



# READABILITY OF READING TEXTS IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS FOR THE TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the readability of reading texts in English textbooks for grade XII students in the academic year of 2018/2019 based on Dale and Chall formula. This study was categorized as descriptive qualitative research. The source of the data were 5 reading texts which consist of report, news item and procedure texts selected from *English for Senior High School Students XII*. The average readability score report texts in textbook was 6.9, while news item and procedure text in were 7.45 and 6.15. The scores indicated that the report text, news item and procedure text in *English for Senior High School Students XII* textbook were too easy for the twelfth grade students since the textbooks' level was for the seventh and eighth grade.

Keywords: Readability, The Dale and Chall Original Formula, Readability Formula, English Textbooks for Twelfth Grade Students

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Background of the Study*

The use of textbook has been very dominant in the teaching learning process, especially in teaching and learning a foreign language. In Indonesia, textbook has always been a media used in most schools and most grades.

The textbook is almost a universal element of teaching. As the writer experience in teaching English, textbook is the most used as teaching sources. The contents of textbooks have a significant association with the learning of the students. The student should understand their own textbook to understand the lesson taught in their class room, because we realize textbook is one of main source of learning in Indonesia, there are many textbooks from different version which are designed based on the K-13. It means there are textbooks which contain the same text types, but the topic and the difficulty can be different. Teachers should be able to select a textbook with suitable difficulty of the reading materials. Difficulty of a reading material can be determined by measuring the readability of the material.

Readability of a reading material can be measured by considering various factors, some of them are words difficulty and sentence length which have been considered as the direct cause of difficulty in comprehension (Anderson & Davison, 1986, p. 3; Dubay, 2004, p. 1). Appropriate readability of a reading material will motivate the students to enjoy reading the materials in result it will be easier for the students to comprehend their reading materials and surely, it will help their learning process. In contrary, inappropriate reading materials will bore and frustrated the students, furthermore if the students are forced to read a reading material which is too difficult for them, the students will not only fall behind in their education but will also have a miserable time (Flesch, 1949, p. 147).

Therefore, this study focused on the use of readability formula to analyze the readability of the reading texts which are based on the genre of procedure,

news item, and report texts taken from the English textbooks used by XII grade students.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Reading is not simply an activity of reading texts, people often see the concept of reading that simple, however, there are more process involved in reading. To understand a real concept of reading, it is better to know the concept of reading according to experts.

According to Weaver (2009, p. 13), reading is a process very much determined by what the reader's brain and emotions and beliefs bring to the reading: the knowledge/information (or misinformation, absence of information), strategies for processing text, moods, fears and joys—all of it. From the definition above, it is clearly stated, there are some factors affecting reading, the factors are the brain of the reader, the emotion of the reader, beliefs of the reader which affect the reading activity.

Pang, et al., (2003, p. 6) also add that reading is about understanding written texts. It is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought. Reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition can be defined as the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text.

Further definition, reading is an interactive process that takes place between the text and the reader's processing strategies and background knowledge (Lems, Miller, and Soro, 2010, p. 33).

To sum up, the definitions above defined that reading is a process that is affected by two factors, the reader and the text being read. After knowing the definition of reading, it is also necessary to know the definition of reading comprehension, because reading comprehension is related to readability as a more appropriate reading material for the directed information receiver, the better it is

for the receiver or the reader to understand what is the inside or the contain of the text.

Pang, et al., (2003, p. 6) state that reading comprehension is about relating prior knowledge to new knowledge contained in written texts. Prior knowledge refers to knowledge which depends on lived experience. From those definitions about reading comprehension, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is the process of obtaining meaning from written materials in which the process of obtaining the meaning, factors from reader, like the prior knowledge and previous experience of the reader affect the process of the comprehension.

### *Methodology*

Research design is defined as the strategy or the way how the researcher gets valid data, analyze them, and finally come to the answers of the research problems. The design used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative is the method that used for describe the condition and situation of something specifically. In the other word, this method describes the condition of existence and classifying the information. In this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative method. This study aim to describes the readability of the textbook by using The Dale and Chall Original Readability Formula in students' BAHASA INGGRIS SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Grade XII textbook which published by Ministry of Education and Culture, textbook with the criteria of a good English textbook proposed by the experts. The researcher uses descriptive qualitative method to understand the data in depth. The reason conducting qualitative research is because researchers want to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue.

### *Instruments for Collecting Data*

In qualitative research, the researcher is the key instrument. The researcher must comprehend the research method and the insight of the problems. By having the proper instrument, the researcher will have a highly reliable and valid data for the findings. The instrument of data gathering is called checklist. The data will be collected by identifying the materials of the book based on certain checklist.

