

READABILITY ANALYSIS OF READING TEXTS IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK *WHEN ENGLISH RINGS A BELL* FOR SEVENTH GRADERS

A Thesis

by

GIRATIA

Student Number: 06011281621032

English Education Study Program

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FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY
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Approved by,

Advisor 1,



**Dr. Machdalena Vianty, S. Pd., M.Ed.
NIP. 197411242000122001**

Advisor 2,



**Drs. Muslih, M.L.I.S..
NIP. 195708261984031001**

Certified by,

Coordinator of English Education Study Program,



Hariswan Putra Java, S.Pd., M.Pd

NIP. 197408022002121003



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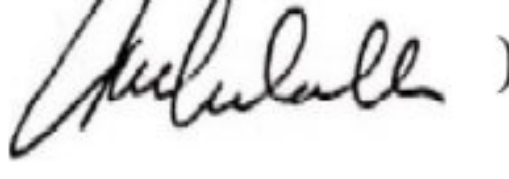

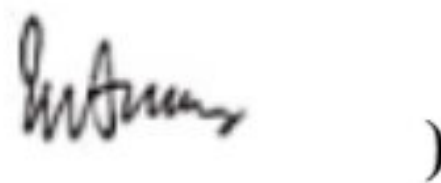
Giratia

Student Number: 06011281621032

This thesis was defended by the writer in the final program examination and was approved the examination committee on:

Day :

Date: December 25, 2021

1. Chairperson : Dr. Machdalena Vianty, S. Pd., M.Ed ()
2. Secretary : Drs. Muslih, M, L.I.S. ()
3. Member : Dra. Rita Hayati, M.A. ()

Indralaya, 2021

Certified by,

**Coordinator of English Education Study
Program,**



Hariswan Putra Jaya, S.Pd., M.Pd

NIP 197408022002121003



DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

Name : Giratia

Place, date of birth : Palembang, May 7th, 1998

Student's Number : 06011281621032

Study Program : English Education

Certify that thesis entitled "READABILITY ANALYSIS OF READING TEXTS IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK *WHEN ENGLISH RINGS A BELL* FOR SEVENTH GRADERS" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or in appropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserved to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

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06011281621032

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to myself, thank you for surviving until this phase.

“a happy soul is the best shield for the cruel world”

(atticus)

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Giratia

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background, problems, the objectives, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background

Based on the Indonesian National standard of Education Corp or Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BNSP) (2006,p.13), English is a compulsory subject that is taught at secondary school level. It has four main language skills that are connected to each other. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

As a compulsory subject, English is one of the courses included in the secondary school National Examination in Indonesia and the type of questions in the examination are dominated by reading comprehension questions. For example, in *Ujian Nasional Utama SMP/Mts Bahasa Inggris* (2019) retrieved from www.m4th-lab.net, there were 50 questions and 46 out of 50 questions were based on the 13 reading texts and the rest questions were about poster. In addition, according to *Kisi-kisi Ujian Nasional Sekolah Menengah Pertama / Madrasah Tsanawiyah* published by Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2017/2018), the objectives of the examination are students can identify the relationship of meaning between the parts in texts, and students can compare classify, and explain the relationship of meaning between the parts in texts. It means that reading test takes a big part in English subject for Indonesian Junior High School students.

Reading is an important activity for finding information in modern society (Alfassi, 2004). In establishing the meaning of reading as information, Rumelhart (1997) states that reading is an interaction between the writer toward the reader. It means through reading, the reader can get the meaning or information from the writer.

However, English reading comprehension is a challenging task for Indonesian students. Suryanto (2017), for example, reported that Indonesian students experienced a cultural problem when they tried to understand English reading texts and most of them preferred speaking skill to reading skill. The study conducted by Ikhsanza, Vianty, and Rosmalina (2018) involving 328 students from four public senior high schools in Palembang and investigated their reading performance which was measured by PISA Reading Literacy test (2009) revealed that the average score was 24.58 which was below the benchmark (75). In addition, the students' reading level was 2 which meant that the students were able in some cases to find information of the text, make single comparison and relate the text with their personal experiences. The study conducted by Subadrino, Sofendi, and Vianty (2019) who investigated the reading comprehension of the sample students from eighteen accredited A public junior high schools in Palembang found that the lowest reading comprehension mean score were 29.40.

The students' problem with reading comprehension as shown by the examples in previous paragraph can be helped by providing them with reading texts that are at their reading level. The reading texts can come from many media resources. According to Rao (2014), in teaching and learning process, media can act as facilitator. There are a lot of instructional media that an English teacher can provide for the student and one of them is textbooks. Textbook is commonly used in almost every grade level at school, especially in reading. It is used in many schools and facilitating sequences of learning activities. Brown and Douglas (2001) state that the most real and most general form of material to support language teaching comes from textbooks. In Indonesia, the textbooks used for the English

language teaching and learning are published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture and there are also textbooks that are published by public or private publishers.

