

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section presents the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and definitions of key terms.

A. Research Background

The goal of a text does not meet its expectation in case the students are exposed to the unreadable and complex text. Meanwhile, the students are supposed to understand the text according to their complexity level. A study carried out by Sembiring et al. (2024) reveals that it is crucial to ensure the textbook's contents must correspond to the students' cognitive and proficiency level. Proper complexity level contributes to students' reading comprehension which is directly impactful to their English mastery. Moreover, reading is a fundamental skill in language learning that crucially serves to develop language proficiency and academic success. As one of the receptive English skills, reading is an activity which requires information-processing skills, which depends on cognitive and linguistic processes (Nation, 2019). Through reading, learners may enrich their vocabulary, enhance critical thinking, and build a good foundation to produce meaningful productive skills like speaking and writing. However, despite its significance, successful reading comprehension is often influenced by various factors.

One of the main problems in reading skills, whether in terms of sentence structures or advanced vocabulary, often causes significant difficulties for students (Satriani, 2018). In an academic setting, textbooks are not only a material source but also an essential tool to measure how well students are at understanding written text in English. For instance, senior high school students generally experience challenges in understanding the text with high lexical density or with long and complex sentences (Nesia & Ginting, 2014). In order to minimize misconceptions throughout the learning process, the textbook should feature accurate language. If textbooks are too complex, students may struggle with comprehension. This can affect students' learning motivation and the limited students' ability to comprehend in-depth the whole content of the textbooks.

Some previous studies have investigated the students' problems in terms of reading comprehension. Riadil (2020) found that the various problems students experienced are difficulty when comprehending the texts, pronouncing the words correctly, and mastering the vocabulary, linking the word ideas, comprehending the text topics served in various cultures, inferring the information, and differentiating the main ideas and supporting ideas in the texts. Additionally, according to Ramadhianti and Somba (2023), students struggle most in reading comprehension, differentiating between the main ideas and supporting details as well as connecting the topic to their prior knowledge. The empirical study showed that Indonesian students had problems with reading comprehension because they lacked reading strategies, had trouble with grammar, and lacked vocabulary and prior knowledge (Setiyadi et al., 2016).

A significant key aspect impacting students' comprehension is lexical density (Maufiroh et al., 2024). According to Flowerdew (2013), "Lexical density is a statistical measure of the relative frequency of lexical words and grammatical words in a stretch of text" (p. 29). Texts with high lexical density are indicated by a higher proportion of content words, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, rather than function words such as determiners, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, numerals, and auxiliary verbs. The higher the lexical density, the greater the level of the cognitive process required to comprehend the texts. For EFL students, this challenge becomes even harder since they have to do information processes in English. Consequently, this will affect students' learning activities.

Measuring the texts' readability is also essential in addition to lexical density since it affects students' ability to perceive the texts. Readability is determined by the linguistic elements such as sentence length, complex grammatical structure, and unfamiliar vocabulary used in the texts (Li et al., 2025; Crossley, 2025; Zhang & Lu, 2024). By analyzing readability, it allows the teacher to regulate the level of difficulty attached to a text. Therefore, the teacher must adjust the textbook using a readability level that meets the competency of their students. This is supported by Hidayat's study (2016) revealed that selecting an appropriate textbook for the students can be done by the teacher through considering how readable the passage found in the textbook. Moreover, providing students with texts that are accessible and well-matched to their reading abilities helps to ensure that they better understand the text and, over

time, eventually benefits pupils advance their reading abilities (Crossley et al., 2022).

In dealing with the issues of textbook lexical density and readability, the teacher's role as well as the quality of the instructional materials become extremely important. Textbooks often contain reading materials with varying difficulty levels, ranging from easy to difficult (Rizkiani et al., 2022). Furthermore, teachers take the responsibility not only to deliver the material but also to ensure that the teaching resources used are compatible with students' abilities. A textbook with high lexical density or complex sentence structures must be countered with good teaching guidance and strategies. In addition, supplementary materials such as designed texts (Adams et al., 2024), more specified exercises or teaching word meanings (Wright & Cervetti, 2017) can help students comprehend the content of the text better (Saryati & Yulia, 2019). Thus, the collaboration between teachers and the use of appropriate resources can bridge the gap in students' understanding.

