

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer would like to discuss about background of the study, statement of problems, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definitions of terms. Those are explained in detail below.

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is a useful skill and has an important role in human being's life. Through reading, everyone can get information about science, and technology that perhaps they do not know before. Reading is the most efficient way to acquire information about many aspects in life, since most of available information is delivered in printed media such as journals, newspapers, magazines, and books. Therefore, having a good reading skill is needed to know the content of an information. Even in the internet, the information is presented in written form, so the users need to read the information. Reading comprehension is required in each subject, because each lesson is inseparable from the act of reading. Therefore, students are required to have good understanding capabilities. As stated by Shang (2010 : 25).

So far, as stated in many educationalin guidelines, reading is very important skill to be mastered without ignoring the others. As stated by Carell (1998: 1) for many students, reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second language or foreign language.

It is also stated in the curriculum of the lesson unit level for the senior high school level which has been published by the Department of Education of Cilacap District Moleong (1989: 23), the purpose of teaching reading for the junior high school is to understand the meaning in the simple written interpersonal and transactional discourse formally or informally, especially in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in the context of daily life.

In learning English, there are four skills that should be mastered by students, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills should be involved by the teacher in the process of teaching and learning in a classroom. Speaking and writing refer to productive skills while reading and listening refers to receptive skills (Harmer, 2003). They learn it at Senior High School (SMA).

Reading is one of the language skills which is very important to be learned by students. Through this activity, students can improve their own language and experience. They will get information and ideas which they need to know. Moreover, they will be able to know what they did not know before. Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build the meaning. The goal of reading is comprehension (Nunan, 2003: 68). Comprehension is an active process that involves strategies and behaviors.

In reading, there are many kinds of reading text, such as narrative, recount, report, descriptive, explanation, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, procedure, discussion, news item, and so forth. Descriptive text is one of the genres of text that should be taught to students of senior high school especially in the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 10 Kupang in the school year 2019/2020.

Based on some experiences of the writer's in teaching practice in SMPN 10 Kupang, the majority of students could not understand what they read and could not answer the question based on the reading text. The ability of the students in terms of reading was not so good, the pronunciation, and the comprehension was not so good as well. The writer assumes that it is the problem in learning English in general and reading comprehension in particular. Realizing about this, the writer feels interested to conduct a study about the ability on reading comprehension under the title "*A Study on Reading Comprehension Ability of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 10 Kupang in the School Year 2019/2020*".

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates the statement of the problem in the following questions.

1. Are the eighth-grade students of SMPN 10 Kupang in the school year 2019/2020 able to comprehend the reading text ?
2. What is the ability level of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 10 Kupang in the school year 2019/2020 in comprehending the text they read?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the problems stated above, the objectives of the study are as follows :

1. To find out whether or not the eighth-grade students of SMPN 10 Kupang in the school year 2019/2020 are able to comprehend the reading text.
2. To find out the ability level of the eighth-grade students of SMPN Kristen 1 Kupang in the school year 2019/2020 in comprehending the text they read.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance is important in doing the study. Doing this study has some significances for some parties, such as the teacher of English, the students, and the writer himself. The significance of the study are presented below:

1. The Writer

The result of this study can be useful for the writer as a prospective teacher in preparing himself to become a teacher in the future. The writer is also trained in how to conduct research and to comprehend a reading text.

2. For the English Teacher

This study will inform the teachers of English especially at the researched school about the ability of the students in reading a text so that they improve or maintain the method of teaching English especially the teaching of reading comprehension.

3. For the students

By doing the test on reading the text the students can be motivated and illustrated about how to comprehend reading text. By seeing the result of the test, they can be motivated to study English better, especially in comprehending an English text.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

There are some kinds of reading comprehension such as literal, interpretative, critical and creative. By considering the education level of the students, the writer limits his study on literal reading comprehension. This study is focused on descriptive text.

1.6 Definition of Terms

There are some terms used in this study that should be defined. The definition may help the readers to understand the study as a whole. The terms which should be defined in this study are as follows:

1. Ability

Ability is a potential capacity or power to do something physically or mentally (Hornby,1998: 2). Dealing with this study, ability means the students capacity in comprehending a reading text.

2. Reading

It is an activity of contacting the eyes on printed materials by which the reader process and create new text to that of the original ones (Anderson: 1987). In this study reading means the text that the students will read.

3. Comprehension

Comprehension is a means and has excessively aimed at improving or testing one's understanding of a language whether written or spoken. Comprehension is not only a need in student's reading activities but also to measure the ability of each student in the classroom (Hornby: 1995, p.235)

4. Reading Comprehension

Comprehension means understanding. It is the ability to get the meaning of something. Reading comprehension is the first goal in reading. Duke and Pearson (2001: 423) stated that reading is comprehension.

5. Descriptive Text

description is discourse that help us visualize. It focuses upon the appearance or the nature of an object. In description, we see vividly and concretely, we perceive the object with a kind of fullness for which exposition does not strive (Temple, et al: 1998).

6. SMPN 10 Kupang

SMPN 10 Kupang is one of the private junior high schools in Kupang city that is located in Jl. Prof. Dr. Herman Johannes, Kupang East Nusatenggara Province