CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

1.1. Background of the Study

English language is considered to be the first global language and widely used by people all over the world in the various aspect communication of human life in almost all fields such as science, engineering and technology, medicine, trade and commerce, scientific research, education, tourism, internet, banking, advertising, movie, transport, pharmacy and many (Srinivas Rao, 2019). One of the national goals of education in Indonesia is to develop the global competitiveness of the nation, especially in science and technology. This is why, in Indonesia, English is taught in the secondary schools: the junior high schools and the senior high schools as an international language.

As in Indonesia, English is an international language, it is not used in the people's daily communication. As such, people do not have sufficient English view in their everyday lives. Thus, schools play a key role in enhancing the skills of young people in Indonesia in English communication. English has been introduced and taught starting from primary school to university. Certain schools begin English lessons in the kindergarten. Besides, there are numerous English courses available to assist students in mastering the language (Suciati, 2015).

Regarding the goals of the national education, that is to increase the nation competitiveness in the global communication, it is expected that the higher the education of a person, the more literate he will be. As a result, such a person will be able to give better reasonings when communicating with others. A person with good reasoning skills is able to make conclusions, to solve problems, and then to make a

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decision. In other words, a person with good reasoning skills is able not only to think about factual contexts, but more than that he can manipulate his higher-level thinking to be a successful communicator.

Benjamin Bloom proposes six levels of thinking skills starting from the lowest level to the highest level (Anderson et al., 2001). The revised Bloom's Taxonomy consists of remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating. The first three belong to the lower-order thinking skills, and the second three levels belong to the higher-order thinking skills. Formal education should help young people to develop their thinking skills through trainings which focus more on the higher-order thinking skills (King et al., 2003).

The result of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2016, indicates that Indonesian students' proficiency in literacy, mathematics, and science is ranked as the second-to-last (64 (sixty four) out of 65 (sixty five) countries), as cited in Argina et al. (2017). The Ministry of Education and Culture is concerned by these low PISA test results. Based on the researcher's observation and experiences when she was in the junior high school and the senior high school, higher-order thinking skills were not the focus of learning. Most of the time, students did more memorizing materials than analysing and creating things. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Culture has presently urged educators to train students reach more higher-order thinking skills practice. Higher-level thinking skills in the learning process can improve students' critical thinking skills and their ability to assess information. Having higher thinking skills is very important to prepare students for thinking in the real world. Linse (2005) emphasises that reading is interrelated with higher-order thinking skills.

Reading is a metacognitive process (Silvén, 1992). Metacognitive strategies in reading are classified as the students' self-monitoring and self-regulating activities, which allow them to concentrate on both the process and product of the reading. To put

it simply, students who employ a metacognitive strategy are capable of anticipating, monitoring, and evaluating the content of the text even before they begin to read (Usman et al., 2017). Not only understanding words but reading requires other aspects of thinking like background knowledge, the knowledge of the world, supported by language mastery. In this way, higher-order thinking skills should be the focus of teaching and learning in the secondary schools.

Reading is a complex 'cognitive process' (reading comprehension) that decodes symbols to construct or deduce meaning (Hans, 2013). Reading is a way of learning language, communicating, and sharing information and ideas. Like all languages, it is a complex interaction between a text and reader. It is created by the reader's prior knowledge, experience, attitude and the social language community. Reading requires constant practice, development and excellence. In addition, reading requires creativity and critical analysis. Since reading is a very complex process, it cannot be controlled or limited to one or two interpretations. It does not have a specific right in reading, but it allows readers to get away from introspection and create their own products. Harmer (2007) states that even reading is difficult for native speakers of English because of the many complex reading skills involved.

Reading comprehension which contains reading passages along with questions is one of the necessary materials used for those who learn English. Questions may play an important role in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. Then, in line with the government's literacy level, teaching reading is intended to train students to understand the meaning of the texts.

A teacher and students use a textbook during the educational process, as one of the sources, to provide a substantial source of information, guidance and structure (AlGhazo & Smadi 2013 in Wardani et al., 2019). A textbook is regarded as an indispensable means of learning foreign languages, the validity and importance of which are rarely questioned. The textbook is highly appreciated by restless teachers

who try to get their message across, teach vocabulary and help students learn and consolidate the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking (Tanashoulas, 2016). As a moderator of education, the teacher should choose a good textbook wisely. Students may get benefit from reading and completing the exercises in the textbook. Bruner (2016) states that "Some very good books have relatively few graphics; others often use pictures, charts, graphs and maps". A textbook, especially an English textbook, should contain a variety of topics and activities for different learners' levels, learning styles and interests in the learning of a language.

