

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, identification of the problem, scope of the study, objectives of the study, statements of the problem and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Realizing the importance of textbook in the classroom, textbook analysis is a crucial thing to do in order to examine the quality of certain textbooks. In reference to the above explanation, this study is a textbook analysis examining the cognitive levels of textbook for the eighth grade students of Junior High School. The textbook analyzed in this study is English textbook for eighth grade of Junior High School entitled *Scaffolding*. This book is published by Departemen Pendidikan Nasional (National Education Department) in 2008. This book is also suggested by BSNP (*Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan*) to be used in teaching learning process. Therefore, this study is expected to measure the cognitive levels of certain textbook which have been used for a period of time in Indonesia. The analysis is done by using the cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

English textbook generally consists of the four skills which are needed to be mastered by the students in learning English. The four skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Those skills are important to build and develop students' ability in English. In terms of reading skill, reading materials are usually contains reading texts which are then followed with some tasks related to the texts. These tasks may be varied from lower-order-thinking (remembering, understanding, applying) to higher-order-thinking (analyzing, evaluating, creating) of cognitive levels by revised version of Bloom's taxonomy (Edward & Bowman, 1996).

Tasks provided in textbook are one of the crucial elements in developing students' thinking particularly the higher-order thinking level. Therefore, it will be good if a textbook contain tasks which promote and encourage higher-order thinking level instead of only transferring knowledge and information. Penny (2009) highlights that students may consolidate and master language skills and knowledge and arguably the most important of all the stages of learning. Thus, tasks are also essential tool that can be used to examine students' understanding of the subject matter and measure what levels of thinking students are implementing during the learning practice. Accordingly, this study will analyze the cognitive levels of Scaffolding: An English textbook for Junior High School Grade VIII in order to identify to what extent it contributes in developing students' thinking skill.

Linse (2006) states that the activity of reading involves Higher-order thinking skills which is more complex than just decoding specific words.

Teaching the students to interpret, analyze and synthesize meaning of what they have read is crucial part of the reading process. Moreover, training students to have use Higher-order thinking skill is important for students' improvement in the reading skill since students will need to solve the reading tasks at all thinking levels. The analysis of Higher-order thinking skill in the reading tasks is considered important because it may help students in developing their critical thinking skill. This is to be in line with Woodward and Elliot as cited in Reed and Bergemann (1998) who argues that, by emphasizing more on problem solving and Higher-order cognitive process, a textbook can be improved. On that ground, this study tries to analyze the tasks appeared in textbooks in order to identify how these particular textbooks develop the students' level of thinking.

In order to determine the levels of tasks in a textbook, a variety of classification systems have been used. These classification systems or categories have sorted the questions into two major levels: lower-level tasks and higher-level tasks. Lower level tasks which are related with the lower-order thinking level emphasize the recall of specific and universal methods, processes, structures, and settings. Meanwhile, the higher-level tasks which related with the higher-order thinking level are more advanced and require knowledge of the subject matter. Furthermore, the two major levels of task or thinking demand students to engage on higher thinking processes.

Previous studies shows that the cognitive domain of reading tasks is not balance in a number of textbooks since the reading tasks contained more lower-

order thinking level than higher-order thinking level. One of the study (Freaahat & Smadi, 2015) revealed that about 52% of the questions, and only 3.7% and 6% of the questions on the cognitive levels of *Knowledge* and *Application*. The results showed that around 40% of the questions in the textbook emphasized on higher-order thinking skills. Thus, the textbook analyzed is focusing more on the Lower-order thinking skill.

Ayaturochim (2014) argued that 98% of the reading tasks implement remembering level and only 2% of the reading task implement understanding level. Reading tasks in English Focus Textbook only had 2 components of cognitive domain of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The other levels of cognitive domain are not implemented in reading tasks of "English in Focus" textbook. Hence, the dominant cognitive domain of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy is remembering. For this reason, reading tasks in English Focus Textbook for Junior High School published by The National Education Department is considered insufficient to develop students' critical thinking as proposed by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001).

The higher-order thinking (HOT) is crucial for students to construct their critical thinking. Students' critical thinking will not be constructed properly if the tasks did not implement equally both lower-order thinking and higher-order thinking. Critical thinking may be beneficial for students since it might help them to solve problems easier and systematically.

Bloom in 1956 developed a taxonomy to assist in categorizing questions and responses. There are six levels or categories in this taxonomy; knowledge (recalling specifications), comprehension (describing in one's own words), application (applying information in order to produce results), analysis (splitting something to show how it is put up together), synthesis (generating a unique product), and evaluation (making value decisions about a particular thing). The first three levels are categorized into lower-order thinking skills. Meanwhile, the last three levels are categorized into higher-order thinking skills (Hopper, 2009). Later in 1974, Barrett and Smith adapted Bloom's taxonomy in order to produce a classification of reading objectives and suggested educational goals for reading instruction; literal meaning, inference, evaluation, and appreciation.

In 1978, Pearson and Johnson generated a three-level taxonomy; textually explicit, textually implicit, and script implicit. Several studies have applied these taxonomies to the examination of comprehension questions. Another taxonomy is generated by Davies and Widdowson (cited in Williams and Moran, 1989) classified questions into direct reference questions, inferences, and supposition and evaluation questions. Furthermore, Barrett (cited in Williams and Moran, 1989) created a five-level taxonomy which comprises of internal comprehension, recognition of the ideas in the text, inferential ability, evaluation, and appreciation.

