

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the background of the study, statements of the problem, objective of the study, theoretical framework, scope and limitation, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the proposal.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is globally used by people around the world in the communication of various aspects of human life, such as politics, diplomacy, international trade and industry, commerce, science and technology, education, the media, information technology, and popular culture (Crystal, Huda, and Jenkins, in Lauder 2008). This is the reason why in Indonesia, English is the most important international language to be taught at schools because one of the goals of the national education is to enable Indonesian people to compete in the international world. As such, being able to communicate in English will increase the nation's competitiveness in the global communication.

Simatupang (1999) states that English has no wide use in the Indonesian society as a medium of communication in the official domains like the governmental business, the law courts, and the education system as the medium of instruction. English is not a second language in Indonesia; therefore, English is not used in the daily communication by most Indonesian people. In this situation, most people in Indonesia do not have enough English exposure in their daily life. This means that schools have the important roles to increase the English communicative competence of young people in Indonesia. Hence, English is a compulsory subject taught to during junior and senior high schools students in Indonesia (Sulistiyo, 2016) to enable students to communicate globally in English.

As the focus of teaching English in secondary schools is to develop students' communicative skills, the English syllabus of Curriculum 2013 is designed based on the Communicative Language Teaching or the Communicative Approach. Richards and Rodgers (2001, P.161) stress the importance of language tasks that

promote meaningful learning to help students develop their communicative competence. These language experts also assert the use of the communicative approach focuses more on the four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Reading is one of the four language skills that constitute communicative skills. It is an activity that involves the reader and the text to gain information through the textual material and build the meaning based on their background knowledge (Nunan, 2003). Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S (2001) state that reading is not just the process of understanding words in reading passages, but it requires learners to negotiate and to interact with meaning. In this way, communication happens. Harmer (2007) puts forward that reading is such a complex and challenging skill to learn.

Williams (1998) states that reading comprehension is an activity aimed to comprehend the messages conveyed in a particular text. In reading comprehension materials, reading texts are commonly followed by reading questions. Alderson and Urquhart (1984) state that one comprehension can be traced by giving them a series of passages to understand and asking them a variety of questions afterward. No wonder, in teaching and learning reading comprehension, questions play an important role in ensuring students' understanding of texts (Rahmawati, I. K., & Prayogo, J. A., 2012). The function of reading questions as an instrument to find out whether the students have understood the reading text so that the reading questions should be suitable and organized based on taxonomy of thinking. One of the comprehension taxonomies used for educational purposes is the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (abbreviated as RBT). It is a classification system of educational objectives based on the level of student understanding necessary for achievement or mastery. RBT consists of 6 (six) levels of cognitive domains ranging from the lowest to the highest level: (1) Remembering, (2) Understanding, and (3) Applying (4) Analyzing, (5) Evaluating, and (6) Creating (Anderson et al., 2001).

Based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, levels of thinking can be grouped into the Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher-Order thinking (HOTS).

LOTS are reflected by the lower three levels of RBT: (1) Remembering, (2) Understanding, and (3) Applying levels and HOTS are reflected by the top three levels of RBT, which are: (4) Analyzing, (5) Evaluating, and (6) Creating levels. Linse (2006) states that in a reading process, a reader in order to get the message of the text manipulates thinking skills of the higher-order. As such, an ideal reading task in a reading materials should equipped with questions of more HOTS level. This reading principle is also confirmed by Airasian and Russel (2008) who propose that reading requires the students to perform in most complicated process. This means that good reading questions accompanying reading texts should not only measure factual and literal questions in which students can find the answers directly as written in the texts, but there should be questions requiring students to analyze, evaluate, and create new ideas and knowledge. Moreover, when students are trained to manipulate their higher-order thinking skills to assess information, make a conclusion, decision, and solve the challenges they encounter in daily life (Paul and Elder, 2002), they are trained to get involve in the real communication. It can be concluded that students who can manipulate their higher-order thinking can be successful communicators.

In the standard practice in the English class, teachers commonly use textbooks to provide substantial sources of learning materials (AlGhazo & Smadi 2013) as cited in (Wardani et al., 2019). A textbook has some units containing certain information, practice, and activities, which a teacher needs to teach based on a set of syllabus. Furthermore, a textbook, especially an English textbook, is established as the key component for providing learning information and assistance in most language teaching programs (Richards, 2001).