There are numerous investigations that have measured the lexical density and readability of various textbooks from a range of publishers. Textbook published by *Tiga Serangkai* entitled "Passport to the World" for the 8th grade of junior high school was investigated by Maufiroh et al. (2024). They carried out this study to examine the lexical density of reading materials served in the textbook. The result showed that two texts were classified as having low lexical density, eleven as medium, and four as high. The lexical density and readability levels of the Advanced Learning English textbook for grade XI high school

students released by Facil were examined by Rizkiani et al.'s study (2022). The result demonstrated that nearly every text had a high lexical density. Another study from Suminih et al. (2024) examined the lexical density in the English textbook "English for Nusantara" for junior high school students. It was revealed that the textbook exhibited high lexical density with a score of 11.5. Another textbook entitled "Stop Bullying Now" launched by *Kemendikbud*, has also been analyzed by Miskiyah & Amalia (2022). They revealed that nearly all of the reading texts generated high lexical density scores and were more relevant to 8th–9th grade students based on the average analysis score. Additionally, a textbook from the same publisher entitled "Interlanguage: English Senior High School Students X" has been investigated by Sabuna et al. (2024). It was found to range between 40% and 60%, reflecting a sufficient level of complexity for learners. Moreover, the reading texts were assessed to be clear, comprehensible, and appropriate for eleventh-grade pupils.

Although some earlier studies have analyzed the lexical density and readability of various textbooks from diverse publishers, there has been no specific research that analyzes how dense and how readable of the texts contained in *Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Lanjut Kelas XI* textbook published by *Kemendikbud*. Moreover, this textbook was published as part of the official *Buku Sekolah Elektronik (BSE)* program innovated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kemendikbud*), which is broadly accessible by schools across Indonesia. This textbook needs to be investigated in terms of the complexity level of various reading comprehension texts due to its significant role as a national learning reference to determine whether it is truly appropriate for

students' needs or not. In contrast, the absence of this research might potentially lead to the problems. If the reading texts found in this textbook turn out to have overly high readability levels, students will struggle to comprehend the texts, and vice versa. In addition, this book is selected considering that its intensive usage in some reputable schools according to the researcher's investigation in the schools' online repositories. For those reasons, this book remains an important attention to deeply analyzed to ensure the text complexity is in line with the students' level (Mulyanti & Soeharto, 2020).

Considering this gap, the author therefore intends to conduct a study about "Lexical Density and Readability Analysis of Reading Texts on *Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Lanjut Kelas XI Textbook*" this study to analyze this textbook.

B. Research Questions

In line with the explanation above, the author addresses the research problems into the following questions:

1. What is the overall lexical density of the reading text found in *Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Lanjut Kelas XI* textbook?
2. What is the readability of reading text found in *Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Lanjut Kelas XI* textbook?

C. Research Objectives

Based on the research of study that has been stated above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the overall lexical density of the reading text materials in *Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Lanjut Kelas XI* textbook.

2. To determine whether the reading text found in *Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Lanjut Kelas XI* textbook are readable.

D. Research Significances

The finding of this study is expected to offer contributions both theoretically and practically. The significance of this research is formulated as follows:

1. Theoretically

Theoretically, this research is proposed to enrich the literature related to the analysis of lexical density and readability of the reading text in the English textbook, specifically in the context of learning in Indonesia. In addition, this study is expected to give scientific contributions in the field of education, particularly in developing instructional materials that align with the ability of high school students.

2. Practically

This study is expected to offer practical advantages for several stakeholders:

a. For English Teachers

This research can help teachers in selecting and evaluating English textbooks that are in accordance with students' ability levels so that these can enhance the learning quality and students' learning outcomes, especially in reading skills.

b. For Students

This study is hoped to provide insight for students on the importance of reading material which are appropriate to their ability level. This can aid in improving their motivation and learning effectiveness, specifically in terms of understanding English text.

c. For Textbook Developers

The research is expected to give feedback for publishers and textbook developers to create reading materials with a balance between lexical density and readability so that it can better support the learning needs of senior high school students.

d. For Other Researchers

This work can serve as a reference to conduct further research regarding textbook analysis.

E. Definition of Key Terms

In order to synchronize understanding between researcher and readers, as well as to minimize certain confusion and misunderstanding. Here are some presented definitions of important terminologies used in this study:

1. Textbook

A textbook, an instrument used for the educational process which contains instruction guides on effective teaching and learning, that is going to be investigated in this study is for an English lesson entitled *Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Lanjut Kelas XI* for senior high school.

2. Lexical Density

Lexical density is often described as the proportion of lexical words (verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs) compared to the total number of words in a text.

3. Readability

Readability means the ease with which a text can be read and understood by the reader seen by passage length, lexical density, and sentence complexity.