

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the writer presents the background of the study, the research questions, the theoretical frameworks, the objectives of the study, the significances of the study, the scope and the limitation of the study, and the definition of the key terms used in this study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Nowadays in this global era, English has been used as an international language in all over the world. In Indonesia, English has been taught formally from elementary up to senior high level. In learning English there are four basic skills that need to be mastered. They are speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Each skill has its own role in the use of English.

There are a lots of ways to learn English, and one of them is through reading a lot. Paris (2005) says that reading is the foundation for learning and academic achievement. It is one of the most important abilities that students should acquire as they progress through the early years of school. Reading itself has been taught in every grade through many resources like books, magazines, newspaper, textbook, and others. Longan (2001) also says that reading is like any other skills; in which the more the students practice, the better they get. When the students want to improve their English, they need to read a lot. In addition, a frequent reading improves vocabulary, spelling, reading speed, reading comprehension, as well as grammar and writing.

Reading process is not a simple activity, it is known as a complex cognitive process that cannot be separated with the concept of thinking, because reading is thinking. It involves several thinking and language abilities (Blair et al, 1981). According to Cunningham (2007) reading is also known as a constructive activity where readers try to construct meaning by understanding what the author is saying, thinking about what the author means, and forming opinions based on the author's message and their prior knowledge. In other words readers must use their mind to get the meaning the text. Therefore, reading provides the perfect source to strengthen the students' skills related to logical and critical thinking.

In a reading process students are expected to achieve high-level thinking skills, where the students can think logically and critically. Especially, in the Indonesian's Curriculum, the government demands the students to be able to think logically, systematically, and critically. (*Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 81a Tentang Implementasi Kurikulum*) The students are demanded to be able to think inductively and deductively using the information that they have had. They are asked to be able to construct hypothesis, to speculate, and to conclude after they have read a reading text. Those kinds of skills are considered as the high-level thinking skills.

Therefore, to accomplish this goal, teachers who have an important role in the educational reform, must consider about this thoughtfully. Teachers should focus to develop the students' thinking skills and encourage them to practice a high-level of thinking skill. To master a high level of thinking skill, students need suitable reading materials. One source that commonly used by teachers is a textbook. Usually in the senior high schools, they have provided a textbook with various reading texts in different themes for the students with the purpose to help them improve their thinking skill.

Apart from the reading texts, there will be some comprehension questions in the textbook that are used by the teachers to foster a deeper thinking skill. The reading comprehension questions are the vital parts of reading purposes to enhance the students' understanding. In this case, teachers can use the reading comprehension questions to check whether or not the students have comprehended the reading text well. If the students are able to answer the reading comprehension questions, it means that they have comprehended the reading text. These questions should be clear, accurate, relevant, and logical. Unclear or misleading questions tend to frustrate students and discourage them rather than improving their thinking skills (Day & Park, 2005). For that reason, the writer considers that questions have an important role both in comprehending a reading text and practicing thinking skill.

Brown (2004): Changpakorn (2007) says that there are two types of questions. They are lower-level and higher-level questions. The lower-level or factual questions involve a convergent thinking where the students recall information which is presented previously. The response will consist of one correct answer. On the other hand, the higher-level questions promote a divergent thinking which requires students to engage in a deeper thought about what they have learned. It cannot be answered with a single word or phrase. Asking higher level questions will promote the students' high thinking skills rather than asking for simple recall question.

By giving a suitable comprehension questions, students will practice to achieve a higher order thinking skill. Day and Park (2005) say that a suitable comprehension questions will lead students to the comprehension and a well-designed questions help students interact with the text, create and construct meaning and begin to think critically and intelligently.