Regarding the significant role of textbooks, teachers should be more selective in choosing and using a textbook based on the students' needs (Chaisongkram, 2011). Torres & Hutchinson (1994, p. 315) stress that textbooks used in the class should support the teaching-learning to help accomplish the goals of the lessons. Teachers need to consider the materials of the textbook to provide varied topics and tasks for different levels of learners, learning styles, and interests (Ur, 2009) involving all four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing

skills, grammar, and vocabulary. Therefore, textbooks used must meet the requirements relevant to Curriculum 2013 based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. It is used to measure students' thinking levels from lower-order to higher-order thinking to help students achieve the essential competencies – to communicate in English towards the material learned. It is expected that English textbooks in Indonesia contain more HOTS contents in the reading questions to enhance higher-order thinking skills, as proposed by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001).

Three previous studies conducted by: Damestiyas (2016), Ramli (2019) and Kartika (2019) analyze the reading comprehension questions of other English textbooks. Damestiyas has found out that 92% of reading questions in the English Textbook "Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Grade X Semester I measured as LOTS. Ramli, however, has investigated that reading questions in an English Textbook "Bahasa Inggris" for grade 11 by Kemendikbud is 79.3% measured as HOTS. Kartika concludes that Edition 78.64% reading questions in the "Bright" English Textbook for Nine Graders Revised belong to the LOTS. In this study, the researcher will analyze the questions in the English textbook "When English Comes in Handy" for Grade X based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy to analyze reading questions. The researcher chooses this textbook as no study has been conducted on the levels of thinking measured by the questions in the textbook. This textbook is published by Grafindo Media Utama and used by senior high schools in different cities in Indonesia. This textbook, English Comes in Handy for Grade X, is written based on the English syllabus of Curriculum 2013.

In line with the above reasons concerning the importance of providing questions of the HOTS levels, it is vital to know whether the questions in a textbook measure students' higher-order thinking skills. Therefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing the questions in the textbook regarding the LOTS and HOTS contents in the reading comprehension questions. This textbook comprises of 10 (ten) main chapters and 3 (three) review chapters. The materials for the reading sections take the forms passages only. Not all chapters contain reading texts and

questions. In all, there are 29 (twenty-nine) reading texts accompanied by 175 (one hundred seventy-five) reading questions which will be used as the data source of this research.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

In line with the background of the study above, the statements of the problem of this research are formulated as follows:

1. What levels of thinking skills are measured in the reading comprehension questions of the English textbook “Bahasa Inggris When English Comes in Handy” for Grade X?

There are six levels of thinking skills based on the cognitive domains of the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy which are grouped into the lower-order thinking skills consisting of remembering, understanding, and applying; and the higher-order thinking skills consisting of analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

The reading comprehension questions are provided following the reading texts of different types; hence, the next problem statement is formulated as follows:

2. a) Which reading text types are equipped with more higher-order thinking skills questions?
b) Which reading text types are equipped with more lower-order thinking skills questions?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Derived from the statements of the problem above, this study is intended:

1. To find out the levels of thinking skills measured in the reading comprehension questions of the English textbook “Bahasa Inggris When English Comes in Handy” for Grade X based on the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy.
2. a) To find out which reading text types are equipped with more the higher-order thinking skills questions.
b) To find out which reading text types are equipped with more the lower-order thinking skills questions.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theories supporting this non-experimental study are reading, the importance of questions in reading, Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, higher-order and lower-order thinking skills, Curriculum 2013 and English syllabus.

Reading is described as an activity that involves the reader and the text to gain information through the textual material and build the meaning based on their background knowledge (Nunan, 2003). As a result, students should be encouraged to access themselves to absorb knowledge from reading materials. So questions are an essential instrument to dig more knowledge based on the materials they have read. Furthermore, “...the use of questions is an integral aspect of such activities, and in our experiences, as language teachers, we have seen that well-designed comprehension questions help students interact with the text to create or construct meaning. In addition, “...well-designed comprehension questions help students interact with the text to create or construct meaning” and also “... help our students begin to think critically and intelligent.” (Day & Park, 2005). That is why teachers

and students need to see demonstrations of how questioning is used to construct meaning from texts. It can be said that questioning lies at the heart of comprehension because it is the process of questioning, seeking answers, and asking further questions that keep the reading going. No wonder reading questions are required for students to measure their understanding of the reading texts provided in textbooks.

