

The Readability Level of Reading Texts in the English Textbook Entitled *When English Rings a Bell for the Seventh Grade Junior High School*

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Abstract : The purpose of this research is to find out the readability level of the revised version of the English textbook titled “When English Rings a Bell in Junior High School”, the aim of doing this research is to make sure the reading texts are appropriate for the student’s level of reading. In this study, students have a problem to comprehend the text well. This study use quantitative approach as the research design in this study. The data was collected using Flesch’s Reading Ease Formula. The results of the research shows that 2 texts selected from 15 texts are appropriate for the Seventh Grade of Junior High School at a “Fairly Easy” Level. There are 6 texts suitable for the fifth grade students, 4 texts suitable for sixth grade students, 3 texts suitable for eight grade students and only two reading texts appropriate for the seventh grade of Junior High School.

Keywords: *Reading Texts, Textbook, Readability, Reading Ease Formula*

1. INTRODUCTION

People communicate by using language, even the mutes have their own language. According to Hampp (2019, p. 1), she says “Language is a tool for expressing oneself, a tool for communication, and a means for controlling society.” “Every society must have a language.” “Through language, human being can think and develop their knowledge.” In other words, human can express their opinions, thoughts and feelings through language. Sudarsono, Samola and Maru (2016, p.1), state that: “In order language to communicate to each other, people include a meaning in their language, although sometimes there are language that have no meaning or meaningless.” While Rombepajung (2019, p.1) “Language is a meaningful and clear symbol system and articulate (produced by speech equipment), which is arbitrary and conventional, and is used by a group of humans as a communication tool to generate emotions and thoughts.” There are many languages in

the world, and English is one of them. English is an international language and is often used in every country (Maru, 2018). Therefore, it has become an important subject of education in Indonesia.

In the process of learning English, students need to master four skills : listening, speaking, reading and writing. Through reading, students will gain more information, knowledge and new vocabularies.

During the reading process, students must understand every word or sentences in order to understand the information in the reading text.

Mogea (2019, p.2) in her journal states that, “reading is a learning process. People can obtain information, ideas and knowledge through reading. Reading involves the interaction between thought and language.” Reading is very important skill to acquire. Through reading, the first we expose

ourselves to new things, new information, new ways to achieve one thing. Second, through reading, we begin to understand a topic that we are interested in. Third, reading also increases to understand the rules of life, last but not least, through reading we are exploring a different perspective to look at one thing we care about. As well as know, reading helps us improve our imagination and creativity. This is why the ultimate goal of teaching English in Indonesia. According to Grabe (2009, p. 15), "Most of the reading passages are excessively long, and the reading material is not interesting." If the texts are excessively long and the topic is uninteresting, students will become easily get bored, especially when reading. So, that's way the teacher need looking for the appropriate English textbook based on the student's reading level.

Many textbooks are created in Indonesia to promote English study and teaching. The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan) publishes textbooks, as well as private publishers. Teacher or School need to select and choose the right book for the students level, the appropriate book can help students in comprehending the texts.

The concept of readability has defined in various way. Dubay (2004) stated "Readability is what makes texts simpler to read." It is a measurement for determining how easy or difficult a text is to read based on a student's reading level.

There are various readability formula that are used to assess the readability of written material, but one of the most well-known is Flesch's Readability Formula. Rudolph Flesch created the Flesch's Readability Formula in 1948, and it is widely regarded as one of the most accurate readability formulas. Flesch's Reading Ease and Flesch's Kincaid are two types of readability formulas. The writer of this research discusses Flesch's Reading Ease Formula.

As a result, the writer tries to concentrate on determining the readability level of the reading texts "When English Rings a Bell of 2017 Revised Edition" for Seventh-grade.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reading Text

Reading is one of the four language skills that is needed to be mastered in learning English. According to Deboer and Dallman (1964), "Reading is much more complex process." Students can read the text easily but they did not understand the meaning of the text. It is very important for students because by reading students can get new information, new knowledge and new ways to solve a problem.

