

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Rationale

Reading is a way in which something is interpreted or understood (Hornby, 1995, p. 357). By reading, people can understand something better and faster. Reading is clearly important in order that people get easier to obtain information from written text. Reading also becomes an important thing in Islamic precept. It is stated in the Qur'an Surah Al 'Alaq as follows:

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾  
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

The verses indicate that Islam commands the followers to read. The seventh instruction from Allah to his prophet is a command to read. Allah wants people to read in order to get much information.

In Indonesia where English is a foreign language and taught as subject matter in any level of school, reading an English textbook is one of the key components of teaching English, since it generally serves as the basis for much of the language input that learners receive and the language practice in English teaching and learning processes. Cruickshank, Brainer, and Metchalf in Kurniawan (2008, p. 1) stated that textbook is the most used (and sometimes overused) source for determining what students should learn and it is usually readily available to teachers and learner alike. Hutchinson and Torres in Kurniawan (2008, p.1) also stated:

“The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries...No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook.”

Nunan in Kurniawan (2008, p.1) also claimed:

“Materials are, in fact, an essential element within the curriculum, and do more often simply lubricate the wheels of learning. At their best they provide concrete models of desirable classroom practice, they act as curriculum models, and at their very best they fulfil a teacher development role.”

They are in a line with Harmer which stated “if the language, content and sequencing of the textbook are appropriate, the teacher will want to go ahead and use it. If, however there is something wrong with the textbook, the teacher has to decide what to do next” (1998, p. 111).

The statements above give strong argument that the high quality of textbook is really wanted by every person involved in education. A teaching-learning process will run well if the material can fully comprehended by the student.

There are many English textbooks which have been written and produced by authors and publishers. The importance of using textbooks for academic purposes encouraged many publishers to produce textbooks that will be used in schools. They offer a variety of textbooks including English textbooks. Thus, teachers should be able to select and use the appropriate English textbook to be used in class.

A good English textbook is readable, understandable and comprehensible for students. The suitable difficulty text level will make students motivated and enjoy reading the material. Then, it will help them to catch the material. Too low

readability text will make students bored. Otherwise, if it is too difficult, there will be lost of interest and students get frustrated.

The way to know whether an English textbook is appropriate for students is *readability analysis*. It is used to analyse the readability level of texts in a textbook. *Readability analysis*, as the tool for analysing, is needed to know whether English texts provided in English textbook is difficult, plain or easy for students. *Readability analysis* concerns on how easily written materials can be read and understood.

As it has been stated before that textbooks are the practical implementation of a given curriculum containing important information of general knowledge, science, and, technology, so that it is important to analyse the readability level of newest book which is based on newest curriculum. The English textbook entitled “Bahasa Inggris” for SMP/MTS Grade VII which is published by MEDIATAMA is based on the recent curriculum. 2013 curriculum is the newest curriculum which is arranged by the government. Even though it is still implemented by only several schools which most of them are favourite ones including SMP Negeri 1 Banjarmasin, but beginning from next academic year, all school should apply it. Thus, “Bahasa Inggris” textbook is likely to be widely used by students from any schools. Moreover, the materials of this textbook complement the materials of textbook that was made by the government. As a complementary book which widely used by students, the textbook should be developed by considering the readability aspect to know whether it is appropriate with the students.

Knowing that fact, the writer would like to try to analyse the readability level of reading materials found in “Bahasa Inggris” textbook for seventh grade of Junior High School Published by Mediatama and this analysis will be conducted to the seventh grade of SMP Negeri 1 Banjarmasin.

### **B. Statement of the Problem**

Based on the background above, the writer formulates the problems as followed:

1. How is the level of readability of “Bahasa Inggris” textbook for seventh grade students published by Mediatama?
2. Is “Bahasa Inggris” textbook readable for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Banjarmasin?

### **C. Limitation of the Research**

The research is limited to explore the readability level of five reading texts that are taken from the textbook entitled “Bahasa Inggris” published by Mediatama. The readability analysis is carried out using cloze test and readability formula which is Flesch Reading Ease Formula. This analysis is conducted to the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Banjarmasin.

### **D. Purpose of Research**

Based on the problem above, the purpose the research can be set as follows:

1. To investigate the level of readability of “Bahasa Inggris” textbook for the seventh grade students published by Mediatama

2. To know whether “Bahasa Inggris” textbook is readable for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Banjarmasin

#### **E. Significance of Research**

The result of this research is expected to contribute to the field as follows:

1. The writer

The research enriches the writer’s knowledge and experience in this specific research

2. The teachers

The teachers can measure the readability level of any textbook by reading this research. This research is used to determine, select, and choose the textbook that they should use to teach which results in students’ enrichment of knowledge.

3. The publisher

The research’s results are expected to give more information to the publisher in evaluating their textbook.

4. Other researchers

The research hopefully can provide information for them about results of readability of reading texts so that it can help them in holding further research.

#### **F. Definition of Key Term**

In order to avoid misinterpretation about the use of terms; it is important for the researcher to give the suitable meaning of the key terms. Some terms are defined as follows:

1. Readability Level : The level of ease or difficulty with which text material can be understood by a particular reader who is reading that text for a specific purpose (Pikulski, 2002). It was designed to assess the suitability of books for students at particular grade levels or ages.
2. “Bahasa Inggris” : One of the English textbook for SMP/MTs Grade VII that published by Mediatama. It is developed based on 2013 curriculum.
3. Textbook : A book giving instruction in a subject, used especially in school (Hornby, 2003, p.447). It is a book used for the study of a subject.
4. Mediatama : The publisher of “Bahasa Inggris” textbook