Data collecting technique is a sequence of ways that researcher takes to collect data empirically and objectively. To obtain valid data, some technique of data collection was applied. In case of collecting the data of the research, the researcher needed the instruments. The application of data collection in content analysis is collected from any documents. In this research, data is collected from the BAHASA INGGRIS SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Grade XII textbook. However, data collection is not considered to be a specific phase that must be completed before analysis begins. Data collection and analysis is a process of cycle in document analysis by going back and forward. Data collection and analysis also can be said as a process of iteration. Somehow look at the data and analyze it, and then go back again to collect the data more by iteration in reading. Therefore, in this research, data collection and analysis cannot be separated. The materials of BAHASA INGGRIS SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Grade XII texts in the textbook is analyzed based on Dale and Chall original formula..

For analyzing data, the researcher use The Dale and Chall Original Formula. To apply the formula, the writer select one to two texts from each genre which are procedure, news item, and report genre texts from the textbook as the following are the genres of text that twelfth grade students currently or going to learn. Compute the average sentence length in words as sentence length affect the quality of writing. In general, an average of 15 to 20 words is effective for most technical communication. Compute the percentage of words outside the Dale list of 3,000 words. Outside of 3,000 words indicates that those words are considered difficult. Consider that the word list contains the basic forms of e.g. verbs and

nouns, regular plurals of nouns, regular past tense forms, progressive forms of verbs etc needs to be added.

### *Findings*

Research findings present the description of cognitive level of reading questions in *English* textbook published by Depdiknas, used by third grade students of senior high school. After analyzing all of the reading questions in the textbook, the researcher stated the findings below:

The analysis revealed the readability of reading texts in the textbooks by using the Dale and Chall readability formula. After analyzing all the texts, the findings of the study was the text titled *Six things to do if you visit Seattle* which was a eport text had 7,01 readability score. Based on the Dale and Chall formula the text was appropriate for the 9-10<sup>th</sup> grade level. The text was predicted to be not appropriate for the twelfth grade. The average sentence length was 14 and there was 79 words that were not found in the Dale list of 3,000 words. The text entitled *Parents upset, disappointed with online school registration* which was a news item text has 7,4 readability score. Based on the Dale and Chall formula the text was appropriate for the 9-10<sup>th</sup> grade level. The text was predicted to be too easy for the twelfth grade. The average sentence length was 25 and there were 80 words that were not found in the Dale list of 3,000 words. The text entitled *Indonesia opens regional recycling conference* which was a news item text had 7,5 readability score. Based on the Dale and Chall formula the text was appropriate for the 9-10<sup>th</sup> grade level. The text is considered to eay for the twelfth grade. The average sentence length was 20 and there were 36 words that were not found in the Dale list of 3,000 words. The text entitled *How to breed leopard geckos* which was a procedure text had 6,2 readability score. Based on the Dale and Chall formula the text was appropriate for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level or below. The text was predicted to be too easy for the twelfth grade. The average sentence length was 12 and there were 74 words that were not found in the Dale list of 3,000 words. The text entitled *How to bath your dogs* which was a narrative text

had 6.1 readability score. Based on the Dale and Chall formula the text was appropriate for the 7-8<sup>th</sup> grade level. The text was predicted to be too easy for the twelfth grade. The average sentence length was 20 and there were 61 words that were not found in the Dale list of 3,000 words.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

### *Conclusions*

This study was conducted to describe out the readability of the English reading texts which consist of procedure, news item and report texts in *English for Senior High School Students XII Science, Social Study, Islamic school and Vocational highscool Programme revised 2018* published by Ministry of education and Culture which were designed under guidance of *Kurikulum 2013(K-13)* in the academic year of 2018/2019 by using The Dale and Chall Original Formula. The readability of the 5 representative texts in *English for Senior High School Students XII* textbook indicates that the texts are inappropriate for the twelfth grade students since it's level is for the seventh and eighth grade.

### *Suggestion*

The following are the suggestion for English Teachers, Researchers of Textbooks and other Researcher:

1. For English Teachers

It is recommended for English teachers to understand and to know the readability of the reading materials given to their students. Teacher should find reading materials which are appropriate for the students. Appropriate reading materials can help the students to improve their reading comprehension.

## 2. For Researchers of Textbooks

The researchers of textbook should give more concern about the readability of the reading materials in the textbooks that they research. They should match the readability of the reading materials to the target students. It is better if the writers can provide information about the readability of the reading texts in the textbook.

## 3. For Other Researchers

There are many other textbooks offered by other publishers and also there are other types of readability tests and other readability formulas. The other researchers can use them as the subject of the research and type of test to implement in the research. The writer hopes that this research can give more information for further research.

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