

**ENGLISH FOR MARINERS**  
**COURSEBOOK: *HOW DOES READABILITY FORMULA RATE THE READABILITY***  
***LEVEL OF TEXTS?***

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**Abstract**

Readability level of marine texts do influences cadets' ability in comprehending Maritime English reading materials. This research investigates the readability level of texts in *English for Mariners*, an English Maritime coursebook published by Language Competence Certification Tools for the Vocations (LCCTV) used for first-year cadets at West Sumatera Merchant Marine Polytechnic. To this end, 10 selected texts from 10 units were analysed. The Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease was utilized as readability formula to assess the readability level of texts. The findings revealed that 10% text was categorized as extremely difficult, 30% texts were difficult, 30% texts were fairly difficult, 10% text was average, 10% text was fairly easy, and 10% text was easy to read. Thus, English for mariners coursebook is readable for cadets even though few texts are too easy to comprehend.

***Keywords: Coursebook, Readability formula, Readability level***

**INTRODUCTION**

Since English is a foreign not a second language in Indonesia, classroom serves as the primary wellspring of English exposure for understudies. In this manner, materials, especially coursebooks assume and imperative part in presenting the understudies to the English language. Well-constructed and up-to-date coursebooks are indispensable for demonstrating the nature of accomplishment (Indrawati, 2012). Cunningsworth (1995, p. 7) believes that coursebooks play numerous parts in English language classes and can assist with introducing the composed and spoken material, provide activities, promote collaboration, serve as a reference on vocabulary and grammar, act as a source for classroom activities, serve as a syllabus, and deal self-access work or self-coordinated learning. Ardiansyah et al (2020) Independent learning makes students more self directed into lesson. It additionally offers understudies

the feeling of purpose and progression, a sense of security, chance for independent learning, and a reference for checking and revising (Halliwell, 1992). In other words, coursebook is utilized to reach learning objectives for both lecturers and understudies during teaching and learning process.

O'Neill as referred to Baleghizadeh and Rahimi (2011) elaborate that coursebook is essential to be utilized on account of a few reasons. In the first place, most piece of the coursebook can be employed in teaching and learning process since it is intended for classroom usage. Furthermore, it makes the understudies ready to review previous materials or what they want to learn again and study the following material before they come to the classroom. At last, coursebook could give what lecturer need to reach with respect to learning purposes, give what understudies' needs, and be a main source to get information during study.

Good coursebook materials need to cover a few requirements (Hutchinson and Walters, 1987). First, they are not yet train urge understudies to learn and contains fascinating texts, enjoyable activities which draw in understudies' reasoning limits, opportunities for understudies to use their existing knowledge and expertise, and content which both understudies and lecturer can adopt with. Second, provide clear and reasonable unit structure which will guide lecturer and understudies through different exercises in such manner as to expand the odds of learning. Third, involve both opportunities for analysis and synthesis. (Indrawati, 2012) further add that the nature of coursebook is additionally addressed by few criteria including general information about the coursebook and supporting materials, content, lesson design and instructional strategies, evaluation, and universal design.

Maritime English (ME) used to impart from ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore, or shore-to-ship trade in marine areas and enterprises is the most unique and typical language among other English for Specific Language (ESP) chunks all over the world. The terms, phrasings, languages, truncations, and abbreviations are convoluted and far extraordinary from normal general English. Its inclination is as directed by Manaadiar (2019) as follows, "*a seafarer is never at the front or the back of a ship; they are at the bow or the stern; they are never on the left or right side, but rather port or starboard; they are never in their bedroom or the kitchen, but they might be in their cabin or in the galley; a boat's speed isn't estimated in miles or kilometers each hour, yet rather in tangles; and a boat, obviously, is alluded frequently as she and not generally as it.*" Likewise, cover themselves in Marine English is an unquestionable requirement for marine cadets, crews as well as officer candidates, and trainee mariners before on board.