Reading is one of four language skills that must be learned in order to learn English. . According to Deboer and Dallman (1964) "Reading is a far more sophisticated process." Students were able to read the material without difficulty, but they were unable to comprehend its content. It is critical for students to read since it provides them with fresh information, knowledge, and new ways to solve a problems.

In addition, McGinnis and Smith (1982, p.3) defines " Reading as a deliberate process of finding, analyzing, and evaluating ideas in terms of the reader's mental content or total awareness."

Based on the statement before, it means Reading is the process of looking at a series of written word. Reading can helps students get knowledge and by reading the students can understand the meaning of the text.

Text refers to any written material. Text is an any object that can be "read" whether this object is a work of literature or a sign. Anderson and Anderson (2003, p. 1) "When a person talks or writes to express a message, they create something called a message."

From the definition, it can be concluded that text is a readable written material which constructed to convey a message.

Based on the definition mentioned above, reading is the process of looking at a and a text is a readable written form which constructed series of written text is any form or object a readable written which constructed to convey a message.

Reading text is a readable written consists of information and knowledge for comprehend and understand the material. Reading text is about reader and writer happens.

Textbook

According to Ur (1996) defines “Textbook is in principle should be followed systematically as the basis for a language course.” “Textbook is crucial since it establishes the direction, content, and to a degree how the lesson is to be taught” McGrath (2002). In the teaching and learning process, a textbook can also be defined as a book created for the teacher and school.

Based on the definition, a textbook is an instructional tool used by teachers to guide them through the teaching and learning process.

Advantages and Disadvantage of Textbook

According to Richards (2001, p. 2) There are some advantage of textbook :

- a. They provide a program with structure and a syllabus.
- b. They aid in the standardization of instruction.
- c. They maintain a high level of quality.
- d. They offer a wide range of educational resources.
- e. They are productive.
- f. They can provide useful linguistic input and models.
- d. They have the ability to train teachers.
- h. They have a pleasing appearance.

It can be concluded, textbook has a many benefits for teacher and students.

There are some disadvantages of using textbook :

- a. They might use slang language.
- b. They may cause content to be distorted.
- c. They may not accurately reflect the students need.
- d. They have the ability to de-skill educators.

e. They are pricey.

It can be concluded that we need to create the textbook more easily to understand.

Readability

Zakaluk and Samuels (1988) defines “Readability is the ease of reading documents.” As a result, it is simple to read. The readability of a text is the ease with which it may be read and comprehended. Readability was developed to determine whether or not a text is appropriate for a particular student's reading level.

Additionally, Rudell (2008) states “Readability refers to the degree of difficulty in text materials, and it is a topic that teachers, students, textbook authors, and publishers are all concerned about.”

From the previous definitions, it can be stated that readability indicates how easy or difficult a text is to read.

According to Greenfield (2004, p. 21), “Readability formulas are multiple regression equations in which the dependent variable is a text's projected reading difficulty, and the independent or predictor variables are two or more explicitly observable text characteristics.”

Flesch's Reading Ease Formula is one of four formulas that can be used to determine the readability level of a text. As the result, The formula is :

$$\text{Score} = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW})$$

ASL = Average Sentence Length

ASW = Average Number of Syllables per Word

Flesch's Reading Ease Formula was first published by Rudolf Flesch. The formula is described by Flesch (1949, p. 149) as follows:

Table 2.3
Flesch's Reading Ease Score

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

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used quantitative approach with descriptive content analysis. The readability level of the reading text in the textbook was described using descriptive content analysis. The data for this study came from the English textbook "When English Rings a Bell" for Junior High School's seventh grade.

The data for this study was gathered through documentation. The writer chose a textbook for the first. The writer then uses Flesch's Reading Ease Formula to determine the readability level.

One of the oldest and most accurate readability formulas is Flesch's Reading Ease Formula.

