

**A STUDY ON THE TEXT READABILITY OF AN ENGLISH
TEXTBOOK ENTITLED BRIGHT: AN ENGLISH COURSE FOR
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GRADE IX PUBLISHED
BY ERLANGGA**

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Abstract: This research was conducted to find and measure the readability level of a textbook *Bright: an English Course for Junior High School Students Grade IX*. There is no sample and population in this research because almost of reading texts in the textbook are used as the research subject. The way to collect data in this study was by determine an English textbook of Junior High School, identify the text of reading texts on the textbook, read the text, and count the number of sentences, words and syllables of each text. The data were analyzed using Flesch Readability Formula. After analyzing the data of reading texts on the textbook by using Flesch Reading Ease, the result showed that from 13 reading texts, they are categorized into five levels; Easy (1 text), Fairly Easy (4 texts), Standard (4 texts), Fairly Difficult (3 texts), and Difficult (1 text). In average, the texts are in Standard Level. It means that according to the theory of Flesch Reading Formula (reading is formula) by Rudolf Flesch, the texts are in the appropriate level for grade IX students.

Keywords: Readability, Textbook

**STUDI TENTANG KETERBACAAN TEKS DARI BUKU TEKS
BAHASA INGGRIS BERJUDUL *BRIGHT: AN ENGLISH COURSE
FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GRADE IX*
DITERBITKAN OLEH ERLANGGA**

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mencari dan mengukur tingkat keterbacaan buku teks *Bright: an English Course for Junior High School Students Grade IX* yang diterbitkan oleh Erlangga. Tidak ada sampel dan populasi dalam penelitian ini karena hampir semua teks bacaan dalam buku tersebut digunakan sebagai subjek penelitian. Cara mengumpulkan data dalam penelitian ini adalah dengan menentukan buku teks Bahasa Inggris SMP, mengidentifikasi teks teks bacaan pada buku teks, membaca teks, dan menghitung jumlah kalimat, kata, serta suku kata dari setiap teks. Data dianalisis menggunakan Flesch Readability Formula. Setelah menganalisis data teks bacaan pada buku teks dengan menggunakan Flesch Reading Ease, hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa dari 13 teks bacaan, semua teks dikategorikan ke dalam lima level; Mudah (1 teks), Cukup Mudah (4 teks), Standar (4 teks), Cukup Sulit (3 teks), dan Sulit (1 teks). Rata-rata, teks-teks berada di Tingkat Standar. Ini berarti bahwa menurut teori Flesch Reading Formula oleh Rudolf Flesch, teks-teks tersebut berada pada level yang sesuai untuk siswa kelas IX tingkat SMP.

Kata Kunci: Keterbacaan, buku teks

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the teaching of English in Junior High School has become popular. We can find many kinds of media in teaching and learning process, let say a textbook. Textbook is one of the media which is used in almost every grade levels of students in the junior high school. Textbook is a crucial teaching and learning material composed of text and/or images that is used in many schools for facilitating sequences of learning activities (National Educational Department, 2008). Rombe Panjung (1988) clarifies that a good textbook must meet several requirements. First, it must be realistic which means that it can be used by both teachers and students and easily found in the market. Second, it must relevant to the age or level of the students and also the objectives that should be achieved. Third, it must be interesting to the students. And last, it must be in line with the approach used. So it is not easy to choose textbook which are suitable for the students.

In line with that, Orstein (1990) gave some characteristics of a good textbook. It should be well organized, coherent, unified, relatively up-to-date, accurate, and relatively unbiased. Scholars, educators, and minority groups have scrutinized it. Its reading level and knowledge base match the developmental of their intended audience. Teacher's manuals, test items, accompany it, study guides, and activity guides.

Based on Nuttal (2000), there are three criteria of a good reading text for students, they are: (1) suitability of content, it means that the materials for the students are interesting, enjoyable, challenging, and appropriate for their goal in learning English, (2) exploitability, is a text that facilitates the achievement of certain language and content goals which is exploitable for instructional tasks and techniques; and it's interpretable with other skills (listening, speaking, and writing), (3) readability, the text with lexical and structural difficulty that will challenge the students and also should be at the appropriate level of difficulty for students

THE CONCEPT OF READABILITY

Readability is one of the most important aspects that should be considered in selecting a good passage for students (Hill Walter, 1979: 190). Since readability can determine the achievement of the goal in teaching reading, some experts or researchers define the term readability of a text differently. Actually, readability is not only determined by the length of the passages or the length of the words, but it is also determined by how interestingly and attractively the text is written.

