

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study. It is divided into seven sections: background of study, problems of study, objectives of study, significance of study, scope and limitation of study and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Reading is a particular approach of enhancing language proficiency because it allows those who are learning languages to master new abilities while reading. Reading well-written texts can help you enhance your writing, speaking, and language study skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and idiom (Richards & Renandya 2002). Academic reading materials must be suitable for the linguistic proficiency of the students. The subject matter should be engaging, the information readable, and it ought to help in the development of young learners' language abilities. Students shouldn't have any problems understanding the reading material if it contains these components. If the reading material is not suitable for the students' level, they will struggle to comprehend the book. Teachers should help students with their reading in order to encourage reading comprehension in the classroom. The reading material ought to be suitable for the students' level of language skills. Its goal is to increase student comprehension of the specified book.

In academic setting, English teachers give reading materials through textbooks. Textbooks are an extremely common component of English language teaching because it is used in language instruction programs must address the four abilities in language (Hutchinson & Torres 1994). In terms of reading, the textbook can be an essential tool

for a reading skill class because it contains a collection of reading texts as well as activities based on the materials being read. Nevertheless, in order to successfully instruct reading in a foreign language, the teachers must choose books that are relevant to the learners. The text level can be applied differently depending on the learners' language level. Miller's approach, as adopted by Payani, et al., (2003), stated that texts are divided into five categories, there are: exceptionally hard, moderately hard normal, fairly easy, easy, and extremely easy. A highly challenging level of text is meant for undergraduates; a challenging degree is advised for middle school students; and a fairly challenging degree can be assigned to some middle school students. Children in seventh or eighth grade can be assigned an average level, while sixth grade students can be assigned a very easy level, fifth graders a moderate level, and fourth graders an exceedingly easy one. Understanding reading texts in English is not easy. Based on the preliminary interview with teacher of MA Al-Mahrusiyah Lirboyo, Mrs. Siti Umaroh, many students struggle with vocabulary and pronunciation while reading and comprehending a text with multiple paragraphs. It is due to their lack of familiarity with the language. All of them are related to the lexical density and readability of the text.

A crucial factor in assessing whether a learner finds reading English simple or challenging is lexical density. According to Halliday (1985), lexical density is the proportion of lexical items of all words. These words demonstrate the text's word complexity. It has an impact on the student's ability to comprehend the text. Many new terms affect students' ability to recognize the importance of understanding and the ways in which the lexical density of their reading materials affects their ability to learn English. More information can be found in a written text with a high lexical density than

one with a low one (Ure, 1971; Fang 2005). Additionally, it indicates that text with a large number of lexical phrases will be more challenging to understand because there is more information.

Besides lexical density, one of the most important factors in determining whether a learner finds it difficult or easy to read English is to know the readability level of the text. The material's readability affects students' reading comprehension (Nunan, 1991). Readability was described by Johansson (2008) and Richard (1992) as the ease of reading and understanding a text. The degree of difficulty of written content is related to readability (Martha, 2005). If readers can read the content right away and deduce its meaning, it becomes readable. It is the text that determines how easy it is to read and comprehend. The readability and comprehension of a text are determined by how the writer writes and organizes it. It is advised to evaluate the text's level of complexity and whether the intended community can understand it before delivering it to the students. Because of this, readers may read and understand materials that are appropriate for their level of proficiency. Therefore, readability and lexical density affect how complicated a document is. Teachers can choose appropriate reading resources for their pupils by evaluating a text's lexical richness and readability (Miskiyah & Amalia, 2022).

