CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Reading has become a very important skill for people in this modern era. It has been known that many books, articles, journals, and manuals are published in English. If someone wants to read books and articles without waiting for translated versions in their native language for a long time, they have to be able to read them in English. It takes times to translate them and when they are translated, the knowledge will not be so new anymore. So, if someone wants to have up-to-date information from all over the world, they have to be able to acquire a good reading skill in English.

The reading skill is also very crucial for students. They need to be able to have a good reading skill to support their learning process in school. If they have a good reading skill in English, it is easier for them to find many resources for their studies through books or articles using English.

Although reading seems an easy activity to do, there are not many students enjoying this activity. They rarely read books or articles in their spare time. It is not a strange phenomenon to see many students rarely go to libraries. They do not like reading newspapers or even novels printed in English. Students often get a hold of English reading texts only from textbooks. However, sometimes they have less enthusiasm in reading materials that they learn in the textbooks. Because of this lack of practice, they have poor reading skill. Besides, The reading materials
that students read sometimes do not appropriate with their educational background. So, it is teachers’ duty to select suitable reading materials to their students’ level.

Good reading materials serve as an important basic input for students to improve their reading skill. Mostly, the reading materials which are given for students are reading text. Textbooks are the learning source that mostly provide many reading texts for students. It cannot be denied that many teachers use materials from textbooks for their students. For this reason, a textbook that is suitable for the level of students is needed to serve as a basis in their learning process. Suitable reading texts from textbooks can encourage students to learn English more effectively.

To make sure that the reading texts are appropriate, teachers have to evaluate the readability level of the reading texts before give it to the students. According to DuBay (2004), readability is what makes some texts easier to read that other. It means that readability refers to the difficulty level of the written text based on the level of the students’ educational background. Analyzing the readability level of text also can help the teacher to predict whether the text is difficult, plain, or easy for the students. If the readability level of text is not suitable with students’ level, the text will be difficult to understand by them. Students commonly get difficulty in answering questions based on the text such as about main idea, details, moral value of the text, etc. They face the difficulty because they think that the text is hard to be comprehended especially in grasping the main idea of the paragraphs and unfamiliar vocabularies. So, to avoid
it, teachers task is evaluating the readability level of text before use it in teaching and learning activities.

There are three ways in measuring the readability level of text, those are by using text judging, readability formula and cloze test. Judgement is used to analyze texts where its reading difficulties are easy to identify. Readability formula is used to analyze the level of readability by counting syllables, words, and sentences. At least there are five formulas are used in education, those are Flesch Reading Ease score, Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, SMOG formula, Fry formula, and Dale and Chall formula. Then, the last way in measuring readability level is cloze test. Close test is used to measure students’ understanding of text by fill in the missing words from the text to improve their reading skill.

From the explanation above, the researcher is aimed to analyze the readability level of text by using readability formula. The formula that will be used is Flesch Reading Ease formula, it is considered as the most accurate readability formula. The researcher will analyze the readability level of texts that are found on the English mandatory textbook for first grade students of Senior High School in Indonesia based on Curriculum 2013. The textbook used is *Bahasa Inggris* Textbook written by Utami Widiati, et al. Senior High Schools in Pekanbaru which are implemented Curriculum 2013 also use this book such as SMAN 1 Pekanbaru, SMAN 2 Pekanbaru, SMAN 4 Pekanbaru, SMAN 9 Pekanbaru and SMA Sri Rama. *Bahasa Inggris* textbook is a book written by Utami Widiati, et al and published by Curriculum and Books Center, Research and Development Agency, Ministry of Education and Culture. This book is
prepared by the government in implementing Curriculum 2013 as the current curriculum in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the researcher will do this research according to some reasons. First, the researcher wants to know the readability level of texts which are found on the *Bahasa Inggris* textbook for first grade of Senior High School. Due to this book is mostly used by Senior High Schools in Indonesia, it is important to know whether the readability of the reading materials based on students level or not. It also can be teachers’ consideration to keep using this book or wants to find another learning sources which appropriate with students’ level. Second, the researcher wants to give information for English teachers that measuring readability level is important because suitable reading texts for students can help them to improve their reading comprehension.

Due to some reasons above, the researcher positive that this research will be useful because it can help teachers in the field of evaluating readability level of texts. It is important because teachers have to select texts which its readability level appropriate with their students’ level.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

There are three factors that influence the selection of reading texts from textbooks, those are suitability of content, exploitability, and readability.

Firstly, the affecting factor is suitability of content. the reading text should interest the students as well as be relevant to their need. It is important because it really influences the motivation of students to read. The reading texts should contain of the proper information. Since, students will get difficulty when the
reading text contain of too much new information. Furthermore, the text should be suitable with students’ need to make them interest.

Second factor is exploitability. It is the facilitation of learning. It refers to how the text can be used to develop the students’ competence as readers. To determine the exploitability of the reading texts, teachers usually give students exercises after they read the reading texts.

The last factor is readability. Readability is used to describe the combination of structural and lexical difficulty of a text, as well as referring to the amount of new vocabulary and any new grammatical forms present. It is important to assess the right level for the right students.

1.3 Focus of the Problem

This research focuses on analyzing the readability level of texts in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook by Utami Widiati, et al for first grade of Senior High School. Here, the researcher will use the Flesch Reading Ease formula to measure and to analyze the readability level of each texts.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the focus of the research, the problem of this research formulates into the following question:

How is the readability level of texts in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook by Utami Widiati, et al for first grade of Senior High School by using Flesch Reading Ease formula?
1.5 Objectives of the Research

The objective of this research is to find out the readability level of reading texts in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook by Utami Widiati, et al for first grade of Senior High School by using Flesch Reading Ease formula.

1.6 Significance of the Research

The researcher hopes that this research will be useful for teachers in applying the result of the study as a feedback on their teaching activity; improve their knowledge and experience in choosing appropriate book, so that the students are better in reading skill. Then, the researcher also hopes this research would be source of information for students, lecturers, researchers and whoever interested in the subject of reading materials. This might be used as a reference for them in which to know level of readability of reading text.

Hopefully, this study will be a new source of information to increase the knowledge of content analysis of reading materials, especially concerning with readability level of text.

1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation about the terms used in this research, the researcher defines them as in the following:

1. Readability level

   Readability level is the level at which someone can read successfully (Pam M.S., 2013)
2. Text

According to Anderson and Anderson in Rohmatillah (2015), text is words that are put together to communicate a meaning.

3. *Bahasa Inggris* Textbook

*Bahasa Inggris* is an English textbook for first grade of Senior High School that are prepared by Ministry of Education and Culture in implementing 2013 Curriculum.