The Readability Level of English Textbook Published by Kemendikbud for Grade Xi

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Abstract: This study aims to examine and describe the readability level of reading texts in English textbook published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) for the eleventh grade of Senior High School with a descriptive analysis method. There were 11 reading texts of the English Textbook 2017 revised edition as the object of this research. The instrument of this study was to collect data procedures and then measure with the Flesch Reading Ease (FRE) formula. There were only two of the reading texts were found as the appropriate level for eleventh-grade students. The data showed that only 18.18% of the eleven reading texts were suitable for eleventh-grade students. The suitable level was Fairly Difficult level, which ranges from fifty to sixty and has been set as the appropriate level for eleventh-grade students. Therefore, the readability level of the English textbook published by Kemendikbud was low and did not match eleventh-grade students' level.

1 INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the skills that are acquired through teaching and learning English in school. Reading allows students to study writing and compose sentences correctly. It is an easily identified language skill since every activity in the classroom is tied to reading. Students read not only to gather information but also to improve their linguistic competence (Harmer, 2011). In accord with Renandya and Widodo (A Renandya, 2016), reading is the process of collecting meaning from printed words, phrases, paragraphs, or an entire written statement. It is the process of looking at written words using our eyes and compiling them to make perfect sense. If students are given a reading text below their level, they will not develop their reading ability. The lack of students' reading ability can cause them to become poor readers in the future. Therefore, Suitable reading materials would enhance the students' language skills, whereas too simple text would tire the students, and challenging material would frustrate them.

Furthermore, according to Nuttal in Berardo, there are three things to consider in selecting texts: suitability, exploitability, and one of them is

readability. Readability is a term that involves how easy or difficult it is for students to comprehend and understand a text. Some studies use the readability formula to test the quality of textbook reading texts because it is a very efficient and reliable way of measuring the quality of textbooks (Yunita et al., 2017).

Moreover, Martinc et al (Martinc et al., 2021) imply that readability is the relationship of a text and the working memory of a reader to grasp the meaning. Sangia (Sangia, 2017) also states that readability is frequently related to whether or not students read the material. Readability is the study of written text components that help or hinder the contexts of ideas and information (Bailin and Grafstein, 2016). It can be said that readability focuses on how difficult the readers perceive the texts. It is a matter of choosing suitable reading materials and how readers can understand texts. Students reading abilities are also affected by the readability level of a textbook. If reading texts is not readable, students would move on without getting information from the reading text. Then they would not use their intelligence; instead, they would lower their supposed competence. Therefore, the readability level plays an essential part

in terms of providing a reading material that matches students' level.

The length of the sentences or the length of the words determines readability. However, it is also influenced by how informative and compelling the text is written. Some experts or researchers interpret the word readability in various ways. Readability is how easily written materials may be read and understood (Richards and Schmidt, 2010; Zulkifli, 2019). It is an essential part of readable material which showcases the difficulty that lies in the text. How the text goes beyond or within the level of the readers is affecting the readability level. Readability assessment is a way of identifying the appropriate reading level for text (Deutsch et al., 2020).

Some approaches can be used to measure readability. According to Alderson, there are two approaches: cloze test and readability formulae. The measuring of readability is carefully considered, especially about the complexity of words and phrases. In this case, the researchers used readability formulas. Using mathematical calculations, they mainly focus on the number of sentences, phrases, and easy and difficult words that appear in a reading material. The researchers used Rudolf Flesch, who developed the Flesch Reading Ease formula. The formula by Flesch Reading Ease score as follows:

$$Score = 206.835 - (1.015 \times ASL) - (84.6 \times ASW) \quad (1)$$

Where:
Score = position on a scale of 0 (difficult) to 100 (easy)
ASL = average sentence length (the number of words divided by the number of sentences)
ASW = average syllable count per word (the number of syllables divided by words)

It calculates reading ease on a scale from 1 to 100, with 0 –30 being "very difficult," 30 –50 being "difficult," 50 – 60 being "fairly difficult," 60 –70 being "standard," 70 –80 being "fairly easy," 80 –90 being "easy" and 90 –100 being "very easy."