In addition, having a good textbook with a suitable comprehension questions based on taxonomy for the students as their media in learning, will facilitate them to practice a high thinking skill. Thus, to achieve this teacher will need a suitable reading comprehension questions. A suitable reading comprehension questions must be organized by taxonomy (Dupuis and Askov,1982). In the educational world there are two popular taxonomies that are used. They are Bloom's Taxonomy and Barrett's Taxonomy. Bloom's Taxonomy is a taxonomy made by Bloom et al. in 1956. The main purpose of taxonomy is to classify the educational objectives. In Bloom Taxonomy, there are six categories of questions in cognitive domain which are (1) *knowledge*, (2) *comprehension*, (3) *application*, (4) *analysis*, (5) *synthesis*, and (6) *evaluation*. This taxonomy can be used for other subjects such as mathematics, science, physics and others. Therefore, Bloom taxonomy is not used for reading specifically and purposefully.

Barrett's taxonomy is a taxonomy which was made by Thomas C. Barrett in 1968. Barrett's taxonomy is commonly used for reading. Barrett's taxonomy is the representative of a comprehension taxonomy that can be used when developing instructional activities, identifying questions and specifying reading comprehension instruction (Blair et al, 1981). Therefore, the writer chooses Barrett's Taxonomy as her parameter in this study because it is suitable for reading comprehension.

In Barrett's taxonomy (*Content Area Reading*, Dupuis and Askov, 1982) there are four levels of questions with different tasks. These questions are designed to facilitate the students' thinking process and the comprehension abilities by asking various types of questions. They are (1) *literal recognition or recall*, (2) *inferential*, (3) *evaluation*, and (4) *appreciation*. These levels are divided based on their difficulties. According to Dupuis and Askov (1982), students should be given all of Barrett t's levels of questions. It is important for the students to have different types of questions so that they can exeperience and practice both the divergent and convergent thinking skills.

Based on the background above and considering the importance of a good quality of questions, the writer interested to analyze English textbook that is used by senior high school teachers. The English textbook that is chosen by the writer is “Bahasa Inggris”.

The English textbook entitled “Bahasa Inggris ” is a new English textbook published by the government, Kemdikbud (Ministry of Education and Culture) in line with the implementation of new designed curriculum, 2013 Curriculum. This book is distributed as the primary source for free to all schools in Indonesia that applied 2013 curriculum. This book is designed for the X grade students of Senior High School.

As a new textbook which the use is widespread, English teachers need to know whether or not the materials in the textbook can really facilitate the students. Cunningsworth (1995) explains that course book analysis helps teachers to gain good and useful insights into the nature of material so it is useful in teacher’s development. The analysis on the material is needed for the effectiveness of the use of the textbook. Therefore, the writer is interested to conduct a depth analysis on the reading comprehension questions found in “Bahasa Inggris” for X grade students by Kemdikbud.

The analysis will be based on Barrett’s Comprehension Taxonomy. The analysis is aimed to find out what thinking skills are measured in the "Bahasa Inggris" with its percentage in each levels of Barrett’s Comprehension Taxonomy and to find out whether or not the reading comprehension questions found in “Bahasa Inggris” are suitable for X grade students.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

From the description above, the research questions of this study formulated as:

- What is the percentage of the reading comprehension questions’ level based on the Barrett’s Comprehension Taxonomy in "Bahasa Inggris" for X grade students by Kemdikbud?
- What thinking skills are measured in the reading comprehension questions in "Bahasa Inggris" for X grade students by Kemdikbud?
- Are the reading comprehension questions found in “Bahasa Inggris" for X grade students by Kemdikbud” suitable for the students?

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the research questions on the previous page, the objectives of this study are to find out:

- The percentage of reading comprehension questions' level based on Barrett's Comprehension Taxonomy in "Bahasa Inggris" for X grade students by Kemdikbud.
- The thinking skills measured in the reading comprehension questions in "Bahasa Inggris" for X grade students by Kemdikbud.
- The suitability of the reading comprehension questions found in "Bahasa Inggris" for the X grade students.

### 1.4 Theoretical Framework

To find out what thinking skills are measured in "Bahasa Inggris" by Kemdikbud, the writer uses some theoretical frameworks. The first theory is about the nature of reading. According to Graves et al (2004), reading comprehension refers to the process in which readers actively construct meaning as they read by using the following strategies: connecting new information with prior knowledge, asking and answering questions, making inferences, summarizing and evaluating. It involves thinking and responding to what has been read. This means that, when the students comprehend the reading text, they will use their thinking skill including their prior knowledge, interpretation and assumptions (Cunningham, et al 2007).