As a facilitator, a teacher can select English reading materials that match with the students' reading level. In selecting reading materials, Nuttal (1996) states three points that should be considered: suitability of the content, exploitability, and readability. Suitability means that the content of the text makes learners feel interested, enjoyed, challenged, and appropriate in achieving learning target. Exploitability gives the opportunity to achieving learning goals with the text that can be deep exploration to instructional task, techniques, and also can be integrated into other part of language skills. Readability is a measure of how well and how simply the reader achieve the meaning from a text (Ewie, 2014). Freatat (2014) also states that the contents that are easy to comprehend have low readability level, and the contents that are difficult to comprehend have high readability level. It means that, the lowest level is the easiest to be understood and the highest level is the most difficult to be understood. According to Mesmer (2008), educators have used the term readability to describe all the text features that influence how person read and understand a book. It means by analyzing the readability level of the texts, a teacher can predict whether the text is difficult, plain or easy for his/her students.

There are some ways in measuring the readability level of a text. Klare (1974), for example, lists four most widely used readability formulas for measuring text difficulty; they are Flesch Readability Formula, Dale – Chall Formulas, Fry Readability Estimate and SMOG (acronym for Simple Measure of Gobbledygook). These readability formulas when applied to the written text produces a numerical score based on certain textual variables such as word and sentence length, number of syllables, etc. Each readability score has a specific description such as easy, standard, difficult, and so on, along with the corresponding reading grade level.

There have been many studies undertaken to evaluate English textbooks by analyzing their readability and students reading level. For example, the study conducted by Yulianto (2019) who investigated the readability level of reading texts in the English Textbook "Pathway to English 2 for Eighth Grade of Junior High School Students". Yulianto (2019) reported that only one out of eight reading texts that was in the standard level which meant only one text is suitable for eight students of junior high school. The study done by Saputra (2017) revealed that the readability level of reading texts in the textbook entitled *Bahasa Inggris* used by tenth grade students was varied. There were only four out of sixteen texts which readable for the tenth grade, and the result of the text readability levels which proposed for the tenth grade students at level 4 did not match the students reading ability. Thus, the important thing the teachers should know is the difficulty level of the textbooks that will be used.

The Flesch Readability formula is found by Rudolf Flesch. It is a statistical readability formula that analyze the readability level. There are two kind of readability formula, namely Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch Kincaid formula. Chall (1974) states that Flesch Reading Ease formula became the most tested and reliable. The calculation not only covers only the counting of syllables, words, and sentences, but also readability, score and grade. The formula is the best combination of simplicity and meaningfulness

This present study also focused on the analysis of reading level of the textbook used in one of the public junior high school in Palembang that participated in Subadrino, Sofendi, and Vianty' study (2019). The result of the communication that the writer had with one of the English teachers at this junior high school revealed that the textbook entitled "*When English Rings a Bell*" for grade 7 published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture is used as the main resource. It was also found out that the 7 grade students found it difficult to comprehend the reading texts in the textbook.

This present study did not only focus on finding out the readability of the reading texts in the textbook, but also the reading level of the students. In addition, it was also aimed to determine which vocabulary that had to be learned more by the students (vocabulary

building). Chinelo (2016) states that reading level is the level of the capability in interpreting a text obviously. In this study the writer used Jennings Informal Reading Assessment retrieved from <https://wps.ablongman.com/> to find out the reading level of the students. Jennings test is a part of Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) test. Meanwhile, the important of vocabulary for reading ability has been a lot discussed in the literature (Baumann, 2003). According to Larson and Dixon (2013), an important component in academic reading comprehension is vocabulary comprehension and lack of mastery vocabulary is a factor that causes low reading ability. With the purpose of to find out whether or not the readability of the English reading texts from the textbook matched with the reading level of the students, and also to determine which vocabulary that had to be learned more from reading texts, this present study entitled **Readability Analysis of Reading Texts in English Textbook *When English Rings a Bell* for Seventh Graders** was conducted.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the problem, the research questions are as follow:

1. Do the reading texts in the textbook *When English Rings a Bell* match with the students' reading level?
2. Which vocabulary building that the textbook contained?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the formulation of the problem, the objective of this study are:

1. To know whether or not the reading texts in the textbook *When English a Rings Bell* match with the students' reading level.
2. To select the vocabulary building that the textbook contained.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

By conducted this study, the writer hopes that this will have some significant advantages in the process of English language teaching and learning at junior high school. First, this study might give the techers usefull information to selecting appropriate textbook as the additional media for the students. Second this may help the students to rectifying their reading comprehension skill by providing appropriate textbook with readable texts. And last, this study may become a guideline in conducting readability study for th next researcher.

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