

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

In doing teaching and learning process, the most useful tool is the material. Material can be in a form of tools, text, or information. When at school or college, the most important material needed is a text book. As what Jabberwocky (2005) said, a textbook is a collection of the knowledge, concepts, and principles of a selected topic or course. The textbook is usually written by one or more teachers, college professors, or education experts who are authorities in a specific field (Jabberwocky, 2005).

Text book is a written material compiled by the expert to support the teaching and learning process in class. Usually, a text book is designed based on the curriculum implemented at that time. A text book provides material that can make the learning process

works well based on the standard competence and achievement indicators. A text book should have a good quality and should be readable for the readers and attract readers to read it. A good and suitable text book will help the student to comprehend the lesson and make the student understand the lesson and the language used there.

As the researcher knows, English is the international language for communication in the world. To make students able to speak English fluently, Widya Mandala University provides English Department to help students build their skills in English especially in reading. Reading can help the students speak English fluently because they can get so many new vocabularies and also use the vocabularies themselves.

English Department is helping the students through Intensive Course subject as the basic subject that

the students will get in the first semester with 18 credits. Intensive Course subject uses *Up-Beat* for their text book. There are two levels of *Up-Beat* textbook that is used by English Department. In the first half term of first semester they use *Up-Beat Pre-intermediate* and in the second half term they use *Up-Beat Intermediate* level.

After passing Intensive Course, the student will learn Reading through graded Reading subjects in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th semester with 3 credits for the graded reading subjects. Graded reading subjects in English Department here have four levels, there are: Reading I, Reading II, Reading III, and Reading IV. For Reading I, English Department uses *Issues for Today* text book as one book of Lorraine C. Smith's books.

The selection of reading textbook for Intensive Course is important. Since Intensive Course and graded Reading subjects are required subjects in this English

Department. To make the chosen textbooks are comprehensibility for the students, the chosen books should have a readable quality.

Most of the lecturers use the textbook based on the consideration of English Department and the Reading lecturers. Not all the reading passages in textbooks are suitable for the students because textbooks published not always fulfill the criteria of readability. Every subject in Widya Mandala Catholic University especially in this English Department has their own coordinator. The coordinator has a job to choose a readable material for the students based on the English Department consideration that will be used on that semester. If the department agrees that the text book is good for the students, they can use it.

In choosing a readable material for Intensive Course or Reading subject, English Department do not

always measure the readability level of a textbook. They also do not use the same benchmark to measure the readability of a textbook. The result is the textbook may be too difficult for the students or may not be too easy for the students.

Here the researcher wants to help the students to comprehend the reading text well by helping the lecturers in Widya Mandala Catholic University in choosing a readable material for the students based on Fry Graph. According to Hamsik (1984) and Greenfield (1999), the readability levels which is obtained from Flesch Kincaid and Fry Graph can be directly converted for the EFL students. The level of EFL students which is obtained from Fry graph is the same as the level of native English.

Lecturers have to know the readability of a textbook or material that will be learned by the students so that the students can comprehend the lesson well. To

know the readability of a text book, teachers need to use readability test.

Readability test is designed to assess the suitability of books for students at particular grade levels or ages. Readability formulas can certainly be extremely helpful in the teaching process in reading skill because the teacher can know whether the material would be helpful for building the skill of the students or would not be helpful for the students. From this study, researcher wanted to know the readability level for the reading passages in *Up Beat Intermediate* by Longman Pearson and the readability level for reading passages in *Issues for Today* by Lorraine C. Smith using Fry Readability Graph.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What is the readability level of the reading passages in *Up Beat Intermediate*?
2. What is the readability level of the reading passages in *Issues for Today*?
3. How is the readability level of the reading passages in *Up Beat Intermediate* compared to those in *Issues for Today*?

1.3 The Objective of the Research

This study was conducted to assess the readability level of the reading passages in *Up Beat Intermediate* and *Issues for Today* and to see how the readability level of the passages in *Up Beat Intermediate* is compared to that in *Issues for Today*.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theory underlying this research is reading. Reading is one of text-based skills which are concerned with the written language and it is a skill that is critical in the educational success of all individuals. 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. The contrasting theories are bottom-up processing and top-down processing (Smith, Frank, 2004).

Nuttal (2005,187) stresses the importance of reading texts should be readable (have suitable structural difficulty to the students by following certain standard

readability index). Readability level or index is crucial to know because choosing a readable materials for students would help the students to comprehend the text they read, which will develop their fluently in speaking English. Measuring the readability level of a reading passages could be done by using Fry readability graph.

1.5 The Significance of the Research

The researcher hoped that this study will be useful for the coordinator of Intensive Course, the lecturers of Intensive Course, Intensive Course program, and all reading lecturers in English Department so that they know whether *Up Beat Intermediate* textbook and *Issues for Today* text book are in graded level of reading subjects.

1.6 Limitation and Scope

The researcher limited the research by choosing 6 passages which consisted 100 words taken from *Up Beat*

Intermediate published by Longman Pearson and 6 passages which consisted 100 words taken from *Issues for Today* published by Lorraine C. Smith. The research also focused on finding the readability level of the items chosen. The formula chosen was Fry Readability Graph.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Readability

“Readability is the sum of the total of all those elements which is a given piece of printed material has that affect the success of a group of readers” (Dale and Chall 1949, cited in Dubay, 2004).

1.7.2 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,1977)

1.7.3 Reading Passages

Refer to reading material that is in the form of sentences, paragraphs and texts (Snow,2013)

1.7.4 Up Beat Intermediate Level

A course book that is used in the second term of the 1st semester for Intensive Course in English Department in Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya

1.7.5 Issues for Today

A course book that is used in the 2nd semester for Reading I subject in English Department in Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.

1.8 Organization of the Research

Chapter 1 of this study deals with the background of this research, the research questions, the objective of the research, the significance of the research, the limitation and scope of the research, the definition of the

key term, and the organization of the research itself. Chapter 2 deals with the review of related literature and previous studies. Chapter 3 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.