CHAPTER I

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1.1 Background of the Study

English as the first foreign language in Indonesia has expanded a lot. It does not only have an important position in the educational system but it is also the key which opens doors to scientific and technological knowledge, which is needed for the economic and political development of our country.

Nababan (1982:9) states that English was chosen by the government as the only compulsory foreign language subject in schools beginning from the Junior School level to Senior High School . Some kindergarten schools even give their students English lessons beginning from the second year.

Since the position of English is important in our educational system, many English proponents publish many kinds of English textbooks used by students in schools. However, the reality not all the English textbooks can fulfill the criteria of readability.

According to Input Hypothesis we acquire language through comprehensible input - input that is a little beyond our current level of competence (i + 1). It implies that to become readable, a textbook must not be too difficult for the readers. It must be within the students' range of competence, either in term of vocabulary, structures or background knowledge.

Nowadays, there are many private publishers which have published the English textbooks based on the English Curriculum of SMA, such as "Penuntun Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris Berdasarkan Kurikulum 1984 - GBPP 1987", "Active English For SMA", "Communicative English For SMA", "Kompetensi Komunikatif Bahasa Inggris", "Communicative Learning English For SMA", etc. In this case, the text books which are used for the first class of Senior High School are based on the new English Curriculum of SMA 1994. While, the text books which are used for the second and the third class of Senior High School are still based on the English Curriculum of SMA 1984. Among those books, it seems that "Communicative Learning English For SMA" has risen in favour, it has been proved that many Senior High Schools use this book for the students' textbook.

When the writer conducted teaching-learning practice at SMA Kristen Petra 1 Surabaya, the English teachers there also use "Communicative Learning English For SMA". That's why the writer feels interested to analyze this textbook in order to investigate whether this book has fulfilled the criteria of readability.

The two descriptive studies investigating the readability of a textbook have been conducted by two researchers. The first one is Liliana Wiyono (1988) in her thesis entitled "The Readability of Reading Materials in the " Penuntun Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris Berdasarkan Kurikulum 1984", and the second one is Suryawati (1989) in her thesis entitled "The Readability of Reading Materials in the "Buku Teks Wajib untuk SMTA -Bahasa Inggris- Depdikbud". However, there are some shortcomings in their researches. The first shortcoming is lied on the textbook which is used by Wiyono (1988). In the textbook namely "Penuntun Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris Berdasarkan Kurikulum 1984" there are not illustrations at all in it, whereas illustrations are important to facilitate the students in comprehending the contents of the reading materials. Sutaria (1980:111) points out that illustrations increase readability by decreasing the reading difficulty found in the text. With the help of illustrations, the

students may find reading in a foreign language a pleasure rather than a burden. Based on Wiyono's (1988) shortcoming the writer wants to use another textbook which is considered more qualified since it is completed with illustrations that is "Communicative Learning English For SMA".

The second shortcoming is found in Suryawati's thesis (1989) in which she used SMOG and FOG index for knowing whether the reading materials which have been analyzed by her are suitable or not for the Senior High School Level. In reality these formulas are not suitable to be applied in Indonesia since our country regards English as a foreign language, while according to Nutall (1982:27) SMOG index is devised for use with L1 learners. In accordance with this shortcoming the writer wants to use another formula which is tought more appropriate in our educational system namely Fry Readability Estimate.

Based on the above conditions the writer feels interested to make an advanced research about the readability of reading materials in a textbook. Besides to analyze the readability of reading materials in "Communicative Learning English For SMA", presented to the third year students of Physics and Biology program of SMA Kristen Petra 1 Surabaya, the purpose of this

research is also to complete the previous studies done by Liliana Wiyono (1988) and Suryawati (1989) by using another text book which is completed with illustrations and another formula that is Fry Readability Estimate.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The primary concern of this study is to investigate the English textbook entitled "Communicative Learning English For SMA" in order to know whether this textbook has fulfilled the criteria of readability.

The major question that guides this study is: To what extent the readability of the reading materials in the "Communicative Learning English For SMA" is for the third year students of Physics and Biology program of SMA Petra 1 Surabaya in the school year of 1993-1994? This question is specified into minor ones:

(1) Are there many new or difficult words in the reading passages?

(2) Are there many complicated structures in the reading passages?

(3) Are the contents of the reading passages familiar to the students?

(4) Are the contents of the reading passages interesting to the students?

(5) Are there any illustrations to simplify the contents of the reading passages unfamiliar to the students?

The secondary concern of this study is to complete the previous theses which are done by Liliana Wiyono (1988) and Suryawati (1989).