Related to Maritime English learning, West Sumatera Merchant Marine Polytechnic (POLTEKPEL SUMBAR), a vocational college for seafarers under the Ministry of Transportation, uses Marine English coursebooks as one of the media in English teaching and learning process. The purpose is to facilitate the cadets during learning activity as well as encourage them in gaining knowledge beyond maritime context. In short, these particular coursebooks are expected to be able to give in-depth knowledge akin maritime matters or partially background of marine information. Those coursebooks are English for Mariners, Maritime English Vocabulary for Beginners, and Maritime English Modul for Cadets. The former was written by Tony Grice, LCCTV Project Consortium. The latter was composed by the English lecturers' team of West Sumatera Merchant Marine Polytechnic by referring to the curriculum for seafarers namely IMO (International Maritime Organization) Model Course 3.17. They consist of general English materials in accordance with seafarers' jobs.

Among the three coursebooks, *English for Mariners* is often used by English lecturers and cadets as the media in learning Maritime English. This coursebook was a project of Language Competence Certification Tools for the Vocation (LCCTV) financed by European Commissions' Leonardo da Vinci program in 2007. The aim was to develop materials for testing the second language competence of mariners and for teaching the language that they require for professional certification. The contents deal with the language and terms combined in texts used when mooring, belaying, measuring, piloting, naming hull and deck parts, describing sea and weather conditions, making measurements, and navigation. Moreover, based on the pilot interview, there was a text readability issue that many difficult vocabularies and higher terminologies faced by cadets during reading

the texts. Consequently, they did not get full comprehension regarding the text and less information was absorbed.

The readability of a book relies upon whether it is conceivable and clear for the reader (Yulianto, 2019). In choosing learning materials, readability is one of the contemplations suggested for the lecturer prior to involving it in the learning process. It is a characteristic of composed text, generally characterized by factors that hypothetically make a text pretty much hard to peruse (Begeny and Greene, 2013). As such, it what makes few texts simpler to peruse than others (DuBay, 2004). Furthermore, readability is an endeavor to coordinate the perusing with understanding level of the reader.

Readability is also a proportion of how well and how effectively a text moves the importance to the reader (Ewie, 2014). The motivation behind comprehensibility itself is to discover the right fit between understudies perusing capacity decide the fruitful of understudies to get a decent perception in perusing and it likewise decides the understudies' capacity to comprehend and acquire significance from the readings. The texts that are straightforward have low lucidness level, and the texts that are hard to comprehend have high readability level (Freatat, 2014). It implies that, the least level is the simplest to be perceived and the most significant level is the hardest to be perceived.

Readability may be seen as legibility, interest, or ease of comprehension (Maryansyah, 2016). Legibility implies straightforwardness and speed of perusing printed material, or all in all, it is the agreement or perception toward the printed text. Interest at times depends as much on mechanical factors like size, style of type, length of understanding material, drawings or charts, and subject of texts. A book that is too troublesome may lose its allure, despite the

fact that it is fascinating to the readers. Ease of comprehension depends on readers' interest of the topic. Factors, for example, design, great paragraphing, and short sections work with the understanding of the readers.

Readability indeed influences cadets' ability in comprehending the reading materials. Accomplished cadets usually feel bored if they are given easy texts below their reading level. It will not enhance their reading skill. On the other hand, poor cadets will feel discouraged and frustrated when they have to read texts that are too difficult for them. Husna (2016) says that the low perusing execution in Indonesia is brought about by certain elements and one of the elements is the readability level. Thus, the passage itself should be compatible with the readers, and lecturers have the responsibility to choose appropriate passages of the coursebook following the curriculum, language level and cadets' need. As Maryansyah (2016) contends that regardless of how much an English lecturer finds out with regards to her understudies' understanding expertise and mentality, she needs to evaluate textbooks, modules, or materials she is going to instruct her understudies to read.