Parera (1983) in (2014) Ayaturrochim stated that Bloom's Taxonomy may help English teachers to determine or choose learning materials by

analyzing the tasks given. Original Bloom's taxonomy only contains one dimension, while there are two dimensions in the new revision of the taxonomy. The two dimensions are cognitive domain and knowledge domain. Correlation between the two dimensions is called the Table of Taxonomy (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001).

The cognitive process domain represents a continuum of increasing cognitive complexity—from remember to create. Meaning that it represent levels of cognitive from the lowest to the highest. Meanwhile, the knowledge dimension represents a range from concrete (factual) to abstract (metacognitive). In this dimension, instead of categorizing from the lowest to the highest, it categorize the types of the knowledge itself. Representation of the knowledge dimension as a level of knowledge can be a bit misleading. For example, all procedural knowledge may not be more abstract than all conceptual knowledge (Anderson & Krathwol, 2001). The objectives of this study is to obtain a profile of the reading tasks in terms of levels of Cognitive Process, therefore, the dimension adapted in conducting this study is the cognitive process domain only.

Previous study in the area of influence of lower- and higher-level questions on students' achievement have achieved mixed results. Carlsen (1991) and Gall and Rhody (1987) have categorized several reasons behind the statement earlier. Among the reasons was that researchers who conducted the mentioned previous study used different question classification systems or taxonomies. Lower-cognitive questions are used in order to review basic facts,

information, and skills. Meanwhile, higher-level questions encourage critical thinking ability and skills.

In reference to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) in Sheldon (1988), textbook analysis is basically a straightforward, analytical ‘matching process: matching needs to available solution’. Textbook analysis is a process of choosing what textbook to use in a particular course considering the need and value of teaching. Cunningsworth (1995) mentioned the purpose of textbook analysis is to support the teacher development and help teachers in order to gain good and useful insights into the nature of material. To be short, the aim of textbook analysis is to decide the best material that may act as framework and also resource of EFL teaching.

There are three reasons why the researcher choose *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Students Grade VIII* textbook as the object of the study. The major reason is that the book was published by National Education Department and recommended for English teacher as one of the sources of teaching and learning material. The second reason is because *Scaffolding* has two series for two different grades of Junior High School namely grade VII and grade VIII. Textbooks produced by the same publisher usually share similar contents, formats, presentation, and styles. Therefore, the analysis of English textbooks for grade VIII has contributed to the judgment of other series. The third reason why the researcher choose this book is because there is no previous studies to the related area that use *Scaffolding* as the object of the study.

Teachers need a reference of which materials are appropriate to be used in class and properly accommodate the construction of student's critical thinking based on Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. In reference to above explanation, the researcher will analyze the cognitive levels applied in the contents of reading tasks in *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Students Grade VIII* Textbooks.

1.2 Identification of the Problems

Referring to the background above, previous studies shows that the cognitive domain of reading tasks in a number of textbooks is not balance in a number of textbooks since the reading tasks contained more lower-order thinking level than higher-order thinking level. Hence, the dominant level of thinking implemented in those textbooks is Lower-order thinking skill.

Based on ground, the researcher decided to analyze the cognitive levels of the English textbook entitled *Scaffolding for Eighth Grade* which has been used for a period of time in Indonesia to identify how the cognitive levels are distributed in the reading tasks and to what extent does it contributes in developing students' thinking skill.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study checked the reading tasks based on the components of the cognitive domain of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy in reading tasks (Krathwohl

and Anderson, 2001) namely remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The object of this study is instruction of task in reading skill in English textbooks for the eighth grade of Junior High School students, *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Students Grade VIII*.

The rationale of analyzing the textbook above is because, to be in line with Linse (2006), training students to have use Higher-order thinking skill is important for students' improvement in the reading skill since students will need to solve the reading tasks at all thinking levels. On that ground, the writer tries to analyze the tasks appeared in textbooks in order to evaluate how these particular textbooks develop the students' level of thinking.

Moreover, *Scaffolding* has three series for three different grades of Junior High School namely grade VII, grade VIII, and grade IX. However, textbooks produced by the same publisher usually share similar contents, formats, presentation, and styles. Therefore, the analysis of English textbooks for grade VIII has contributed to the judgment of other series. Additionally, there is no previous study regarding cognitive levels in reading tasks in *Scaffolding: English for Junior High School Students Grade VIII Textbooks*.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study aims at obtaining a profile of the reading tasks in the “Scaffolding “ textbook in terms of levels of Cognitive Process proposed by Anderson & Krathwol (2001) in their Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy (BRT).

1.5 Statements of the Problem

How can reading tasks in “Scaffolding” textbook be described in terms of BRT levels of Cognitive process? This study seeks to find the answers to the following questions:

1. What levels of cognitive process are represented in the tasks?
2. What level of thinking is most dominant?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to give several advantages to some parties such as English teachers of Junior High School, textbook writers, and other researchers in the area of English Language Education.

1. English Teachers of Junior High School

The findings of this study should provide teachers with better insights on choosing appropriate textbooks to be adapted and adopted in teaching learning process for the on-going and the next semester.

2. English Textbook Writers

The findings of this study should provide textbook writers with better insights on important things related to the cognitive and thinking level as important aspects of textbook. This study is also expected to raise their carefulness in developing textbooks.

3. English Education Students

This study was expected to assist and enlighten other English Education students and researchers to conduct similar study in the area of textbook analysis. This study is therefore expected to be the reference for future researchers wishing to undertake research in the area of textbook analysis or other related research in the area of materials development.