The procedures of the calculation can be explained as the follows :

1. The writer calculated the ASL.
2. The writer calculated the ASW.

3. The writer put into the readability formula.

$$\text{Score} = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW})$$

4. The score will appear above 0-100.

5. The result obtained if the text appropriate for the students' level.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Flesch's Reading Ease Formula was employed in this study. This study is based on the English textbook "When English Rings a Bell of 2017 revised version." Siti Wachidah, Asep Gunawan, Diyantari, and Yuli Rulani Khatimah wrote the textbook.

The textbook is the 2017 updated edition textbook from Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture, which is the most recent revision. The textbook is divided into 193 pages and 8 chapters which present the basic competence of the syllabus. There are many session in each chapter but the writer only focused on the reading session of the English textbook.

Findings

The following table shows the results of the readability score of reading:

Table 4.1
Readability score of the reading text based on the Flesch's formula

Text	Score	Level	Grade
Text 1	64.09	standard	8 th -9 th grade
Text 2	79.82	fairly easy	7 th grade
Text 3	98.59	very easy	5 th grade
Text 4	87.57	easy	6 th grade
Text 5	91.60	very easy	5 th grade
Text 6	90.65	very easy	5 th grade
Text 7	93.12	very easy	5 th grade
Text 8	95.48	very easy	5 th grade
Text 9	88.77	easy	6 th grade
Text 10	93.73	very easy	5 th grade
Text 11	88.64	easy	6 th grade
Text 12	83.45	easy	6 th grade
Text 13	61.49	standard	8 th -9 th grade
Text 14	70.37	fairly easy	7 th grade
Text 15	67.02	standard	8 th -9 th grade

Based on the table 4.1, the writer find there are four categories level. Text 1, text 3, and text 15 are the three texts with the average reading ease score of 60-70 on the readability level scale. Text 2 and text 14 are the two texts in the average reading ease score of 70-80. Text 4, text 9, text 11, and text 12 are the four texts in the average reading ease score of 80-90. Text 3, text 5, text 6, text 7, text 8, and text 10 are among the six texts in the average reading ease score of 90-100.

Discussion

Readability refers to how easy it is to read a piece of text. It is important to know whether the text suitable for the student's level of reading and also it makes student can easily understand the text.

To assess the reading text of the English textbook, the writer used Flesch's Reading Ease Formula. Based on the data, we may deduce that just two text are appropriate for seventh grade. The result can describe as follows :

The result of the text 1, text 13 and text 15 shows that the text appropriate for the eight to ninth grade students with the score 64.09, 61.49 and 67.02 in the standard level.

The result of the text 2 and text 14 shows that the text appropriate for the seventh-grade students with the score 79.82 and 70.37 in the fairly easy level.

The result of the text 3, text 5, text 6, text 7, text 8 and text 10 shows that the text appropriate for the fifth grade students with the score 98.59, 91.60, 90.65, 93.12, 95.48 and 93.73 in the very easy level.

The result of the text 4, text 9, text 11 and text 12 shows that the text appropriate for the sixth grade students with the score 87.57, 88.77, 88.64 and 83.45 in the easy level.

Text 1

The writer find out :

- 29 sentences
- 187 words
- 302 syllables.

$$\text{Score} = 206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$$

$$\text{Score} = 206.835 - 65366 - 136206$$

$$\text{Score Readability Level} = 64$$

The final score shows the text 1 is 64, which indicates that the text is appropriate

for 8th-9th grade because it follows the standard style description.

Text 2

The writer find out :

- 19 sentences
- 129 words
- 184 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 68817 - 120132$

Score Readability Level = 79

The final score shows the text 2 is 79, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 7th grade because it ifollows the fairly easy style description.

Text 3

The writer find out :

- 35 sentences
- 261 words
- 311 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 756175 - 100674$

Score Readability Level = 98

The final score shows the text 3 is 98, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 5th grade because it follows the very easy style description.

Text 4

The writer find out :

- 25 sentences
- 187 words
- 248 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 75922 - 111672$

Score Readability Level = 87

The final score shows the text 4 is 87, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 6th grade because it follows the easy style description.

