

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter talks about the introduction of research. It consists of the background of the research, the focus of the research, the aims of the research, and the significance of the research.

1.1 Background of The Study

The Ministry of Education has arranged the 2013 curriculum for all levels of formal schools in Indonesia. The 2013 curriculum was employed and practiced by every school in Indonesia in the first year period of 2014/2015. However, Because of the pros and cons of this curriculum, in the second period of 2014/2015 and the third period of 2019, until now, the 2013 curriculum is constantly updated and practiced by schools in Indonesia.

English teaching practices incorporating Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) are required in Indonesian classrooms. One of HOTS' learning objectives is for students to be able to analyze, evaluate, and create their knowledge (Ariyana, Bestary, & Mohandas, 2018). Teachers should promote higher-order thinking abilities for their students, according to the most recent 2013 curriculum. HOTS, as defined by Seman, Yusoff, and Embong (2017), is a level of thinking that stresses the application of previously acquired information, the investigation of reflections, problem-solving, decision-making, and the formulation of new things. However, either school have not implemented HOTS or teachers do not use it regularly.

According to Heong et al. (2011), teachers should help students build higher-order thinking abilities so that they may think broadly and uncover new difficulties. HOTS enables someone to respond to a new situation using fresh knowledge and information. According to Brookhart (2010), HOTS is regarded as the pinnacle. Students can use the skills and information they gain when learning a new topic if they think about it. Limbach and Waugh (2010) recommend five phases for developing critical thinking skills: establishing the reading class's learning purpose, teaching through questioning, assigning students to practice, reviewing, refining, enhancing

comprehension, and practicing feedback assessing learning. All five phases should be combined to improve students' critical thinking support.

Reading ability has become an important language skill for students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) in academic settings (Grabe, 2010). Reading comprehension, fluency development, and enjoyment go hand in hand and must be developed over time through training. According to Nuary (2015), many EFL students, particularly those still at a low level of understanding, find it challenging to cultivate excellent readability. This condition can substantially contribute to a lack of enjoyment and less learning and engender lower understanding and fluency. This is why many teachers and researchers have taken notice of the extensive reading program since the 1990s—it has had a significant impact. Day and Bamford (2002) suggest that the first successful experience of reading extensively in a second language leads to the development of positive reading approaches that are reinforced with subsequent readings. Choosing the right textbook can play a significant role in the students' success when reading activities.

Teachers use textbooks to represent their teaching plans (Richards, 2001). Especially in reading skills, it can be a valuable tool that can be used in classrooms. It displays language elements such as grammar and vocabulary lists. The materials used in class, such as magazines, newspapers, or textbooks, can be considered authentic. English teachers should be able to decide if the contents of the textbook or reading materials are appropriate for the current curriculum. Textbooks are essential for students to have a fulfilling experience in the excellent process.

Reading material is submitted to texts or passages that have specific messages or ideas to share with the reader through reading activity. In preparing the material, some things need to be considered. Before presenting their textbooks to students, teachers must evaluate their readability to ensure they are appropriate for the students. Readability refers to how easily a given group of people can read a text – including students of all education levels. The readability level of a text can help predict whether it is complex, plain, or easy for students to understand. If the text is too difficult for students, it will be difficult for them to understand. They find it difficult to understand because they think the reading material is complex, especially in

understanding the main idea of paragraphs and unfamiliar vocabulary (Dubay, 2004). Students need to have good reading comprehension skills to maximize their comprehension by having Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Thus, to solve problems, teachers better assess the readability of texts before using them in teaching and learning and make learning strategies supportive of Students' HOTS.

Choosing the "right" textbook is a difficult task. According to Harmer (2007), convincing students of English as a foreign language that a text in English can be comprehended can be challenging, especially if there are vocabulary items and structures they have never encountered. Furthermore, according to John Guthrie (2008), obtaining readable literature in English is a serious process but manageable. Adult fiction, simple stories, and high-interest books can all be found. Experts suggest that the curriculum be limited to texts about drugs, sex, and fantasy in popular culture. High-interest, low-difficulty books, on the other hand, can make up at least a piece of the core curriculum for all students. According to the research, finding understandable material and textbooks is critical in learning and teaching from those insights. As a result, it is critical to understand and assess how to match the text or textbook with the students needed to stimulate them to develop their reading skills.

Cognitive psychology has drawn attention to the link between reading skills and critical thinking. Schema activation or creation can be accomplished through critical thinking. The schema has an interactive relationship with reading comprehension between readers' past knowledge and the reading material, according to Aloqaili (2012). Based on their own experiences, readers may arrive at a different level of understanding. Reading as a critical thinking act becomes manageable. Aloqaili (2012) also argues that specific readings are recognized as automatic and vital but insufficient to create a comprehension of the text. Using HOTS to help students with reading challenges can help them better grasp texts.

In light of the preceding, this study examines the readability level of reading materials used in a textbook for second-year high school students in the 2013 curriculum and teachers' approaches to developing HOTS in the classroom. This research analyzes the readability level of reading materials in the mandatory English textbook for the eleventh grade of high school

students in Indonesia based on the 2013 Curriculum. The textbook used is “Bahasa Inggris,” a textbook by Mahrukh Bashir. The government of Indonesia prepared this book to implement the 2013 Curriculum as the current curriculum in the country. The researcher also analyzes the teacher’s teaching strategies and whether the strategies could develop students’ HOTS or not.

