



## The Readability Level of Reading Texts in "Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress" English Textbook on Grade 10 at SMAN 1 Medan

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<b>Article history:</b> Received Accepted	<p>This study aimed to determine the readability level of reading texts in the "Bahasa Inggris" textbook, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the tenth grade of Senior High School, 2020 first edition. It was categorized as descriptive qualitative research. Data were collected using document analysis, with the Flesch Reading Ease formula and Flesch Reading Ease Score employed as instruments to measure the readability level of the texts. The Flesch Reading Ease formula results indicated that one text was at the Very Easy level, one at the Easy level, one at the Fairly Easy level, three at the Standard level, three at the Fairly Difficult level, and six at the Difficult level. This study found that out of fifteen reading texts in the "Bahasa Inggris: Work In Progress" textbook, only three texts were readable for tenth-grade students, falling into the Fairly Difficult level with scores ranging from fifty-one to sixty.</p> <p>Keywords: Reading Text, Readability, Textbook, Flesch Reading Ease</p>
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## INTRODUCTION

Based on the preliminary observation at SMAN 1 MEDAN from October to December 2023 in grade 10, researcher found that some students encountered difficulties in understanding the text content in the textbooks. According to the observation, the researcher concluded that some students encountered difficulties in comprehending the reading material from textbooks leading to both students and teachers having a hard time in the learning process. Most of the students said they encountered many difficult words that were never encountered in everyday life, and the sentences used were very long so that it took them a lot of time to understand the meaning conveyed. Students who should have had an easier time understanding and summarizing the material instead became confused, gave up easily, and became passive in learning activities, while teachers who should have been aided in the material delivery process instead continued to be information providers and more frequently repeated information from related materials, disrupting the effectiveness of learning time. This issue should receive significant attention because according to Detikedu data (2023), SMAN 1 MEDAN ranks 10th among the Best High Schools in North Sumatra Based on UTBK Scores. If the 10th best high school in the province still has issues with readability in textbooks, it can be assumed that other high schools below this ranking have similar problems.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia's Regulation Number 24 of 2016 on Core Competencies and Basic Competencies for the 2013 Curriculum in Elementary and High School Education, appendices 37 (Junior High School) and 47 (Senior High School), English is taught through reading texts. Consequently, reading texts are fundamental to learning English. Given the significant emphasis on reading, it is essential to provide reading materials that are appropriate for students' reading levels. This means that the difficulty of the texts should align with the students' reading abilities.

This study intends to analyze the readability level of the 2022 edition of the English language textbook for grade X, titled "Work in Progress," published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. The researcher selected this textbook because it is the most recent edition released by the government and is widely used in schools. The investigation was conducted with grade X students at SMA Negeri 1 Medan, employing Flesch's Reading Ease (FRE) formula.

Given that students at this level are developing more complex reading skills, it is crucial to evaluate how well their textbooks balance challenge and readability. The hope is that the findings of this research contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of English language learning at the secondary school level.

## **METHOD**

This research adopted a descriptive qualitative design to analyze the readability level in the English language textbook edition 1 for grade X in 2022 titled "Work in Progress," owned by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, by utilizing the Flesch Reading Ease formula. Descriptive qualitative research, as outlined by Nazir (2013) in "Metode Penelitian," involved studying the status of human groups, conditions, systems of thought, or events in the present. Its purpose was to create a systematic description, portrayal, or depiction of phenomena and their relationships.

The descriptive qualitative research method presented data results as they were, without manipulation or other treatment processes. In this study, data were collected and analyzed using the Flesch Reading Ease formula to describe the readability of the reading text in the English language textbook. This formula measured readability based on average sentence length and syllables per word. The results were described predominantly in words, providing insights into the readability level of English learning materials for students.

This research was conducted through library research, as described by Leedy and Ormrod (2019), which involved a systematic process of gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing information from library resources to address a specific research question or topic. The researcher analyzed all reading texts in the English textbook used by the tenth-grade students of SMAN 1 Medan, located in Jl. Teuku Cik Ditiro No.1, Madras Hulu, Kec. Medan Polonia, Kota Medan, North Sumatra. The subject of this research was the reading texts in the English language textbook edition 1 for grade X in 2022 titled "Work in Progress," owned by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia.

In collecting the data, Flesch Reading Ease Formula is analyzed as follows:

1. Count the syllables, words, and sentences of the text
2. Find the average sentence length (ASL) and average number of syllable per word (ASW)

3. Find the readability score by using formula:  $\text{Score} = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW})$
4. Determine the difficult level and reading grade by reading ease scale of Flesch formula as stated on table follow:

Score	Estimated Reading Grade	Readability level
91-100	5th grade	Very easy to read. Easily understood by an average 11-year-old student
81-90	6th grade	Easy to read conversational english for consumers.
71-80	7th grade	Fairly easy to read.
61-70	8th & 9th grade	Standard
51-60	10th to 12th grade	Fairly difficult to read.
31-50	College	Difficult to read.
0-30	College graduate	Very difficult to read. best understood by university graduates.