Text 5

The writer find out :

- 65 sentences
- 445 words
- 573 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 69426 - 108288$

Score Readability Level = 91

The final score shows the text 5 is 91, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 5th grade because it follows the very easy style description.

Text 6

The writer find out :

- 26 sentences
- 159 words
- 207 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 620165 - 10998$

Score Readability Level = 90

The final score shows the text 6 is 90, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 5th grade because it follows the very easy style description.

Text 7

The writer find out :

- 59 sentences
- 365 words
- 466 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 62727 - 107442$

Score Readability Level = 93

The final score shows the text 7 is 93, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 5th grade because it follows the very easy style description.

Text 8

The writer find out :

- 31 sentences
- 197 words
- 245 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 644525 - 104904$

Score Readability Level = 95

The final score shows the text 8 is 95, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 5th grade because it follows the very easy style description.

Text 9

The writer find out :

- 64 sentences
- 403 words
- 535 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 638435 - 111672$

Score Readability Level = 88

The final score shows the text 9 is 88, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 6th grade because it follows the easy style description.

Text 10

The writer find out :

- 57 sentences
- 318 words
- 407 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 565355 - 107442$

Score Readability Level = 93

The final score shows the text 10 is 93, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 5th grade because it follows the very easy style description.

Text 11

The writer find out :

- 42 sentences
- 305 words
- 402 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 73689 - 110826$

Score Readability Level = 88

The final score shows the text 11 is 88, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 6th grade because it follows the easy style description.

Text 12

The writer find out :

- 61 sentences
- 450 words
- 620 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 748055 - 115902$

Score Readability Level = 83

The final score shows the text 12 is 83, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 6th grade because it follows the easy style description.

Text 13

The writer find out :

- 18 sentences
- 207 words
- 329 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 116725 - 133668$

Score Readability Level = 61

The final score shows the text 13 is 61, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 8th - 9th grade because it follows the standard style description.

Text 14

The writer find out :

- 26 sentences
- 245 words
- 368 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 95613 - 1269$

Score Readability Level = 70

The final score shows the text 14 is 70, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 7th grade because it follows the fairly easy style description.

Text 15

The writer find out :

- 44 sentences
- 450 words
- 691 syllables

Score = $206.835 - (1015 \times \text{ASL}) - (846 \times \text{ASW})$

Score = $206.835 - 103733 - 129438$

Score Readability Level = 67

The final score shows the text 15 is 67, which indicates that the text is appropriate for 8th - 9th grade because it follows the standard style description.

The reading score indicates that there are two texts in the textbook that are appropriate for Junior High School's seventh grade. The other texts are unsuitable for the students in seventh grade.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the result shows that flesch's reading ease formula is a good formula to know how match the text with the students level of reading.

It shows there were six text suitable for the fifth grade, four text suitable for the sixth grade, three text suitable for the eight grade and there were two text appropriate for the seventh grade students.

It can be said that flesch's reading ease formula is effective to know how easily or difficult the reading text. The final result shows only two text in the textbook appropriate for the seventh grade.

Based on the conclusion above, the write would like to give suggestion for :

1. Intended for the teacher

The author advises teachers, particularly English teachers, to determine the readability level of reading texts in the textbook before using it in the classroom.

When they discover that the reading texts are unreadable, the teacher may seek out alternative reading materials from other sources that are linked to the topic. As a result of this research, the witer hopes that the teachers will recognize the relevance of readability in the reading materials they provide to students. However, if the reading texts they are given are unreadable, the message and information included in the reading texts will not be well received.

2. Dedicated to the Publisher

The researcher advises the Ministry of Education and Culture that before publishing a textbook, they should first measure the readability of the reading texts and convert the content into one that is readable. The recommendation is made in order for the book to be appropriate for the students' grade level.

3. Dedicated to the Researcher

The researcher hopes that more research will be done to continue this investigation of reading text readability using a different formula or even a different book as a resource.

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