Readability refers to the term that's used in three ways, they are: to indicate eligibility either handwriting or typography, ease of reading due to interest value of writing, ease of understanding or comprehension owing to the style of writing. Related to this, Sutaria (1970) discusses readability in the boarder sense by stating that readability is defined as the sum total of all elements in a piece of material that determines to what extent a group of reader can read easily and at a measurable speed, understanding and enjoy it. Applied to school books, it can be thought of as the presence of characteristic conducive to successful reading by the pupils for whom they are intended.

Shortly, readability means that as far as the readers can read the text in some books, it means that the text in those books is readability. In other words, It's means how much of the idea and the language presented in an extended reading text are comprehend by reader, that determines his or her success in reading.

Today, when the term readability is used, it is usually interpreted as comprehensibility. Sutaria (1970), however, stresses that actually these two terms are not the same. According to her, readability is the quality that makes a book or a passage easy to read and enjoy, whereas comprehensibility is the quality that makes ideas understandable to a particular audience, so comprehensibility is an element of readability. Comprehensibility is related to the factor of readers, such as personality, attitudes, interest, motivation, habits, abilities, and experiential backgrounds, while readability is related to the factors on the text.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was a descriptive research that aimed to find out the text readability of the students in reading the text book entitled *Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students Grade IX* published by Erlangga. This research was conducted by determining the textbook, identifying the text of reading texts on textbook, reading the text and counting the number of sentences, words, and syllables in each text. There are no any treatment and population in this research, because all of the reading texts in the textbook are used as the research subject. To collect the data, the study used one kind of instrument, i.e. Flesch readability formula as measurement devices. The writer employed the Flesch readability formula as the way to measurement, because this formula is mostly used, simple, and has easy step or direction to analyze. Then, to analyze the data, the writer conducted four steps as follows:

1. Analyzing and counting the sentences, words and syllables in each text of the reading text
2. Measuring the readability of each text based on the Flesch readability formula (Reading Ease formula). Flesch Reading Ease Formula is considered as one of the oldest and most accurate readability formulas. It is a simple approach to assess the grade-level of the reader. It's also one of the few accurate measures around that we can rely on without too much scrutiny.
3. Describing and giving further explanation related to the readability
4. Determining the grades of each chapter of reading texts by comparing the results of the scores to the other criteria.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This research was conducted by using Flesch Reading Ease Formula to find out the readability level of the reading texts on the textbook *Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students Grade IX*. The readability score is gotten by counting the syllables, words, and sentences of a text by calculating it in countwordsworth.com. The calculation result of the sentences, words, and syllables of each text is presented in table 4.1.

Table 1
The Description of Sentence, word and Syllable Calculations of Reading Texts.

Text/page number	Kind of Text	Number of Sentences	Number of Words	Number of Syllables
Text 1/91	Narrative	22	267	405
Text 2/98	Narrative	43	541	754
Text 3/133	Explanation	13	150	237
Text 4/137	Report	10	141	237
Text 5/152	Report	14	195	317
Text 6/165	Descriptive	19	268	397
Text 7/166	Descriptive	17	216	333
Text 8/169	Narrative	33	364	505
Text 9/170	Narrative	29	285	375
Text 10/171	Description	32	421	674
Text 11/173	Narrative	32	320	452
Text 12/175	Descriptive	23	308	485
Text 13/178	Narrative	15	149	201

According to Willim H. Dubay (2004), the readability of text by using the Flesch Reading Ease Formula can be analyzed by this formula:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Score (RE)} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ \text{RE} &= \text{Readability Ease} \\ \text{ASL} &= \text{Average Sentence Length (number of words divided by the number of sentence)} \\ \text{ASW} &= \text{Average Number of Syllables per Word (the number of syllable divided by the number of words)} \end{aligned}$$

For the first, it needs to count the number of ASL (Average Sentence Length) or the number of words per sentence and ASW (Average Number of Syllables per Word) or the number of syllable divided by the number of words.