Readability research includes studies connected with the forecast of text level through examination of text's elements. The focal point of studies was fluctuated by research's interest. Yulianto (2019) examined the readability level of English reading text. The outcome was just 1 out of 8 texts suitable for seven or eight grade Middle School understudies. 1 text was for Secondary School level and the other 6 texts were for Rudimentary level. Another study completed by Wirza and Handayani (2020) uncovered that as far as readability level of *Learning Daily English* for Grade 5 Primary School distributed by Grafindo Media Pratama, there were only 5 texts had a reasonable degree of comprehensibility. The other 6 texts were

beneath the grade and age level. The other two texts were over the grade and age level of the understudies. Then, at that point, Hakim et al. (2021) analyzed the readability level of reading texts in *English Coursebook* for Indonesian Senior Secondary School. The discoveries showed that reading texts in this book are beneath the norm of lucid texts or excessively simple for tenth grade understudies.

In readability research, a definitive objective is generally focused around ensuring that a text or reading sections matches the target reader’s proficiency (Srisunakrua and Chumworatayee, 2019). That is why the studies query addressed is: *How does readability formula rate the readability level of texts in English for Mariners Coursebook?*

**METHODOLOGY**

This descriptive qualitative research investigated the level of text readability in English for Mariners coursebook used in West Sumatera Merchant Marine Polytechnic. The book is organized into two levels; Pre-intermediate (level 1/ CEFR-A2/ IELTS 3 and below) and Intermediate (level 2/ CEFR-B2/ IELTS 5). Each level contains five units, and each units have two parts in which one of them is termed *Seaspeak*; *1A Ship Handling, 1B Ship Handling in Seasepak, 2A Emergencies, 2B Emergencies in Seaspeak etc.* These units present introduction, vocabulary, reading, listening, structure, speaking, and writing section; but only five of them covered randomly in certain units. The texts analyzed in this study were the texts contained in the reading section. And thus 10 selected texts were used as the research data.

According to McNeill, et al. (1982) readability can be measured in two ways; by employing formulas and through reader’s response by addressing reading comprehension test. This study utilizes Flesch-Reading Ease

Formula (1948) to determine the degree of text readability since it is generally used and best implied for school text (Sholihah, 2018). This is also one of a handful of exceptional precise measures around that we can depend on without an excessive amount of examination (Yulianto, 2019). This formula further requires number of syllables, words, and sentences.

Data analysis was performed by carrying out Flesch Reading Ease (1948) through the following steps:

1. Count the number of syllables, words, and sentences
2. Calculate the *ASL* (Average Sentence Length) by dividing the number words with the number of sentences;
3. Calculate the *ASW* (Average Syllable per Word) by dividing the number of syllables with the number of words;
4. Calculate the number of *ASL* and *ASW* to get the Readability Ease (RE) by using Flesch’s reading ease formula as follows:

$$RE = 206.835 - (1.015 \times ASL) - (84.6 \times ASW)$$

5. Last, determine the readability level and reading grade by referring to reading ease scale as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Interpretation of Flesch Reading Ease Scale

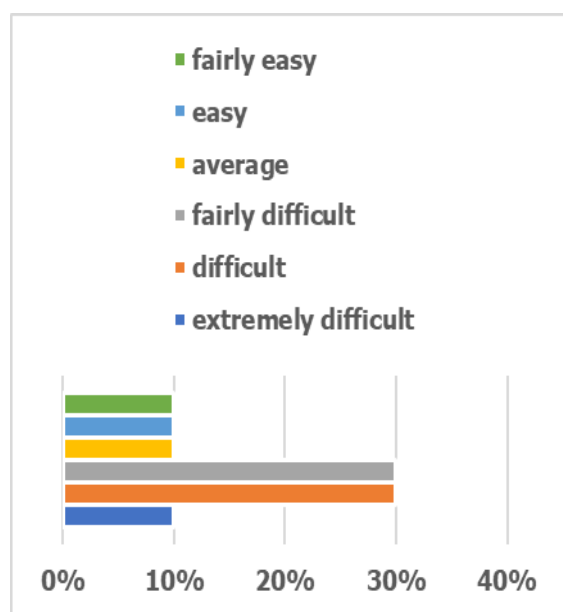
<b>Reading Ease Score</b>	<b>Readability Level</b>	<b>Reading grade</b>
0-30	Very difficult	Post graduate
30-50	Difficult	College
50-60	Fairly difficult	10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade
60-70	Average	8 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> grade
70-80	Fairly easy	7 <sup>th</sup> grade
80-89	Easy	5 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> grade
90-100	Very easy	4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> grade