Next, the second theory is about comprehension taxonomy. According to Dupuis and Askov, a good comprehension questions should be designed based on taxonomy with various kinds of levels. The suitable reading comprehension questions should cover all levels of questions in Barrett's Taxonomy To help the writer analyze the thinking skills measured in the "Bahasa Inggris" by Kemdikbud, the writer uses Barrett's Reading Comprehension Taxonomy. The writer chooses Barrett's taxonomy as the parameter to analyze the thinking skills because Barrett's taxonomy is made for reading purposefully and it is usually used to classify the level of questions. In Barrett's taxonomy there are four levels of questions in which they are designed to facilitate the students' thinking process and the comprehension abilities by asking various types of questions. They are (1) *literal recognition or recall*, (2) *inferential*, (3) *evaluation*, and (4) *appreciation*. These levels are divided based on their difficulties. The low levels or known as the lower thinking level of this taxonomy are the literal comprehension and inference. While the other two levels— evaluation, and appreciation— are the set of higher thinking levels.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The scope of the study is to analyze the materials in English Textbook. Then, this study is limited only to analyze the reading comprehension questions of "Bahasa Inggris" by Kemdikbud. The analysis of the reading comprehension question will use a checklist based on Barrett's Taxonomy.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The result of this study will give benefit for both the textbook's writers and the English teachers:

1. For the textbook's writers :

As a feedback to improve the book to have a reading comprehension questions based on Barrett's Taxonomy which have various level of questions to reach a higher thinking level.

2. For the English teacher:

To encourage teachers to add another reading comprehension questions which cover all levels of questions based on Barrett Comprehension Taxonomy.

### **1.7 Definitions of Key Terms**

#### **1. Thinking skills**

Thinking skills are the mental processes that we apply when we seek to make sense of experience. Thinking skills enable us to integrate each new experience into the schemata that we are constructing of "how things are" (Brainboxx, 2015).

Another definition of thinking skills from Beyer, Costa, and Presseisen (2001) in Changpakorn (2007), thinking skill is a mental process that involves some form of strategic reasoning such as generating data, formulating inferences, making decisions, solving problems or evaluating information. This process requires thinking beyond the literal level

#### **2. Reading**

Reading is a thinking process. It is a constructive activity where readers try to construct meaning by understanding what the author is saying, thinking about what the author means, and forming opinions based on the author's message and their prior knowledge (Cunningham, et al 2007).

### **3. Reading Comprehension Questions**

Reading comprehension questions are questions used to check the students' reading comprehension. A suitable comprehension questions will lead students to the comprehension and a well-designed questions help students interact with the text, create and construct meaning and begin to think critically and intelligently (Day and Park, 2005).

### **4. Barrett's Taxonomy**

In Barrett's taxonomy there are four levels of questions in which they are designed to facilitate the students' thinking process and the comprehension abilities by asking various types of questions. They are (1) *literal recognition or recall*, (2) *inferential*, (3) *evaluation*, and (4) *appreciation*.

### **5. Textbook**

A textbook will include several types of text in different length and topics. It serves different purposes for teachers: as a core resource, as a source of supplemental material, as an inspiration for classroom activities, even as the curriculum itself. (Fredriksson and Olsson, 2006)

## **1.8. Organization of the study**

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction which presents background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, theoretical framework, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the study. Chapter II is review of related literature which discusses 2013 Curriculum, the nature of reading, the comprehension taxonomy, thinking skills, and Barrett's taxonomy, and review of some related studies. Chapter III is the research method which deals with the research design, data source, data collection, instrument, and data analysis technique. In Chapter IV, the writer elaborates the results of the data analysis, including the interpretation of the findings and the discussion about this study. Lastly, Chapter V presents the conclusion and suggestions.