

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of study, statement of the problem, significance of study, scope and limitations, and definition of key terms. Each section is presented as follows:

#### **A. Background of Study**

Among four skills in English, writing is the most difficult skill. Even though some linguists argued, "Writing is considered as the most difficult and complicated skill among listening, speaking and reading." This statement comes from Dixon and Nessel as cited by Bambang Yudi Cahyono in his journal.<sup>1</sup> It requires more efforts to produce meaning through writing than listening and reading. Generally, these four skills cannot be separated. In addition, people often say "First listening and speaking, then reading and writing."<sup>2</sup> One of the problems in writing is about the way to write effectively.

According to Turk and Kirkman "Many writers think that they can emphasize what they want to deliver to the reader with the logically sentences in the text. As a result, they have to explain with more words to support their

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<sup>1</sup> Bambang Yudi Cahyono, *Technique in Teaching EFL Writing* (Malang, State University of Malang Press, 2009),60.

<sup>2</sup> Tae Ho Chun. *Four Skills of Language Learning: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing*. (<http://www.writework.com/essay/four-skills-language-learning-listening-speaking-reading> accessed on March, 25th ,2013).

ideas. Then, it will produce long sentences.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, it is not utterly right but this case still exists among writers. It almost happens for writers because they want to convince the reader with accurate data. Turk and Kirkman also said that the perception of many writers about long sentence that was not easy to avoid is fault. Any subject can be broken up into longer or shorter items of information at will. For them, the determining factor is how much the readers absorb information comfortably.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, after reading a paragraph of text, most of readers do not remember every word, but retain ideas, facts and images. In addition, long sentence that will over fill the short-term memory for words is necessarily limited. As more word, it will cram into an interminable sentence, then the words that we read at the beginning are forgotten. Next, from the syllable, some words with many syllables, which are unfamiliar, will make hard to understand.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, both sentence length and syllables are influence the readability of text. As a basic, knowing the readability level of someone's writing is useful. If he or she in the thirteenth to sixteenth grade (college level), but his or her writing readability level is in the lower level. Truly, it is very disappointed because they cannot produce a text or a reading from their writing which suitable with their education level. The causes are the lack of

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<sup>3</sup> Turk, C and Kirkman J . *Effective writing : Improving scientific, technical and bussiness communication 2nd edition*. (NewYork : E & FN Spon, 1995),94.

<sup>4</sup> Kirkman, *Effective writing : Improving scientific*,94.

<sup>5</sup> Kirkman, *Effective writing : Improving scientific*.93.

words or sentences from their writing, it happens because there are limitations of words that must be produce by writer to make a readable writing. For example, from students' college level in writing, they should produce for about 25 in average sentence length and Average Number. In addition, there are average Number 167 of syllables per 100 words. When students difficult to do, it must get special attention moreover for them who concern in area, which has special relation with writing.

In analyzing student's readability level of their argumentative essay writing, the writer selects students of English Education Department in IAINSA Surabaya as object. The writer selects this department because first this department has big attention on English's development in IAINSA. Second, English Education Department is one of the newer departments than others are in IAINSA, which is still growing up and concerning in English education. Third, the good news is this department has "B" accreditation.<sup>6</sup> One of the requirements is the feedbacks from department to improve the quality of the learning process. Here, information includes source feedback, sustainability implementation, and follow-up.<sup>7</sup> Those ways are to produce prospective graduate English teachers who have high professionalism in the future. The quality of lectures is also good, because most of the lectures have graduated from overseas universities through scholarship. They also have

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<sup>6</sup> The Accreditation's certificate from BAN-PT for English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya February 11<sup>th</sup> 2011-February 11<sup>th</sup> 2016

<sup>7</sup> Buku V Pedoman Penilaian Akreditasi Program Studi Diploma..2009.Jakarta. BAN PT,9.

followed some workshops, which are relating to teach and learn English. Certainly, it influences the learning and teaching process in the class. In addition, this department also provides good facilities such as a major library that has many good resources. These resources can support the students in studying. Knowing all of the goodness from English Education Department, the researcher is interested in knowing the ability of the students as the product of this department especially in writing.

In this research, the researcher analyzes the students from the fourth semester of English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya 2013. There are three reasons that support the writer to choose them. Firstly, they have studied in this department for about two years. It means, they have learned some lesson, which can assist in writing argumentative essay such as writing 1-2, structure 1-2, reading 1-2, listening 1-2, vocabulary class and other subjects for two years.<sup>8</sup> It likes required subject means when student want to follow writing 2, they have to finish writing 1, etc. In similarly, students are studying the skills continually in English Education Department. Then in other words, it has correlation with the development of curriculum in English Education Department. Based on Geraldine O'Neil, in order to create coherence, sequence and integration in a curriculum or programmed that must be consider there are four components such as they are scope, sequence,

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<sup>8</sup> IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris.2010.Panduan Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Strata 1, 111-113.

continuity and integration. In details, when we discuss writing 1-2, structure 1-2, reading 1-2, listening 1-2, vocabulary and other subjects, all of components very contribute in the way to create it. One could also say that they are studying the skills continually in English Education Department. Then in other words, it has correlation with the development of curriculum in English Education Department. There is a consideration in order to create coherence, sequence and integration in a curriculum or programmed. Based on Geraldine O'Neil which cited from Ornstein and Hunkins , they are four components such as they are scope, sequence, continuity and integration. Then in this research, the researcher will analyze the curriculum of English Education Department. The reason is because the curriculum is one of aspects that influence the quality of students' achievement in students' readability level. Next, from that we will know although the curriculum have appropriate with the continuity but how about with the sequence of content within it in each subject.