*Adapted from Spadaro et al. (1980)*

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on a 0-100 scale, high reading ease score implies the text is easier to read, meanwhile low scores suggest the text is complicated to understand. The percentage of readability level of texts in English for Mariners coursebook is shown in Diagram 1 below.

**Diagram 1.** Percentage of Readability Level based on Reading Ease Scores



According to the findings of Flesch Reading Ease Formula, there was 10 % of texts (Text 4) categorized as *extremely difficult* to read. The writer used *extremely difficult* term since the readability ease score of this text was far below the minimum point of *very difficult* scale. It means that this text is difficult and not pertinent for cadets' respective level in which it is college level. In fact, Hubisz (2003) in Nunoo et al. (2020) adds that coursebooks have to be appropriate with the target levels of their audience. Thus, lecturers need to pay attention and give guides and encouragement for cadets while comprehending these particular texts since cadets might have low lexical knowledge and less background knowledge. Leaving them alone in reading this

text will just let them going to hell with no understanding.

Recorded scores of the readability texts of English for Mariners showing the grade levels and reading ease is shown in Table 2 with its interpretation based on Table 1. The finding of reading ease score for text 1 is 49.5; which means the text is categorized as *difficult* as it is in 30-50 reading score and able to be understood by college understudies. For reading text 2, the reading ease score is 72.6 which indicates the text is *fairly easy* to read as the reading score is between 70-80 and suitable for grade 7<sup>th</sup>. Reading text 3 got 58.3 reading ease score; showing the text is *fairly difficult* as the score is between 50-60 and readable for grade 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>.

In reading text 4, the reading ease score is -16.1; indicating the text is *extremely difficult* to read and even hard to be understood by college graduates. Reading text 5 comes up with reading ease score 38.6 implies the text is difficult to read as the score is between 30-40 and relevant to college understudies.

The result analysis of reading text 6 revealed that the reading text is *easy* to read and appropriate for grade 6<sup>th</sup> as the reading ease score revealed was 82 which the score is between 80-90. For reading text 7, the reading ease score is 67 which indicates the readability text is *average* and readable for grade 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>. Finding of reading text 8 shows 49.6 reading ease score; classified as *difficult* to read and suitable for college understudies. Reading text 9 got 57.2 reading ease score and it is categorized as *average* since the reading ease score is 67, between 60-70, and appropriate for grade 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>. The data show that 49.6 in reading ease score, indicating it is *difficult* as the score is between 40-50 and relevant to college understudies. Then, reading text 9 got 57.2 for reading ease score, showing the text is *fairly difficult* as the score is between 50-60

and readable for grade 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. In reading text 10, the reading ease score is 57.9; indicating the text is *fairly difficult* and match for grade 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The examination of text readability in this research has uncovered few things. Through Flesch Reading Ease Formula, generally, the readability level of texts in *English for Mariners Coursebook* are categorized difficult and fairly difficult in which they are readable for cadets in college level even though few texts are too easy to read. In detail, 10% text was categorized as extremely difficult, 30% texts were difficult, 30% texts were fairly difficult, 10% text was average, 10% text was fairly easy, and 10% text was easy to read.

Furthermore, lecturers are recommended to carry out readability analysis on texts before they use them in teaching reading. Another suggestion is that lecturer could adjust and omit the usage of specific texts within this book, as giving texts beneath understudies' level will not lift up their reading skill dan their maritime knowledge. What is more, future researchers are suggested to conduct further research connected with the findings of this research by employing other readability formulas, or different methods of readability analysis.

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