What is the readability level of the reading texts in *Bahasa Inggris for Grade X* published by Kemendikbud?

### **1.3 The Objective of the Problem**

The objective of this research is to assess the readability level of the reading texts in *Bahasa Inggris for Grade X published by Kemendikbud*.

### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

The theory underlining this study is reading, textbook and readability. According to Vacca (1981:12), "Reading is an active process of deriving meaning." In order to understand the meaning in a reading text, students need material which is suitable for them. One of the materials used in teaching language is textbook. Textbook is a key competent in most language programs (Richard, 2001:1).

According to Ulusoy (2006:323), "readability studies aim to analyse texts to find the right fit between students and texts." Readability itself refers to combination of structural and lexical difficulty (Nuttal, 2005:174). Measuring readability text can be done by readability index or readability test. According to Nuttal (2005:175), readability index is a way of assessing a text by giving it a kind of score. One of the popular formulas is Fry readability graph or Fry readability formula. As Ruddell (2005, cited in Listianingsih, 2013:27) states, Fry readability formula is one of the most highly popular formulas used by the teachers for assessing the Junior/Senior High School textbooks, which can also be used both for short and long texts.

### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

The study is expected to give some contributions in teaching reading for schools that use *Bahasa Inggris for Grade X* published by Kemendikbud. The result of this study is expected to give feedback for the school in selecting textbooks that are suitable for the students. On the other hand, for the students, reading the readable texts will help them improve their reading skill. The study is also expected to give more information for the publisher in evaluating this textbook so that it is better.

### **1.6 The Assumptions**

This study is conducted on the basis of the following assumptions:

1. The text book presents reading passages almost in each chapter
2. The book is used by many schools in Indonesia
3. Word and sentence difficulty can be assessed using readability formula
4. Fry readability formula is one of the formulas to assess readability of English written texts

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The study is conducted to know the readability level of reading texts in the revised version of *Bahasa Inggris for Grade X* published by Kemendikbud. The textbook is published in 2016. This research assesses readability of the reading texts only based on the language factor (the words and the sentences difficulty). Therefore, the formula chosen is Fry readability formula.

## **1.8 Definition of Key-terms**

- a. “Reading is a language process requiring the understanding of written language” (Heilman et al., 1981:50).
- b. “Readability is what makes some texts easier to read than others” (Dubay, 2004:3).
- c. Readability level is a level which is calculated by the average number of sentences (y-axis) and syllables (x-axis) per hundred words. (Fry,1977 cited in Soebijanto, 2016:10).
- d. Reading text is any form of written material that is aimed for reading comprehension (Ainiyah, 2009:7).
- e. Fry readability graph is readability metric is designed to identify the grade-level score for material from first grade through college to predict the difficulty of the reading material (Vacca, 1981:265).

## **1.9 Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 of this thesis deals with the background of this problem, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the theoretical framework, the significance of the study, the assumptions, the limitations of the study, definitions of key-terms, and the organization of the study. Chapter 2 deals with the review of related literature and review of previous study. Chapter 3 deals with research design, source data, instrument of the research, procedure of data collections, technique of data analysis and triangulation. Chapter 4 of this thesis shows the results of the findings and also the discussion of the findings. Chapter 5 of this thesis deals with the conclusion and the suggestions.