To apply the formula, this study used the latest version of the English textbook, published in 2017 by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the eleventh grade of Senior High School as the research object. The government prepared the textbook in the context of the implementation of the 2013 curriculum. Following the demands of the National Curriculum, students are needed to explore and find valuable learning sources without losing the cultural context in their own country. The textbook provides students with more communication activities and involves the four language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. This also means that the textbook is expected to help students improve their language skills and expand their knowledge.

Following the background of the study above, the researchers try to examine and describe the readability level of the reading texts in the Ministry of Education and Culture's English textbook for the eleventh grade of Senior High School. Using the formula, the researchers can examine reading texts to determine whether they are appropriate for students or not. Thus, the study is titled The Readability of English Textbook, published by Kemendikbud for Grade XI.

2 METHOD

The study used the descriptive analysis method to describe, elaborate, and analyse the readability level of the English textbook 2017 Revised Edition for eleventh-grade students of Senior High School printed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This research described a phenomenon and its characteristics, concerned with what happened rather than how it happened (?).

The study used eleven reading texts which were three transactional interaction texts, one analytical exposition text, one explanation text, three narrative texts, one hortatory exposition text, one speech text, and one recount text (biography) in the English textbook published by Kemendikbud for Grade XI.

The instrument of this study was the data analysis procedures. Using the Flesch Reading Ease formula as the readability measurement tool, the data were collected by choosing reading texts from the English textbook for Senior High School eleventh-grade students 2017 updated edition, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The researchers then analyzed each reading text. After that, the researchers then determined the readability level of the selected reading texts using the Flesch Reading Ease formula.

In order to obtain the result of the study. The data analysis procedures applied by identifying the reading texts in the textbook and counts the number of syllables, words, and sentences in each text using www.countwordsworth.com. The researchers referred to this as a screening to identify reading texts before applying the Flesch Reading Ease formula. When using www.countwordsworth.com, the procedures are carried out by copy and pasting the texts.

In obtaining the study's the calculation data, the number of syllables, words, and sentences in each text then applies the Flesch Reading Ease Formula. In terms of data analysis, the study results were described with the readability level of each reading texts used in the English textbook published by Kemendikbud for Grade XI. The findings will be used to determine the difficulty level and reading grade using the Reading Ease Scale of the Flesch Reading Ease For mula, as stated in Dubay (2004) and shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Reading Ease Scale by Flesch Reading Ease Formula.

Reading Ease Score	Difficulty Level	Estimated Reading Grade
0 to 30	Very Difficult	College Graduate
30 to 50	Difficult	13th to 16th grade
50 to 60	Fairly Difficult	10th to 12th grade
60 to 70	Standard	8th and 9th grade
70 to 80	Fairly Easy	7th grade
80 to 90	Easy	6th grade
90 to 100	Very Easy	5th grade

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research question focuses on the readability level of the English textbook published by Kemendikbud for Grade 11. Based on the results of using the Flesch Reading Ease formula, the researchers present the process of calculating and presenting data in the research finding. In addition, the researchers described the findings in the discussion section. As the researchers analyzed the reading texts, the results total 11 reading texts used in this research. Firstly, the researchers listed the reading texts; the following result was obtained as the explanation below in Table 2:

Table 2: Reading Ease Scale by Flesch Reading Ease Formula.

Title	Number of Words	Number of Sentences	Number of Syllables
1	106	16	145
2	152	19	220
3	193	12	295
4	202	21	287
5	261	18	435
6	488	34	737
7	660	37	1146
8	750	43	1150
9	827	98	1201
10	1021	83	1318
11	1063	82	1276

Note: 1. Interpersonal transaction, 2. Transactional Interaction, 3. Earthquake, 4. Transactional Interaction Text (Personal Letter), 5. Global Warming: Is it an end to our world?, 6. President Sukarno of Indonesia: Speech at the Opening of the Bandung Conference, April 18, 1955, 7. Life and times of Ki Hajar Dewantara, 8. Bullying: A cancer that must be eradicated, 9. Vanity and Pride, 10. The Enchanted Fish, 11. The Last Leaf