Teachers have to examine whether a textbook contains a variety of exercises and that all four basic language skills with a variety of exercises are proficient in the manual and should be more selective in choosing and using a textbook especially for teaching. Besides focusing in choosing a textbook which contains the four basic language skills, teachers need also to focus in choosing a textbook which is required to be relevant to Curriculum 2013 based on the revised Bloom's Taxonomy that provides students' thinking levels from lower-order to higher order thinking levels. English textbooks are expected to contain more HOTS contents in the reading questions in order to encourage higher thinking processes.

So far, there are quite many studies analysing reading comprehension questions in the English textbooks for secondary schools based on Bloom's Taxonomy that have been conducted. One study conducted by Ong (2004) with the subject "Headlight" textbook shows the result that there are 5 (five) levels of cognitive domain: Knowledge (37.25%), Comprehension (39.17%), Application (3.21%), Analysis (19.97%), and Evaluation (0.40%) measured by the reading comprehension questions following the reading materials. This study uses the original Bloom's Taxonomy. Another study by Setiyawati (2016) analysing the reading comprehension questions in "Bahasa Inggris" for Grade XI by *Kemendikbud* 2014 based on the revised Bloom's Taxonomy shows the result that the book presents questions measuring both higher-order thinking skills (61.40%) and lower-order thinking skills (38.60%). Maharani (2019) who has conducted a study on the levels of thinking skills measured by the reading

comprehension questions in the ELT textbook entitled "Pathway to English" for SMA/MA grade X published by *Erlangga* based on the revised Bloom's Taxonomy has proven that the reading comprehension questions measures more dominant on the lower-order thinking skills than higher-order one. In this case, Remembering level has the highest percentage (44.3%) and Understand level is in the second level of the most dominant cognitive domain (34.4%). Thus, the reading questions which categorized as higher-order thinking skills seldom appeared in the textbook.

The three studies above conclude that the questions in the textbooks cover all levels of thinking skills. This is what teachers should make sure that the questions in the textbooks cover not only lower-order thinking skills but also higher-order thinking skills. It has been suggested that training students to have good reasoning skills can be done through reading comprehension activities when students are exposed to questions more of higher-order thinking skills. Based on these reasons, the researcher is curious to conduct a similar study with a different textbook as the subject. The researcher has found out that "Bahasa Inggris" published by *Grafindo* is widely used in senior high schools in different cities in Indonesia. So far, no study has been conducted on this textbook. In this study, the researcher focuses on the higher-order thinking skills measured by the reading comprehension questions following the reading materials.

The subject of the study is the English textbook "Bahasa Inggris" published by *Grafindo* for grade XI (eleven) measures the students' higher-order thinking skills. The book consists of 9 (nine) chapters and 3 (three) review chapters containing exercises. Each chapter contains the learning goals and the materials for the four language skills, grammar, and vocabulary. Each chapter covers one topic in accordance with the basic competences of the English lesson for grade eleven. In all there are nine topics covered in the nine chapters; they are: suggestions and offers, opinions and thoughts, invitation letters, analytical exposition texts, personal letters, texts related to cause and effect, explanation texts, and song lyrics. The materials for the reading sections in each chapter take the forms of a written dialogue, and/or passages. There are 34 (thirty-four) reading

materials in total, 5 (five) in the form of written dialogues and 29 (twenty-nine) in the form of reading passages. In all the reading materials are accompanied by 206 (two-hundred-six) questions.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In line with the background of the study, the statement of the problem of this research is "What higher-order thinking skills are measured through the reading comprehension questions in the English textbook "Bahasa Inggris" published by *Grafindo* for grade XI?"

1.3. Objective of the Study

In line with what has been stated in the statements of the problem, the objective of this study is to find out higher-order thinking skills which are measured through the reading comprehension questions in the English textbook "Bahasa Inggris" published by *Grafindo* for grade XI.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

There are five underlying theories in this study. They are the theory of reading and reading questions, text types, revised Bloom's Taxonomy, and Curriculum 2013.