1. Text 1

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ASL} &= \text{Number of words : Number of sentences} \\ &= 267 : 22 = 12.1 \\ \text{ASW} &= \text{Number of syllables : Number of words} \\ &= 405 : 267 = 1.5 \end{aligned}$$

2. Text 2

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ASL} &= \text{Number of words : Number of sentences} \\ &= 541 : 43 = 12.6 \\ \text{ASW} &= \text{Number of syllables : Number of words} \\ &= 754 : 541 = 1.4 \end{aligned}$$

3. Text 3
ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
= $150 : 13 = 11.5$
ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
= $237 : 150 = 1.6$
4. Text 4
ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
= $141 : 10 = 14$
ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
= $237 : 141 = 1.7$
5. Text 5
ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
= $195 : 14 = 14$
ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
= $317 : 195 = 1.6$
6. Text 6
ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
= $268 : 19 = 14$
ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
= $397 : 268 = 1.5$
7. Text 7
ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
= $216 : 17 = 12.7$
ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
= $333 : 216 = 1.5$
8. Text 8
ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
= $364 : 33 = 11$
ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
= $505 : 364 = 1.4$
9. Text 9
ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
= $285 : 29 = 9.8$
ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
= $375 : 285 = 1.3$
10. Text 10
ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
= $421 : 32 = 13$
ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
= $647 : 421 = 1.6$

11. Text 11

ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
 = 320 : 32 = 10

ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
 = 452 : 320 = 1.4

12. Text 12

ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
 = 308 : 23 = 13.4

ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
 = 485 : 308 = 1.6

13. Text 13

ASL = Number of words : Number of sentences
 = 149 : 15 = 9.9

ASW = Number of syllables : Number of words
 = 201 : 149 = 1.4

Table 2
The Result of ASL and ASW Calculation

Text/page	Average Sentence Length	Average Syllable per Word
Text 1/91	12.1	1.5
Text 2/98	12.6	1.4
Text 3/133	11.5	1.6
Text 4/137	14	1.7
Text 5/152	14	1.6
Text 6/165	14	1.5
Text 7/166	12.7	1.5
Text 8/169	11	1.4
Text 9/170	9.8	1.3
Text 10/171	13	1.6
Text 11/173	10	1.4
Text 12/175	13.4	1.6
Text 13/178	9.9	1.4

After counting the number of ASL and ASW, the next step is finding the readability score by using Flesch Reading Ease Formula

Text 1

Score = $206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW})$
 = $206.835 - (1.015 \times 12.1) - (84.6 \times 1.5)$
 = $206.835 - 12.282 - 126.9$
 = $67.653 = 67$

Text 2

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 12.6) - (84.6 \times 1.4) \\ &= 206.835 - 12.789 - 118.44 \\ &= 75.606 = 76\end{aligned}$$

Text 3

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 11.5) - (84.6 \times 1.6) \\ &= 206.835 - 11.673 - 135.36 \\ &= 61.802 = 62\end{aligned}$$

Text 4

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 14) - (84.6 \times 1.7) \\ &= 206.835 - 14.21 - 143.82 \\ &= 48.805 = 49\end{aligned}$$

Text 5

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 14) - (84.6 \times 1.6) \\ &= 206.835 - 14.21 - 135.36 \\ &= 57.265 = 57.3\end{aligned}$$

Text 6

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 14) - (84.6 \times 1.5) \\ &= 206.835 - 14.21 - 126.9 \\ &= 65.725 = 66\end{aligned}$$

Text 7

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 12.7) - (84.6 \times 1.5) \\ &= 206.835 - 12.890 - 126.9 \\ &= 67.044 = 67\end{aligned}$$

Text 8

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 11) - (84.6 \times 1.4) \\ &= 206.835 - 11.165 - 118.44 \\ &= 77.23 = 77\end{aligned}$$

Text 9

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 9.8) - (84.6 \times 1.3) \\ &= 206.835 - 9.947 - 109.98 \\ &= 86.908 = 87\end{aligned}$$

