

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

English is an international language used by a lot of people in the world not only as a tool to communicate but also has a role in learning science and technology in facing globalization era.

In Indonesia, English is used and taught as a foreign language. Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya is one of the universities in Indonesia that provides English Department. English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya wants to make the students able to communicate or speak English fluently. Because of that, English Department provides Intensive Course subject as the basic subject in the first semester with 15 credits. The book that is used is *Life: Elementary* by John Hughes. Having got Intensive Course subject in the first semester, the students will learn reading through graded Reading subject with 3 credits. Reading I in the second semester, Reading II in the third semester, Reading III in the fourth semester, and Reading IV in the fifth semester. For Reading I, the Department uses *Issues for Today* by Lorraine C. Smith.

In doing teaching and learning process, the teacher and the students need some materials in order to make the process of teaching and learning smooth. In a learning process, the materials should be good enough to support the education. The materials can influence the level of success or achievement of the students in learning. Learning materials can be in form of tools, information, or text. In

education level, the most important materials needed is a textbook. The textbook is compiled by the expert based on the curriculum that is implemented. To make the learning process well, a textbook should contain material based on the standart competence and achievement indicators, and to help the students comprehend and understand the lesson also the language used, the textbook should have a good quality. A good quality textbook is a textbook which is readable and attract the readers to read it (Soebijanto, 2015).

The textbook selection for both Intensive Course and graded Reading subject are important since those subjects are compulsory at the English Department. Because of that, the textbooks should be readable for the students. According to Nuttal (2005 in Soebijanto, 2015), readable here means that the textbooks have suitable structural difficulty. The students will comprehend the textbooks and later they will develop their fluency in speaking English because they get many vocabularies which they use to communicate.

At the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University, there is a coordinator for each subject who is responsible in choosing the textbook that will be used on that semester. Through this study, the researcher is going to help the lecturers at the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University, especially the lecturers who are teaching Intensive Course and Reading subject to give insight about the materials in the textbooks in order to find out whether the textbooks are suitable or not for the students based on Fry Graph.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What is the readability level of reading texts in *Life: Elementary*?
2. What is the readability level of reading texts in *Issues for Today*?
3. How is the readability level of reading texts in *Life: Elementary* compared to those of *Issues for Today*?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

The study is held to find out the readability level of reading texts from *Life: Elementary* and *Issues for Today* and to see how the readability level of the texts in *Life: Elementary* is compared to the readability level of the texts in *Issues for Today*.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis of this study is reading. Reading is not a straightforward process of lifting the words off the page. It is a complex process of problem solving in which the reader works to make sense of a text not just from the words and sentences on the page but also from the ideas, memories, and knowledge evoked by those words and sentences (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, and Hurwitz, 1999). According to Pardede (2006), among the four language skills, reading is possibly the most extensively and intensively studied by experts in the field of language teaching. The results of the researchers conducted for many

decades on nature of reading—how people learn to process textual information — have contributed contrasting theories about what works best in the teaching of reading.

Pikulski (2002) says that readability of materials is crucial in today's classrooms where there are so many different levels of readers. Therefore, using the appropriate level of reading materials can help the students able to comprehend the text. Later they able to activate their background knowledge and from the background knowledge they can develop their vocabulary which the result is fluently in speaking English. Thus, to measure the readability level of reading texts we can use Fry Readability Graph.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that this study will be useful for the coordinator of Intensive Course, the lecturers of Intensive Course, the coordinator of Reading and the lecturers of Reading subject at the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University so they know whether *Life: Elementary* and *Issues for Today* textbooks are suitable or not for first semester and second semester students.

1.6 Limitation and Scope

In *Life: Elementary* there are 12 themes and 28 reading texts. *Issues for Today* has 4 themes and 12 reading texts. The researcher collects the data based on the percentage and theme. She takes 50% of the total of reading text in *Life:*

Elementary and 50% of the total of reading text in *Issues for Today*. Thus, 14 reading texts from *Life: Elementary* and 6 reading texts from *Issues for Today*. After that she classifies them into 4 similar themes: Science & Technology, Lifestyle, People, and History.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Readability

“Readability is the sum of the total of all those elements which a given piece of printed material has that affect the success of a group of readers.” (Dale and Chall in DuBay, 2004)

Readability Level

“Readability level is a level which is calculated by the average number of sentences (y-axis) and syllables (x-axis) per hundred words.” (Fry in Soebijanto, 2015)

Reading Text

“The printed material on the textbook which is need in the process of teaching and learning reading.” (Sutianah, 2014)

Life: Elementary

A course book which is used in the 1st semester for Intensive Course subject at the English Department in Widya Mandala Catholic University that contains comprehensive grammar, vocabulary, functions, pronunciation, skills syllabuses, and in the end of every lesson there is a

productive outcome, such as speaking or writing. (National Geographic Learning, 2016)

Issues for Today

A course book which is used in the 2nd semester for Reading I subject at the English Department in Widya Mandala Catholic University that develop students' reading and vocabulary skills through engaging themes and intensive practice. (Thomson Heinlee, 2004)

1.8 Organisation of the Study

This proposal consists of five chapters. The first chapter covers the background of the proposal, research title, objectives, theoretical framework, significance of the proposal, limitation and scope, definition of key terms, and the organization of the research itself, while the second chapter deals with the review of related literature and previous studies. The third chapter of this study deals with research design, instrument of the research, the procedure of data collection, and the procedure of data analysis. Chapter 4 in this research shows the results of the findings and also the discussion of the findings. Chapter 5 of this research includes the conclusion and the suggestions for this research.