1.2 Focus of The Study

This research analyzes the readability level of reading materials in the “Bahasa Inggris” textbook’s reading sections for the eleventh grade of high school and the teacher’s teaching strategies. The research data source is a student’s English book for the second high school grade. Here, the researcher analyzes the readability of reading materials from the book and the teaching strategies to develop students’ HOTS.

The researcher also shows the impact between texts’ readability level and the teacher’s teaching strategies. In this part, the researcher observes linkages among material texts’ readability levels and whether the teacher’s teaching strategies could help the students’ HOTS in understanding the texts or not.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the focus of the research, the problem of this research is formulated into the following questions:

1. What is the readability level of reading materials in the “Bahasa Inggris” textbook?
2. How does the teacher’s teaching using HOTS strategies facilitate students’ reading comprehension of the textbook?

1.4 Aims of The Study

Based on the focus of the research and the research question above, this research has two aims to put forward. First, is to determine the readability level of reading materials in the “Bahasa Inggris” textbook for the eleventh grade of high school. The second aims is to observe the students’ performance from the teacher’s teaching strategies to support students’ HOTS in reading comprehension.

1.5 Significance of The Study

It is essential to consider that a textbook's difficulty must be appropriate for the reading ability of the students for whom the book is intended. Teachers must know about the factors that influence readability. When the textbook is used as a higher readability level for students, a teacher may choose another reading text from other sources to avoid students' difficulty understanding.

In Indonesia, teachers must teach their students using higher-order thinking skill strategies. Teachers would propose five steps to develop the ability to think critically: determining the learning objective of reading class, teaching through questioning, ordering students to practice, refining, reviewing, improving, understanding, practicing feedback, and assessing learning. These five steps should be integrated to maximize critical thinking.

Hopefully, the findings of this study will affect the educational institution's awareness of choosing an appropriate textbook for students and provide a better insight into how to choose suitable English textbooks with a proper readability level as a guideline for teaching English. The findings are expected to give data about the effect of HOTS teaching strategies on reading skills. Moreover, hopefully, the research findings will contribute to English teachers, students, and other researchers.

First, it expectedly could help the eleventh-grade students, so that learning will run smoothly because the books as their source of knowledge are appropriate for children their age.

Second, it is expected that the research findings could help English teachers to apply the result of the study as feedback on their teaching activity, improve their knowledge and experience, and can give more effort in choosing appropriate books based on text readability in the hope their students will have better reading skills.

In addition, this study is also expected to provide more information about the readability level of materials in the textbook and teaching reading using HOTS teaching strategies. Hopefully, this research will be a new source of information to increase the knowledge of content analysis of reading materials and an understanding of higher order thinking teaching strategies in reading.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

Some key terms are utilized in this study. Hence, it is pivotal for the terms to be defined and clarified to forestall misinterpretation and ambiguity. Below are the definitions of key terms used in this study:

- a) **English Textbook** is a material used for the study of English. It provides English subject materials for various grades. The English textbook used in this study is the “Bahasa Inggris” textbook for eleventh graders written by Makhrukh Bashir.
- b) **Readability** means that as far as the readers can read a text, it means that the text is readable. In other words, readability means how the readers comprehend the ideas and the language presented in an extended reading text, which determines their success in reading. In this research, the researcher used the “Bahasa Inggris” textbook for eleventh graders’ materials as the source of readability analysis.
- c) **Readability Formula** is an application that can measure the difficulty level of texts and predict the reading ease of texts. A readability formula is employed in this study to measure the readability level of reading materials in the “Bahasa Inggris” textbook for eleventh graders.
- d) **Higher Order Thinking Skills** distinguishes critical thinking skills from lower-order learning outcomes, such as those attained by rote memorization. HOTS include synthesizing, analyzing, reasoning, comprehending, application, and evaluation. This study employed HOTS teaching reading strategies for a teacher to teach explanation text.

1.7 Organisation of the Paper

In terms of the organization of this undergraduate thesis, as many as five chapters are included here. Those are listed as follows:

Chapter I Introduction: This chapter is centered on providing elaboration of background information on why this study is conducted, the research questions, the aims, the scope, as well

as the significance of this study. In addition, clarification of key terms and the paper's organization are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter II Literature Review: This chapter elaborates on the theories used in this study are reading, readability, Higher Order Thinking Skills theories, Flesch Reading Ease readability formula, lexical density, and cloze test theories. Furthermore, related previous studies concerning HOTS teaching reading strategies and textbook readability analysis are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter III Methodology: This chapter expands the methodology employed in this research. It comprises several subchapters: Research Design, Source of Data, Data Collection, and Data Analysis.

Chapter IV Data Analysis and Findings: This chapter discusses the findings of three high school explanation texts' readability levels and the implementation of HOTS teaching strategies. It includes two subchapters focused on the readability analysis and HOTS' teaching implications.

Chapter V Conclusion: This chapter sums up this study's findings and concludes the pedagogical implication recommended to be implemented while analyzing textbooks and teaching English with Hots strategies, especially in reading. Moreover, the limitation of this study and recommendations for further research are also presented here.