Table 2 showed the number of sentences, words, and syllables in each reading text. Then the data above were calculated using the Flesch Reading Ease formula. ASL (average sentence length) was counted by dividing the number of words by the number of sentences, while ASW (average number of syllables per word) was counted by dividing the number of syllables by the number of words. Then, the result of the readability score of reading texts provided in the English textbook for the eleventh-grade student of Senior High School was presented in the following Table 3:

Table 3: Readability Score of the Reading Texts Based on Flesch's Reading Ease Formula.

Readability Score	Difficulty Level	Reading Grade
84.2	Easy	6th grade
76.8	Fairly Easy	7th grade
58.2	**Fairly Difficult**	**10th − 12th grade**
76.9	Fairly Easy	7th grade
70.1	Fairly Easy	7th grade
64.6	Standard	8th − 9th grade
36.4	Difficult	13th − 16th grade
59.7	**Fairly Difficult**	**10th − 12th grade**
75.5	Fairly Easy	7th grade
85.2	Easy	6th grade
92.2	Very Easy	5th grade

Based on the readability score in the data analysis above, two reading texts were classified into Fairly Difficult level. The appropriate reading texts for the eleventh grade of Senior High School are Text 3 (Earthquake), with a readability score of 58.2, and Text 8 (Bullying: Cancer that must be eradicated) with a readability score of 59.7. These two reading texts were considered readable text for students who are in grade 11.

Table 4: Readability Score of the Reading Texts Based on Flesch's Reading Ease Formula.

No	Level	The Number of Texts	Percentage
1	Very Easy	1	9.09%
2	Easy	2	18.18%
3	Fairly Easy	4	36.36%
4	Standard	1	9.09%
5	**Fairly Difficult**	**2**	**18.18%**
6	Difficult	1	9.09%

Table 4 showed the percentage of the readability level from each reading text. Overall, the findings of reading texts from reading one up to reading text 11 only two reading texts, which is 18.18%, are suitable for the eleventh-grade students. It means that nine texts are irrelevant to the students of Junior High School of eleventh grade.

Based on the result of the study, there were two of the reading text examined as the appropriate readability level for eleventh grade students. The result is similar to the findings of Miftahurrahmi and Nababan (Miftahurrahmi et al., 2017; Nababan et al., 2019). There were a few reading texts from the textbooks found to be not suitable for students. Contrary, the study conducted by Tabatabaei Bagheri (Tabatabaei and Bagheri, 2013) discovered that the reading texts that the researchers used had the most of the reading texts in the appropriate readability level for Iranian Senior High School Students. Tabatabaei Bagheri claimed that the student's background knowledge and interest were involved because there were students as the participant. The study conducted by Uri Aziz (2018) also showed that all the reading texts used from the English paper were appropriate for Senior High School students. Students with low or intermediate levels of reading skills were still able to do the test, and at the same time, the texts were not too easy but do not bore the students either.

Furthermore, the previous studies was also found using another readability formula, it was Gunning Fox. Also, the other difference was the object of the textbook. The previous studies used textbooks from private companies published textbooks, while in this current study, the researchers used the Ministry of Education and Culture published textbook. Nevertheless, the readability of reading texts in the previous studies was all conducted using the Flesch Reading Ease formula. Therefore, this current study uses the Flesch Reading Ease formula to examine the readability level of reading texts in the English textbook for senior high school eleventh grade. This present study also aims to examine and describe the readability level of reading texts in English textbook

published by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the eleventh grade of Senior High School with a descriptive analysis method. However, no studies using the Ministry of Education and Culture published textbook as the research object in the previous studies. Therefore, this current study uses the Ministry of Education and Culture published textbook to describe the readability level of the reading texts.