Text 10

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 13) - (84.6 \times 1.6) \\ &= 206.835 - 13.195 - 135.36 \\ &= 58.28 = 58\end{aligned}$$

Text 11

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 10) - (84.6 \times 1.4) \\ &= 206.835 - 10.15 - 118.44 \\ &= 78.245 = 78\end{aligned}$$

Text 12

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 13.4) - (84.6 \times 1.6) \\ &= 206.835 - 13.601 - 135.36 \\ &= 57.874 = 58\end{aligned}$$

Text 13

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Score} &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \\ &= 206.835 - (1.015 \times 9.9) - (84.6 \times 1.4) \\ &= 206.835 - 10.048 - 118.44 \\ &= 78.437 = 78\end{aligned}$$

The result summarizing of the readability level of reading texts in the English textbook entitled *Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students Grade IX* published by Erlangga is as in the following table:

Table 3
The Readability Score of the Reading Texts Based on the Reading Ease Scale of the Flesch Formula

Text/page	Readability Score	Difficult Level	Reading Grade
Text 1/91	67	Standard	8 th and 9 th grade
Text 2/98	76	Fairly Easy	7 th grade
Text 3/133	62	Standard	8 th and 9 th grade
Text 4/137	49	Difficult	13 th to 16 th (college)
Text 5/152	57.3	Fairly Difficult	10 th to 12 th grade
Text 6/165	66	Standard	8 th and 9 th grade
Text 7/166	67	Standard	8 th and 9 th grade
Text 8/169	77	Fairly Easy	7 th grade
Text 9/170	87	Easy	6 th grade
Text 10/171	58	Fairly difficult	10 th to 12 th grade
Text 11/173	78	Fairly Easy	7 th grade
Text 12/175	58	Fairly Difficult	10 th to 12 th grade
Text 13/178	78	Fairly Easy	7 th grade
Average Score	67,7	Standard	8 th and 9 th grade

DISCUSSION

In this section, the writer discusses the result of analyzing the reading texts in the English textbook. The analyzing is focused on the readability level of the reading texts using Flesch readability formula which has been stated in the previous chapter.

Before counting the readability level of the 13 reading texts on textbook *Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students Grade IX*, the writer conducted some steps. In the first step, the writer counted the number of sentences, words and syllables. Then the writer found the average sentence length by counting the number of words divided by the number of sentences, and the average number of syllables per word by counting the number of syllables divided by the number of words. The last step was measure the result of the counting using Flesch readability formula. And the result of the analyzing of reading texts is as follows:

1. Easy, there is 1 reading text in this level. The readability score is between 80 – 90.
2. Fairly easy, there are 4 reading texts in this level. The readability score are between 70 – 80.
3. Standard, there are 4 reading texts in this level. The readability score between 60 – 70.
4. Fairly difficult, there are 3 reading texts in this level. The readability score between 50 – 60.
5. Difficult, there is 1 reading texts in this level. The readability score between 30 - 50.

The result of readability level of text 1 is 67, means that it is in the reading ease score of 60 – 70, the description of style is standard and the estimated reading grade is 8th and 9th grade or it is suitable for second and third grade of Junior High School. The text number 2 has result 76, means that it is in the average reading ease score of 70 - 80 or has fairly easy of the description of style, the estimated reading grade is 7th grade and it is ought to first grade of Junior High School. Text 3 has result 62 or in the reading ease score of 60 - 70, it means that the description of style is same as the text 1 (standard), the estimated reading grade is 8th and 9th grade and it is ought to second and third grade of Junior High School. Text 4 is 49, it means that text 4 is in the reading ease score of around 30 - 50, the description of style is difficult and the estimated reading grade is 13th to 16th (college) or it is suitable for college. Then text number 5 has the result 57.3 or in the reading ease score of 50 – 60, the estimated reading grade is 10th – 12th grade, the description of style is fairly difficult and it is suitable for first to third grade of Senior High School. The result of readability level of text 6 is 66 and the average reading ease score is in 60 – 70, the description of style is standard and it is suitable for second and third grade of Junior High School because the estimated reading grade is 8th and 9th grade. The text 7 has result 67 or in the average reading ease score of 60 – 70, the description of style is standard and it is suitable for second and third grade of Junior High School because the estimated reading grade is 8th and 9th grade. Text 8 is 77, it means that the text 8 is in the reading ease score of around 70 – 80, the description of style is fairly easy and the estimated reading grade is 7th grade and suitable for the first grade of Junior High School. The text number 9 has result 87, means that it is in the average reading ease score of 80 – 90 or has easy of the