Secondly, equally important, in the future, they are an English prospective teacher. As a teacher, at least they should understand and can give good example how to write in a good ways for their students. Therefore, they can produce a readable writing. Third, moreover before graduate from the university they must make scientific writing which can be included in journal besides writing thesis. Absolutely, it is very difficult for them who are not accustomed to write. Moreover, the student have got writing I and writing

II, in that part means they have learned about how the way to make writing become unity and coherence.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the researcher wants to know their readability level in writing. It is very difficult for them who are not accustomed to write. Therefore, the researcher wants to know their readability level in writing.

In this research, the writer analyzes the students' writing in argumentative essay. Argumentative essay is an essay which the purpose is to persuade a reader toward a writer's opinion is valid and to change a reader's mind about a particular subject.<sup>10</sup> There are two reasons which support the writer chooses this text. First, students of fourth semester still fresh in writing argumentative essay. In addition, as a college student not infrequently, their environment to deliver their opinion demanded them and aspiration about the problem, which is exists in the community. It also happens to another country, as stated by Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue that students are often asked to express their argument more formally. In order to give media for college students deliver what they think about an issues or fact that happen in community. The more important thing is they can support their argument with their own views.<sup>11</sup> That is why they are called as agent of change because

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<sup>9</sup> SAP of Writing I-III English Education Department.

<sup>10</sup> Teresa D. O'Donnell and Judith L. Paiva. ( *Independent Writing*. Boston : Heinle & Heinle Publisher, 1993),74.

<sup>11</sup> Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue . *Writing Academic English* ( New York: Addison Wesley. Longman, 1999),8.

they are inside of the community for example, when there is a policy from the government, which is inappropriate with the safeness and prosperity of the community, they can do it not only through spoken language but also through written language. Absolutely, they can do that with logical reason. Properly for college student, writing an argumentative essay can be done by them because they have already got some lesson related to critical thinking to something. Critical thinking is needed to look beyond the surface and to know the underlying reasons to see if the writer agree or disagree with possible solutions to a problem.<sup>12</sup>

There has been a lot of research in the field of text readability. Based on the previous readability research, like what the researcher uses for this present study such as research from abroad there are Adam Jatowt and Marry Schutten. For detail Adam Jatowt with his research entitled “Is Wikipedia too Difficult? Comparative Analysis of Readability of Wikipedia, Simple Wikipedia and Britannica”. In this research, Adam found that Wikipedia less readable than Britannica. Then, research from Marry Schutten entitled “Readability Levels of Health-Based Websites: From Content to Comprehension”. The result of this research shows that this website less readable so it is important for the author to enhance this/her website’s

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<sup>12</sup> Tammy L. Montgomery. *Interpretations Writing, Reading, and Critical Thinking*. ( New York : Pearson Longman Education.Inc, 2005),7.

readability. Whereas, inside of our country there are some research to relate readability level whether from someone's thesis or dissertation. Those research comes from Iswatul Ainiyah, Serman Prayogi, Maghfurrotul Hanik Rosyidah, etc. All of those theses concerned on students' textbook from junior and senior high school. They analyzed whether the textbook that used in school appropriate or not with the students' readability level. Whereas, in this research the researcher analyze the students' writing "argumentative essay" based on readability formula. To the best of her knowledge, it is useful to know the readability level of students' writing because it will be helping them to produce a readable writing. From some aspects, this research will be different from all of those researches. It can say like that because first, the readability formula that will be use by the researcher in this research different from others. Second, all of those research both from outside or inside of country just concerns on textbooks or mass media. In this research, the researcher concerns on the writing of college students. Third, the researcher will held some investigation also to get deeper reason and some aspects that influence students' readability level in their writing. As a result, this research is new and never conducts before.

In this research, the researcher use readability formula to measure the readability level of the text. This formula is Flesh Reading Ease formula (flesh kincaid formula). It considers as one of the oldest and most accurate readability formulas. Rudolf Flesh developed it. This formula is a simple



approach to assess the grade level of the reader. It is also one of the new accurate measures around that we can rely without too scrutiny.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, William Dubay stated from Chall and Clare that Flesch's Reading Ease (FRE) formula became the most widely used formula and one of the most tested and reliable.<sup>14</sup> That is why the writer wants to use this formula as the research instrument to get the data in this research. Moreover, David Foulger, stated that this formula is considered easy to use, requiring no comparisons with word list. The computations involve only the counting of words, sentence length, and the number of syllables. This formula is the best combination of simplicity and meaningfulness.<sup>15</sup>

By using this formula, the writer expects that she can find out the readability level of students' writing. Furthermore, after the students know the result. The writer will show to the students how the way to measures the readability levels of their text. The reason is that many people in Indonesia do not know about the readability formula and the function. Therefore, the writer wants to introduce this formula to the students and make it as the guide for them in writing English form. As a result, the writer decides to present the research with the title: "Analyzing readability levels of student's writing

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<sup>13</sup> William H. Dubay. "The Principles of Readability." 25 August 2004 accessed on October 3, 2012 <http://www.nald.ca/library/research/readab/readab.pdf>, 2. accessed on November 25, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> William H. Dubay. "The Principles of Readability", 2.