According to the result of this study using the Flesch Reading Ease formula, the reading texts, Earthquake and Bullying: Cancer that must be eradicated, had the readability levels for eleventh grade students. Those two reading texts indicated that the words, sentences, and syllables were suitable for students' ability level to understand. Suitable reading materials would enhance the students' language skills, whereas too simple text would tire the students, and challenging material would frustrate them (Zulkifli, 2019). Klare as cited in Dubai stated that the factors influencing readability are word characteristics such as the number of words, concreteness, and nominal verb. And sentence characteristics such as length of sentence, active or passive sentence, and so on. The average sentence length and syllables per word are the essential factors that influence the readability level. Therefore, the factors need to be understood by teachers as they affected students' reading ability. Above all, the readability formula helps predict the readability of texts in a short overview from semantic (vocabulary, multiple syllables, and word length) and syntactic (sentence length). Texts with slightly longer words and longer phrases take longer to absorb, making them more challenging to understand. These factors could influence readability because it involves the reading materials that are used by teachers, which in this case, is the English textbook (Handayani et al., 2021; Peng, 2015; Srisunakrua and Chumworatayee, 2019).

Although it is merely a rough measurement of readability, the results are more objective since they are established based on research and mathematical calculations. The readability formulas' scores lack a conversion score that describes the academic performance of EFL students in Indonesia, and they are not always 100 percent accurate since they cannot effectively measure students' competency. It did, however, become a disadvantage of the readability formula. However, it is helpful for English teachers who want to determine whether their reading text is derived from actual material or a textbook acceptable for their student's level of competency. As a result, one thing to consider is that the application of the

readability formula must be followed by their subjective evaluation, alignment to the learning objectives, and the current Senior High School curriculum.

However, the rest of the reading texts in the English textbook were not suitable for students because they had more challenging words, sentences, and syllables. Because of that reason, textbooks are seen as a less fascinating learning resource than others, such as PowerPoint, Videos, or Audio. There are various drawbacks to reading textbooks. For example, poorly chosen material can be tremendously frustrating for learners since they will make it challenging; determining the validity of resources is difficult; texts are frequently too high. Moreover, concerning the suitable and engaging material, it should be considered by teachers because of the importance of providing reading texts with the readability level as students' level, in line with Petunjuk Teknis Pedoman Buku yang digunakan oleh Satuan Pendidikan dalam Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Nomor8 Tahun 2016 tentang Buku yang Digunakan oleh Satuan Pendidikan (Knight, 2015), "Materi pengetahuan yang diinformasikan melalui Buku Teks Pelajaran dan Buku Non Teks Pelajaran sangat penting. Oleh karena itu penyajian materi harus ditata dengan menarik, mudah dipahami, memiliki tingkat keterbacaan yang tinggi" As textbooks are always an important learning source, it is also defined as technologically organized, structured textual and visual information.

4 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this research has proved that the readability level of the textbooks that the school or government prescribes for teachers and students to use needs to be considered. As a result, the readability effectiveness must be checked by teachers. The results obtained from the Flesch's Reading Ease (FRE) formula utilized in this research showed that only two reading texts or 18.18% of the reading texts that exist in the textbook were appropriate for Senior High School eleventh-grade students.

Following the conclusion earlier, the researchers would like to deliver some suggestions to teachers, the researchers would like to give some suggestions to teachers, which the researchers hope that teachers, particularly English teachers, analyze the readability level of reading texts in textbooks before utilizing them in the classroom. Teachers cannot assume that all reading texts in the textbook they are using are at the appropriate readability level for the student's level. Good textbooks are excellent teaching materials. They are helpful to both teachers and students. Furthermore, the researchers recommend that English teachers who utilize this English textbook, 2017 revised edition, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the eleventh grade of Senior High School as a learning source or media in the classroom use just the two specific reading texts.

Furthermore, for other researchers, the researchers hope that this research will provide a guideline for future researchers who want to do similar studies on the readability of reading texts, particularly in English textbooks. Finding out how reading texts in school textbooks is connected to how students would understand the reading texts they read is essential. The researchers also encourage future researchers to study the readability level of reading texts in Ministry of Education and Culture textbooks or textbooks from several other publishers for the same or other grades or subjects.

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