Reading is a diverse process in which words are recognized, understood, fluent and encouraging (Leipzig, D. H., 2001). Furthermore, in developing students' reading skill can be done through reading questions. A reading question is an interrogative statement that is used during the reading process to assess the learners' comprehension after they have read the passages (Damestyas 2016 in Imanuella, 2018). It can be used to measure the understanding of the students on the reading passage from their response

to questions, whether or not they understand the text already (Ningsih, 2009). In short, students can understand the passage by answering reading questions. The type of reading questions is therefore also an important part of reading.

Text types is the second theoretical framework in this research study. As cited in *Central Rivers Area Education Agency,* the term of text types refers to written forms. In general, there are two main types of text, factual: includes descriptions, recounts or persuasives and literary: includes poetry, narrative or personal response.

The theory of revised Bloom's Taxonomy is also the major theoretical framework in this research study. The revised Bloom's Taxonomy is the process of identifying abilities or skills from the lowest level to the highest level. It classifies into six levels: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analysing, Evaluating, and Creating. Teachers can decide where and how the curriculum and instruction delivery should be improved using the Taxonomy table (Anderson et al., 2001).

Another major theoretical framework in this study is the Indonesian curriculum of 2013. The Curriculum 2013 is the curriculum that applies in the Indonesian Education System. Since July 2013, the Indonesian government has decided to introduce the 2013 curriculum in certain schools (Retnawati et al., 2016). The Curriculum 2013 is an enhancement of the previous curriculum, the Curriculum 2006.

1.5.   Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the reading questions in the English textbook "Bahasa Inggris" published by *Grafindo* for grade XI which is designed based on the Indonesian curriculum of 2013 (Curriculum 2013). This book was published in 2017. The materials for the reading sections in each chapter take the forms of a written dialogue, and/or passages. In all the reading materials are accompanied by 34 (thirty-four) reading passages in total, 5 (five) in the form of written dialogues and 29 (twenty-nine)

in the form of reading passages, and 206 (two-hundred-six) questions. These questions will be analysed based on the revised Bloom's Taxonomy focusing on the higher-order thinking skills levels which are Analysing, Evaluating, and Creating in the cognitive domains. The researcher will analyse the higher-order thinking skills which are measured through the reading comprehension questions in the English textbook "Bahasa Inggris" published by *Grafindo* for grade XI.

This study will only analyse the written questions included in the textbook, and it will not cover teacher-made questions as the researcher will not include teachers as the subjects of the study.

1.6.   Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to give some insights especially to teachers concerning the higher-order thinking skills measured by the questions of the reading materials. This study is also expected to provide useful information concerning the importance of including HOTS in reading questions.

1.7.   Definition of Key Terms

In this study, the researcher used some key terms which may be difficult for readers to understand and provided the definitions in accordance with the context of this study.

(1) Reading passage

In this research, reading passage is a part of a written piece of work that can be as brief as a phrase, but most consist of at least a paragraph and usually several (Bergin, 2017).

(2) Reading questions

According to the *Cambridge Dictionary,* question is a sentence used to obtain information. Reading questions ends with a question mark (?) and are written after the reading passage.

(3) Textbook

A textbook refers to a set of knowledge, concepts, and principles about a particular subject that is used to facilitate learning and is the most frequently used source in the classroom (Yuanovita 2011 in Rahmawati, 2018).

(4) HOTS

HOTS, stands for higher-order thinking skills, in this study is the ability to apply thought processes to complex situations that contain a large number of variables (Arif, 2019). Nursalam et al. (2018) also provides the definition of HOTS, which says is the ability of resolving problems by combining new knowledge and old knowledge by linking a number of facts and then transforming them into a new idea. HOTS is part of the cognitive domain in the revised Bloom's Taxonomy along with LOTS, lower-order thinking skills.

1.8. Organization of the Thesis

There are five chapters in this study. The first chapter presents the background of the study, the statements of the problem, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the theoretical framework, the scope and limitation of the study, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the proposal. The second chapter consists of underlying theories and previous studies. Then, there are research design, source of data, parameters, instrument, procedures of data collecting, data analysis technique, and triangulation in the third chapter. Next, there are findings and discussion in the fourth chapter. Last, there are conclusion and suggestion in the fifth chapter.