1.3 The Objective of the Study

Derived directly from the above formulated problems, the first objective of this study is to investigate to what extent the readability of reading materials in the "Communicative Learning English for SMA" is for the third year students of physics and Biology program of SMA Kristen Petra 1 Surabaya in the school year of 1993-1994, and this objective is specified into minor ones to determine whether:

(1) there are many new or difficult words in the reading passages,

(2) there are many complicated structures in the reading passages,

(3) the contents of the reading passages are familiar to the students,

(4) the contents of the reading passages are interesting to the students, and

(5) there are some illustrations to simplify the
    contents of the reading passages unfamiliar to
    the students.

   The second objective of this study is to complete
Wiyono's thesis (1988) and Suryawati's thesis(1989).

1.4 Significance of the Study

   Since reading is the first language skill to be
achieved in the teaching of English and since it is
important to provide the right book for the right
reader, it is necessary for the teacher to know whether
the reading materials found in the textbook used are
readable for the students or not. The data and
information obtained from this study are expected to
give English teachers of SMA Kristen Petra 1 Surabaya
insights on the readability of the reading materials in
the "Communicative Learning English For SMA".

   As the writer knows, so far there are two studies
analyzing the readability of reading materials in
textbooks. The first writer is Liliana Wiyono (1988) and
the second one is Suryawati (1989). However, there are
some shortcomings in their researches. Based on this
condition the writer would like to make several
revisions by making an advanced research about
readability of reading materials in order to complete

the previous studies.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

In fact there are so many factors that may influence the achievement of reading comprehension, such as intelligence, attitude, motivation, scheduling, class-size, reading materials, etc. To look for the depth of the analysis, this study is necessary to be limited to get the perfect data.

The writer will only deal with the problem of the reading materials that is the readability of the reading materials in the "Communicative Learning English For SMA". There are series of these books for Senior High School students, beginning from the first until the third year. In this study the writer wants to discuss only the readability of the reading materials found in the books for the third year students of Physics and Biology program. It consists of two books, one for the fifth semester and the other for the sixth semester. The book which is used for fifth semester consists of fourteen passages and the other book which is used for sixth semester consits of nine passages, so thére are twenty-three passages altogether.

There are so many factors determining the readability of reading materials. However, the writer will deal only with the problem of vocabulary, structures, background knowledge, personal interest, and illustrations encountered during the reading class. Other factors that may hinder the students' achivement in the reading comprehension will not be discuss.

1.6   Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the following theories:

(1)   Theory of Input

According to Krashen and Terrel (1983:32) The Input Hypothesis states that "acquisition" takes place as a result of the learner having understood input that is a little beyond the current level of his competence.

(2)   The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Krashen and Terrel (1983:37-38) state that in the Affective Filter Hypothesis the filter controls how much input is converted into intake. It is "affective" because the factors which determine its strength have to do with the learner's motivation, self-confidence, or anxiety state. Learners with high motivation, self-confidence, and with low

anxiety have low filters and so obtain and let in plenty of input. Learners with low motivation, little self confidence,and high anxiety have high filters and so receive little input and allow even less in.

(3)   Theory of Reading

According to Sutaria (1980:99) reading is the process of getting meaning of something written or printed by interpreting its character or symbols.

(4) Theory of Readability

Dupuis and Askov (1982:234) indicate that the four major components of readability are: linguistic factors in the text, the reader's background information on the subject, the reader's interest in the subject, and the aids to reading found in the text.

1.7 Assumptions

This study is based on the following assumptions:

(1)   Reading Comprehension is the first language skill to be achieved in Senior High School (according to the GBPP 1987)

(2)   The students have the average competency in learning English - they have learned English in

the Junior High School.

(3) The students are motivated to achieve proficiency in the reading class.

(4) "Communicative Learning English For SMA" is widely used in Senior High School, especially in Surabaya.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, some key terms used in this study are defined below before the writer proceeds to the core of her study.

- Readability, according to Dupuis and Askov (1982:233) is the sum total of vocabulary, structures, background knowledge, personal interest, and illustrations within a given piece of printed materials that affects the success which a group of readers have with it. The success is the extent to which they understand it at optimum speed and find it interesting.

- Reading Materials refer to passages found in a book designed for teaching reading for the third year students of Senior High School.

- New Vocabulary refers to words which the learners have never met in either oral or written language.

- Difficult vocabulary refers to words whose meaning

the learners are not familiar with.

- Complicated Structures refer to structures with a great number of long sentences and numorous occurances of infrequent or rare patterns.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the background of the Study, statement of the problem, the objective, assumptions, and the significance of the study, limitations of the study, theoretical framework, definition of key terms and the organization of the thesis. Chapter II presents the review of related literature, Chapter III concerns with the research design, the subject of the study, the instruments, the procedures of data collection, and the techniques for data analysis. The findings and interpretation of the findings are presented in chapter IV. While, Chapter V will be the conclusion and suggestion of the study.