**Table 2.1. Reading Ease Scale of Flesch Formula**

## FINDINGS

Based on the research findings, the Flesch Reading Ease Formula categorized the 15 reading texts in the textbook "Bahasa Inggris Work In Progress" into six levels. The first category was the very easy level, with 1 reading text in this category, having readability scores of 91-100, suitable for fifth-grade elementary school students. The second category was the easy level, with 1 reading text in this category, having readability scores of 81-90, suitable for sixth-grade elementary school students. The third category was the fairly easy level, with 1 reading text in this category, having readability scores of 71-80, suitable for seventh-grade junior high school students. The fourth category was the standard level, with 3 reading texts in this category, having readability scores of 60-70, suitable for eighth to ninth-grade junior high school students. The fifth category was the fairly difficult level, with 3 reading texts in this category, having

readability scores of 51-60, suitable for tenth to twelfth-grade senior high school students. The last category was the difficult level, with 6 reading texts in this category, having readability scores of 31-50, suitable for thirteenth to sixteenth-grade college students.

	<b>ASL</b>	<b>ASW</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Estimated Reading Grade</b>
<b>Text 1</b>	<b>15,8</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>55,438</b>	<b>Fairly Difficult</b>	<b>10th - 12th grade</b>
Text 2	29	1,6	42,1	Difficult	College
Text 3	21,9	1,4	66,235	Standard	8th – 9th grade
Text 4	20,6	1,6	50,635	Difficult	College
Text 5	24,6	1,6	46,6	Difficult	College
Text 6	19	1,4	69,235	Standard	8th – 9th grade
Text 7	14,5	1,9	31,4	Difficult	College
Text 8	16	1,4	72,2	Fairly Easy	7th grade
Text 9	25,9	1,6	45,6	Difficult	College
<b>Text 10</b>	<b>16,3</b>	<b>1,5</b>	<b>60,43</b>	<b>Fairly Difficult</b>	<b>10th - 12th grade</b>
Text 11	7	1,5	69,8	Standard	8th – 9th grade
Text 12	14,5	1,9	31,435	Difficult	College
Text 13	13,7	1,2	88,03	Easy	6th grade
Text 14	11	1,2	94,15	Very Easy	5th grade
<b>Text 15</b>	<b>18,8</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>Fairly Difficult</b>	<b>10th - 12th grade</b>

**Table 3.1. The Result of Readability Score of the Reading Text**

The analysis based on the Reading Ease formula shows that only 3 out of the 15 texts are readable for tenth-grade students. This indicates that the majority of the texts are too difficult for these students. This poses a challenge as overly difficult reading materials can cause stress and frustration among students, this is the same as one of the previous studies, Amani (2018) also found more reading texts that were difficult to read

than reading texts that were suitable for the intended students. Therefore, the theory proposed by Pearson (2012) which states that If the readability of the book is more difficult than the student's reading ability, students will have difficulty understanding the material, which can lead to frustration and reduced interest in learning indeed happened.

This difficulty can also result in a decline in academic performance because students cannot master the material being taught. Additionally, students' motivation to learn may decrease, and teachers may need to provide extra assistance such as additional explanations or easier reading materials. As a result, students' literacy development may be hindered, and the gap in abilities between students with lower reading skills and those who are more capable may widen. While in comparison Zahra (2018), Rijal (2015), and Afrizal (2019) found that more texts had a readability level that was easier than the intended level. According to Larson (1991) overly easy materials can lead to boredom. If the readability level of textbooks is too low, the impact can be significant. Students feel unchallenged, which can lead to boredom and a lack of engagement in the learning process.

Textbooks that are too easy also do not provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order critical and analytical thinking skills. As a result, they are not prepared to face more difficult material at the next level. Additionally, students who do not feel challenged lose interest in learning because they find the material too simple and irrelevant. Teachers also struggle to provide individualized instruction if all students are using textbooks that are too easy, making it difficult to meet diverse learning needs.

## CONCLUSION

From analyzing the data based the reading texts in the "Bahasa Inggris: Work In Progress" textbook using the Flesch Reading Ease Formula, the researcher discovered that the majority of these texts are not readable for tenth-grade students in senior high school. Specifically, the findings revealed that out of the fifteen reading texts, one was categorized as Very Easy, one as Easy, one as Fairly Easy, three as Standard, three as Fairly Difficult, and six as Difficult. This indicates that only three out of the fifteen texts are suitable for tenth-grade students, falling under the Fairly Difficult level of readability.

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