description of style, the estimated reading grade is 6th grade and it is too easy and not appropriate for Junior High School. The result of readability level of text **10** is 58 and the average reading ease score is in 50 – 60, the description of style is fairly difficult and it is suitable for Senior High School. The text number **11** has the result 78 with the average score around 70 – 80, the description of style is fairly easy and it is suitable for the first grade of Junior High School. The text number **12** with average of ease score around 50 - 60 is in fairly difficult with the score 58 and suitable for Senior High School. The last is the text 13 with ease score 78, average ease score around 70 – 80 and suitable for first grade of Junior High School.

It can be concluded that if the readability score of a text is higher than other text, it will be easier to be understood by the students. However, if the readability score of a text is lower than other texts, it will make the text difficult to be understood. Furthermore, the writer continues to percentage the data as in table

Table 4 Reading Ease Scale of The Flesch Formula

No	Level	Number of the texts	Percentage
1	Easy	1	8 %
2	Fairly Easy	4	30,5 %
3	Standard	4	30,5 %
4	Fairly Difficult	3	23 %
5	Difficult	1	8 %
Total		13	100 %

In average, the text in the textbook *Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students Grade IX* especially in the Reading section are in Standard level (67,7). It can be concluded that the texts are suitable for grade IX or the third grade of Junior High School level based on the theory of Flesch Reading Ease by Rudolf Flesch. However, the score of grade IX students of SMPIT Madani and others school in reading comprehension is affected also by other factors, beside the textbook. Let's say the teaching method, effort of the students, and the reading practices.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The research was conducted using Flesch Readability Formula. This study is useful for finding the level of readability text in the textbook. Start from determining the book, identify the text, read the text, and count the number of the sentences, words and syllables. After that, the data were analyzed to measure the readability of each text.

After analyzing the data of reading texts on the textbook (*Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students Grade IX*) by using Flesch Reading Ease, it can be concluded that from 13 reading texts, they are categorized into five levels; Easy (1 text), Fairly Easy (4 texts), Standard (4 texts), Fairly Difficult (3 texts), and Difficult (1 text). In average, the texts are in Standard Level. It means that according to the theory

of Flesch Reading Formula (reading ease formula) by Rudolf Flesch, the texts are in the appropriate level for grade IX students.

Suggestion

Finally, the writer hopes that this study will be useful for the readers. Therefore, the writer would like to suggest the following parties to consider the research finding in improving teaching and learning process.

1. The English teachers
 - a. The readability level in average of the texts in the textbook entitled *Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students Grade IX* was in Standard level. However, the teachers have to choose the suitable book and facilitate the students with the appropriate level in comprehending the texts, in terms of the students' ability is different each other.
 - b. An English teacher also must know that readability is not the only factor that influence students' comprehension in reading the text, but also it is very important to improve other factors such as teaching method, students' vocabulary and reading practice.
2. The students
 - a. The students should be diligent in reading English text in order to practice their reading ability
 - b. The students should enrich their vocabulary
 - c. The students should pay attention carefully to the teacher when he/she explain about reading material
3. The principal

The principal should not take for granted every textbook that is offered by publishers. The principal has to observe about the quality of the textbook before it is used in the teaching and learning process.
4. The author and publisher

It is very important for the author and publisher to consider the suitability of the texts that will be learnt by students in certain level before published.
5. The other researcher
 - a. The writer hopes to other researcher to examine other factors that influence the text such as interest, exploitability, topic, political appropriateness, cultural suitability and appearance.
 - b. Other researchers also can be find out the readability level of English texts by using other techniques such as Cloze Procedure test, SMOG formula and etc.

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