The theory of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy is also the major theoretical framework in this research study. This taxonomy has cognitive, affective, and psychomotor as its educational goals. The new version of Bloom's Taxonomy, the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (abbreviated as RBT), proposed by Krathwohl and Anderson, and is used to assess learning on various cognitive levels from lower-order thinking to the higher-order thinking process. It is classified into 6 (six) levels: (1) Remembering, (2) Understanding, (3) Applying, (4) Analyzing, (5) Evaluating, and (6) Creating. Based on this Taxonomy table, teachers can decide where and how to improve the planning of curriculum and the delivery of instruction. (Anderson et al., 2001). Based on RBT, levels of thinking can be grouped into the Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher-Order thinking (HOTS). LOTS are reflected by the lower three levels of RBT: (1) Remembering, (2) Understanding, and (3) Applying levels and HOTS are reflected by the top three levels of RBT, which are: (4) Analyzing, (5) Evaluating, and (6) Creating levels.

Another major theoretical framework in this study is the Indonesian curriculum of 2013 and English syllabus. The curriculum 2013 is the curriculum used in the Indonesian school system. The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia has been implementing it in Indonesia since 2014-2015. The purpose of this curriculum is exclusively to foster the students' creative thinking. (Rohiyatussakinah, 2020). While the syllabus is part of the curriculum serves as an overarching plan in a specific subject, for example, English, for the learning process.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on the reading comprehension questions in the English textbook “Bahasa Inggris When English Comes in Handy” for Grade X published by Grafindo Media Pratama, written based on the English syllabus of Curriculum 2013. The materials for the reading sections take the forms passages only. However, not all chapters contain reading texts and questions. In all, there are 29 (twenty-nine) reading texts accompanied by 175 (one hundred seventy-five) reading questions used as the data source of this research. The questions analyzed are only those written in the textbook. The researcher will not include any questions raised by the teachers, as the teachers are not the subject of this study. The researcher will use the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy to develop the parameters.

1.6 Significance of the Study

It is expected that the result of this study would provide information primarily for the teachers about the thinking skills measured by the reading comprehension questions in an English textbook based on the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy. The result of this study is also expected to be a reference for the English teachers to construct questions to measure HOTS in order to train students to increase their literacy level as HOTS questions can be asked to any text types.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

For the sake of clarity, accuracy, and to avoid misinterpretation, the following terms defined into six key terms which described as follows:

1. Reading Passage

Reading passage is a portion or section of a written work which can be as short as a sentence, but most consist of at least one paragraph and usually several.

(Bergin, Mike., 2017). In this study, the reading passage as a part of data source consists of reading texts followed by questions found in the textbook.

2. Reading Questions

Reading questions are inquiries about the reading text. They are used to measure the understanding of the students on the reading text based on their response to questions, whether or not they already understand the text (Ningsih, 2009). In this study, the reading questions comprise of the written questions following the reading text presented in most of the chapters in the textbook.

3. Lower-Order Thinking Skills.

Lower-order thinking skills is the prerequisites of skills required to for progressing to higher-order thinking. These are essential skills taught very well in school systems and include activities in reading and writing (Wilson, 2000). In this study, the first three levels of RBT: Remembering, Understanding, and Applying.

4. Higher-Order Thinking Skills.

Gloria, P. K., (2017) state higher-order thinking skills is the human ability to think at a higher level than memorizing facts or retelling something precisely the same way as it is told before. In this study, the second three levels of RBT: Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating.

5. Curriculum

According to Muljani, M., & Lutfiana, L. (2021), the curriculum is “an education system consisting of a set of subjects that must be taught. The subjects will be explained starting from the objectives, materials, methods, evaluation, and learning resources used.” In this study, the term curriculum refers to Curriculum 2013 applied for senior high schools in Indonesia.

6. Syllabus

A syllabus demonstrates how to plan for tasks, evaluate and monitor one's performance, and allocate time and resources to areas where more learning is required (Parkes and Harris, 2002). In this study, the syllabus refers to the English syllabus for senior high schools in Curriculum 2013.

1.8 Organization of the Proposal

This study comprises three chapters. The first chapter covers the background of the study, statements of the problem, objective of the study, theoretical framework, scope and limitation, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the proposal. The second chapter consists of the review of related literature and the previous studies used as the basis of this research. The third chapter presents of the research methods used in this research.