<sup>15</sup> William H. Dubay. "The Principles of Readability", 4.

“Argumentative Essay” in the fourth semester of English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya 2013.

## **B. Statement of Problem**

In reference to the background of the study previously stated, this study attempts to answer this question:

1. What are the readability levels of students’ writing “Argumentative essay” in the fourth semester of English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya 2013?
2. What factors which influences the students’ achievement in writing readable text?

## **C. Objective of the study**

In relation to the research problem above, the objective of this study is to know:

1. The readability levels of students’ writing in the fourth semester of English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya 2013.
2. The aspects, which influences students’ achievement in readability level of their writing.

#### **D. Significance of the study**

Since this research to find out the readability level of students' writing and the factors which influences their achievement, this research still rarely conduct or even unthought-of. It happened because this research have not conducted before, hopefully the findings will provide insights for : 1) The student will get information how to know their readability level of text, so it may widen up their knowledge towards the way to write text as readable as possible. 2) The department, it will give good input because the department will know how far student's readability level in writing. Next, the result of this research can become a matter for the major to evaluate the curriculum when the students' readability level do not equivalent with their education level. The reason is that they have got some lesson related to writing argumentative essay.3)Next Researcher, this research will be useful as reference for other researchers to conduct further researches, which have concern on readability in writing argumentative essay in English Education Department. They can get some data relate to readability in writing, argumentative essay and readability levels of students' writing "argumentative essay" in English Education Department 2013.

### **E. Scope and Limitation of the study**

This study focuses on:

1. This research involved the fourth semester of English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya in 2013.
2. To measure the readability level of students' writing "Argumentative Essay" in this research, some elements which are really connected just come from the number of sentence, the number of words and the number of syllables in the text.

It does not have correlation with grammatical, organization of text, content of text, vocabulary, language use and mechanical in writing.

1. In this research, the researcher would not observe about the process of teaching writing or reading until produce argumentative essay text in the class or outside of the class. In contrast, the researcher just focuses the way to find out the readability level of this text and some factors which influence their achievement in readability of their writing. Those factors such as : The curriculum in EED, the students' educational background, the students' opinion about their ability in writing, the students' opinion about argumentative essay, and the students' opinion about the condition in class writing III.

More specific, the researcher analyze the curriculum just make sure whether English Education department has an appropriate curriculum based on some elements such as scope, sequence, continuity, integration, articulation, and balance.

#### **F. Definition of Key Term**

To avoid any possible ambiguity and misinterpretation, the term used in this research need to be defining. Some definitions of key terms used in this study are presented as follow:

##### **1. Readability**

Readability refers to easy or pleasant to read.<sup>16</sup>The analyzing of readability is the readable of some written text which are easy or difficult to read. In this research, there are some categorizations of text become easy or difficult. It can be know after someone applied readability formula and matched the result of this formula with the table of reading ease score.

According to the table of readability score, the text can be categorized in very easy if first the average sentence in text eight or less and the average number of syllables per 100 words is 123 or less. Whereas, the text can be

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<sup>16</sup> William H. Dubay. 2007. *Smart Language : Readers, Readability and Grading of the text*. (<http://www.readabilityformulas.com/flesch-reading-ease-readability-formula.php> accessed on November 25, 2012),3

categorized in very difficult if the average sentence in text 29 or more and the average number of syllables per 100 is 192 or more.

## 2. Readability Level

Readability level refers to the grade level of reading materials (the result of students' writing) as a result of applying the readability formula.<sup>17</sup>

## 3. Writing Skill

Writing Skill is one of language skills that used for medium of communication, especially indirect communication.<sup>18</sup>

## 4. Argument

A reason or reasons that support or oppose an idea or suggestion, or the process of explain.<sup>19</sup>

## 5. Essay

A short piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one done by students as part of the work for a course.<sup>20</sup>

## 6. Argumentative Essay

An essay purpose of which is to persuade a reader that a writer's opinion is valid and to change a reader's mind about a particular subject.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Dubay. *Smart Language : Readers, Readability and Grading of the text.*,3.

<sup>18</sup> Donn Bryne. *Teaching Writing Skil* (Hongkong : Longman Group Ltd, 1988),47.

<sup>19</sup> Teresa D. O'Donnel and Judith L.Paiva.*Independent Writing* (Boston : USA, 1993),174.

<sup>20</sup> Mary Fitpatrick. *Engaging Writing* (New York :Longman, 2005), 241.

<sup>21</sup> Fitpatrik, *Engaging Writing*,74.