

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of Study

Reading is an attempt to understand the meaning of printed words or written symbols. Hornby (2011, p. 357) has stated that reading is a way in which something is interpreted or understood. By reading we can know news and information around us. Reading also can bring us in contact with the minds of great authors, with the written account of their experiences.

Reading is an important activity in life which someone can update his/her knowledge. The Almighty Allah has said the importance of reading in the Qur'an Surah Al 'Alaq as follows:

أَقْرَأْ بِأَسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۝ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي  
عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۝ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

The verses indicate that by reading we will know what we do not know yet. By reading we will know and understand what the researchers feel, think, and what they want to share. Besides that, by reading we can improve our communication skill and we also can get pleasure.

English is one of the important subjects in Indonesian national curriculum which is a compulsory subject for students in junior and senior high school. Although English has been taught and used over years in Indonesian schools, whether in formal or informal school, its role is still as “a foreign language” (Lie,

2007, p.1). And the graduations are still unsatisfied. They cannot practice well in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Reading skill is an important tool for academic success. Wei-Ti Kuo, Chao-Shainn Huang and Chao-Lin Liu (2010,p.193) stated that “reading is a key competence for language learners”, and the textbook is the most important material. Since language learners need a textbook as reading materials. Teachers and learners need it for study purposes or simply pleasure (Harmer, 1998.p.68).

Reading English textbook is very important to help you learn English. On reading, you try to comprehend clearly, in the sense of identifying meanings for individual words, sentences, paragraphs and working out the relationships between them. Besides that, you also try drawing on your implicit knowledge of English grammar (Montgomer et.al. 2006,p.7).

Harmer (1998, p.68) in his book *How to Teach English* explained why reading English text is very important in English teaching-learning, such as students' willing to be able read English text, as good model of English writing, provides opportunities to study English more, and it can introduce interesting topics, stimulate discussion, excite imaginative responses, and be fascinating lessons. It implies that textbook is extremely important for the success of that lesson in teaching learning process.

The statement above explains how important the English textbook in teaching-learning. Therefore, text selection is very critical to the effectiveness of reading lessons (Hedgcock & Ferris. 2009, p. 92.). The careful analysis of kind of text is extremely important for the success of lessons. The teachers should

consider a variety issue before they use the textbook in their teaching-learning. Now, the problems are what kind of English textbook is appropriate for students, what topic that is interesting for students and how students' capabilities are.

There are many English textbooks which have been written and printed by authors and publishers. The importance of using textbooks for academic purposes encouraged many publishers and teachers to produce textbooks that will be used in schools. They offer a variety of textbooks which combined from several sources. Therefore, teachers should be able to select and use the appropriate English textbook for their class.

The term of good and appropriate book is well-known as *readability*. Dale and Chall in Oakland & Lane (2004,p.9) stated the definition of readability as follow:

*“Readability is the sum total (including the interactions) of all those elements within a given piece of printed material that affects the success a group of readers have with it. The success is the extent to which they understand it, read it at an optimum speed, and find it interesting”*

It implies that readability is the process of matching in reading lesson. Clearly we can say that readability is the process of matching the reader and the text (Janan and Wray (2013, p.1).

One way to determine the readability or not understand textbook is using a readability formula and assigns it in a score (Siriko,2007,p.147). Kasule (2011, p.65) mentioned some formulas that can be used to measure readability, such as Coleman Liau index, Flesch Kincaid Grade Level, Automated Readability Index (ARI), and SMOG (Simple Measure of Googledygoon), or we also can use Dale-Chall formula, Flesch Reading Ease Formula, and Cloze Test Formula

(Asem,2013,p.9). Moreover, Agnihotri, Khanna, and Johnson in Kasule (2011, p.64) has stated that readability can be determined objectively using formula and cloze test.

Talking about English textbook, PPB (*Pusat Pengembangan Bahasa*) or Language Development Center is a technical organizer unity that is supervised by a chief and respons directly to rector of the IAIN Antasari. This unit uses a new book with title *Your English Partner (Book A)*. Realizing that *Your English Partner (Book A)* is a new English book and just applied on this year, the researcher is interested in finding the the readability level of *Your English Partner (Book A)* book, and whether it is readable for students.

Based on the facts from prior observation the researcher is interested in this problem and wants to conduct a research entitled: **The Readability Level of New English Textbook (*Your English Partner Book A*) at PPB IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.**

## **B. Problem State ments**

Based on the background above, the researcher investigates the following questions:

1. How is the level of readability of new English Textbook (*Your English Partner Book A*) at PPB IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin?
2. Is the new English Textbook (*Your English Partner Book A*) readable for students at PPB IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin?

### **C. Limitation of The Research**

The research is limited to explore the readability level of nine texts that are taken from the textbook entitled *Your English Partner Book A* designed by PPB. The readability is carried out using readability formula and cloze test which is Flesch Reading Ease Formula. This analysis is conducted to students at PPB of IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin academic year 2014/2015

### **D. Objectives of Study**

Based on the problems above, the purpose of the research are:

1. To investigate the level of readability of new English Textbook (*Your English Partner Book A*) for students at PPB IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.
2. To know whether new English Textbook (*Your English Partner Book A*) is readable for students at PPB IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

### **E. Significance of the Research**

The result of this research is expected to contribute to the field as follows:

1. The researcher

The research enriches the researcher's knowledge and experience in this specific research.

2. The Lecturers

The research gives valuable contribution for English lecturers at PPB IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

3. The English Teachers

The research gives valuable contribution and information for all English teachers to select a readable English text book.

4. The Designers

The research's result gives information for designing and evaluating their English book at PPB.

5. Other Researchers

The research can provide information and consideration of readability of reading texts for future researchers.

6. The Literature

The research enriches literary source of the IAIN Antasari library.

## **F. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misinterpretation regarding the title, it is necessary to explain some terms in the title as follow:

1. Readability : How easily written materials can be read and understood (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.442). It depends on many factors such as; the length of sentences, grammatical complexity, number of words etc.
2. Your English Partner : One of new English books at PPB that designed by M. Amin Djamaluddin,et. al.. It starts to be applied in teaching learning English academic year 2014/2015.
3. Textbook : A book on specific subject used as a teaching learning guide, especially in school or college (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.550)
4. PPB : Language Development Center is a technical organizer unite that is supervised by a chief and responsible directly to rector of the IAIN Antasari.