Students that struggle with reading comprehension confront numerous major issues, including inadequate vocabulary, lengthy sentences, and inappropriate reading practices (Supiah, 2021). Students are unable to accurately comprehend the text's contents as a result of this issue. When reading and comprehending English texts, students face five issues: the meaning of alphabet symbols, vocabulary and structure of sentences, unified tools and language markers, the issue that extends beyond common

sense, and concepts (Pais, 2020). According to Joseph (2001) and Rohmatillah (2014), reading English literature may provide a challenge for students whose native tongue is not English. These issues include inability to comprehend the book's meaning, draw conclusions, recognize and comprehend terminology, comprehend sentence structure, and comprehend the context of words in the text (Saraswati et al., 2021). Because Indonesian differs from English in terms of sentence structure, shape, sound, and vocabulary spelling, issues like these are frequently the primary ones. Students will find it easier to understand the concepts of the texts if they have an excellent grasp of the overall meaning (message) and particulars of English textbooks. Before distributing the textbook to the students, it would be better if the teachers who use it were aware of its level of complexity. Nevertheless, Indonesian teachers are unable to assess a textbook's level of difficulty. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce lexical density to Indonesian teachers. Thus, the researcher was motivated to match two different curricula—the K–13 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum—with English textbooks for Senior High School grade 12th produced by the Ministry of Education and Culture. to assess how readable and lexically dense (complex) the reading portions of textbooks are. As the major focus of this study, it is crucial to note that English textbooks serve as the key educational resource for Indonesian senior instructors.

The objectives of this study are to identify the lexical density and readability of reading texts presented in Indonesian High School English Textbooks grade 12th under K-13 curriculum and Merdeka curriculum. To be able to analyze the researcher downloaded the pdf book through the official website of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

B. Problems of Study

Based on the study background described above, some research questions are as follows:

1. How is the lexical density of reading texts in Indonesian High School English Textbooks grade 12th under K-13 curriculum and Merdeka curriculum?
2. How is the readability of reading texts in Indonesian High School English Textbooks grade 12th under K-13 curriculum and Merdeka curriculum?

C. Objectives of the Study

Depending on the previously mentioned definition of the topic, the objectives of this study as follows:

1. To identify the reading texts' lexical density that are presented in reading sections of Indonesian High School English Textbooks grade 12th under K-13 curriculum and Merdeka curriculum.
2. To identify the reading texts' readability that are presented in reading sections of Indonesian High School English Textbooks grade 12th under curriculum K-13 curriculum and Merdeka curriculum.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide substantial theoretical and practical advances.

1. Theoretical significance.

Theoretically, the study is intended to add knowledge, especially while reading literature. In addition, it is intended for use as a reference for the Education Department's English improvement.

2. Practical significance.

This study has practical implications.

a. For the teacher

This study helps teachers to identify the reading texts' lexical density and readability that are presented in reading sections of Indonesian High School English Textbooks grade 12th under K-13 curriculum and Merdeka curriculum.

b. For Students

By identifying the reading texts' lexical density and readability will help students' English reading skills and help them comprehend the context of the text.

c. For further researcher

This study is expected to serve as a reference and contribute significantly to to identify the reading texts' lexical density and readability that are presented in reading sections of Indonesian High School English Textbooks grade 12th under K-13 curriculum and Merdeka curriculum.

E. Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on grade 12th senior high school English textbooks, specifically lexical density and text readability. The academic subject is limited to English textbooks for secondary school grade 12th English textbooks in Indonesia with a total of 24 reading text of 2 textbook that have been designated by the Ministry of Education on different curricula, 10 reading text from K-13 curriculum, and 14 reading text from Merdeka curriculum for the secondary level. Researcher got this PDF book by downloading on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

F. Definition of Key Terms

To clarify the key term utilized in this study, some definitions are presented:

1. Lexical Density

Lexical density measures how informative a text is. Especially in lexical categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Texts with a higher lexical density contain more information than those with a lower lexical density.

2. Readability

Readability refers to the ease with which a written material may be read and understood. The objective of readability is to establish the best fit between students' reading ability and their ability to comprehend and derive meaning from textbooks.

3. Reading Text

Reading text serves as a tool for teaching reading. The shape can take several forms, including visual messages, symbols, and written language. So, reading text refers to a written text or paragraph. Reading provides the students vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.

4. English Textbook

The textbook is intended to be studied methodically as the foundation for a language course. A textbook is one of several types of instructional materials used in education. The English textbook is an instrument for teaching subjects and improving vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. As a result, many schools utilize the Merdeka curriculum English textbook

produced by Kemendikbud, such as SMAN 1 Kandat, while others use the K-13 curriculum English book released by Kemendikbud, such as MAN 3 Nganjuk.