

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A language is a tool used by people to communicate ideas, emotion, and desires as means of vocabulary by symbols (Sapir, 1912:8). In other definition, languages can be said as a means of communication and interaction we use in social life.

There are so many languages in the world like Indonesian language, Chinese language, and one of them is English. As a language in the world, people of Indonesia need to learn English in order to communicate with foreign people, especially those who speak English. The government of Indonesia has included English in the curriculum of Indonesian schools. Reading is one of the skills even regarded both as objective and means of learning a language. Reading as objective refers to final goal of learning English in high school that is to be able to read when in higher education. Whereas reading as a means of learning a language refers to the fact that through reading. Language learners can learn the structure of English vocabulary and pronunciation, as well as the use of language in which learners use English in discussing reading materials. The text books used in the school contain reading passages that are followed by exercises. This is a turn that will help the students develop other language skills.

Reading is one of the many in classroom teaching activities. To make it an effective way of learning English, method of teaching must be selected. Method plays important role in teaching-learning activities beside the skills of teachers. This is to ensure the ability in comprehending reading texts.

Based on the writer's experience in learning process when she was in junior and senior high school or even in the University, many students still have a problem in reading comprehension. The writer assumes that the same things might be faced by students in junior high school including students of SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang.

There are many aspects that can cause the students' problem in reading comprehension, such as: the lack of the students' grammar knowledge and lack of vocabulary as well.

Based on the explanation above, writer is interested in conducting a study on reading comprehension ability. The writer would like to carry out this study with the titled **“A Study on Reading Comprehension Ability of Eighth Grade Students of SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang in the School Year 2015/2016.”**

1.2 Statement of Problems:

The topic of the study is specified into three problems. The problems are formulated in questions.

1. Are the eighth grade students of SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang able to understand the text they have read?
2. What is the ability level of the eight grade students of SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang in understanding the text they have read?
3. What are the areas of difficulties of the eight grade students of SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang in understanding the text they have read?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In this study the writer has some objectives and they are presented below.

1. To find out whether the eighth grade students of SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang comprehend the reading text.
2. To find out the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang in comprehending the reading text.
3. To find out the areas of difficulties faced by the students of SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang in comprehending the reading text.

1.4 Significances of Study

The significance of the study is stated in following lines.

1. For English Teacher

To inform the English teachers about the ability of students in reading text, so it can improve her/his teaching of English especially in the teaching reading comprehension.

2. For Students

Through the result of this study the students will be informed about their ability in reading.

3. The Writer

This study would increase the writer's knowledge and skill in comprehending a reading text.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

There are three kinds of reading text taught in junior high school level. They are: descriptive text, recount text, and narrative text. But the writer only limits her study on the reading comprehension of narrative text. Beside that, there are four level of reading comprehension, they are: literal reading, interpretative reading, critical reading, and creative reading, but in this study the writer focuses on literal reading comprehension.

1.6 Definition of terms

1. Ability

Ability is a potential capacity or power to do something physically or mentally (Hornby, 1982:2). Dealing with this study, ability means the students' capacity of the eight grade students of SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang to understand the text they read.

2. Reading

Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning (reading comprehension). It is a means of language acquisition of communication, and of sharing information and ideas.

Reading is an activity of contacting the eyes on printed materials by which a reader is led to record the information to the brain to the process and create a new similar text to that of the original one (Anderson, 1984). In this study, reading means that a process or activities done by the eighth grade students of SMP Sancta Familia Kupang to record the information from the text they read.

3. Comprehension

Comprehension is a process by which a person understands the meaning of the written or spoken language (Ricard, 1985). In this study comprehension is a process by which the eight grade students of SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang understand the reading text they have read.

4. Reading Comprehension

It is a process of using syntactic and rhetorical information found in printed task to reconstruct in the reader mind, using the knowledge of the words she/he possesses, plus appropriate, cognitive skill and reason ability (Devine, 1986:73).

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand the meaning of reading (Hornby, 1978). Reading comprehension in this study means the ability of the eight grade students of SMPK Sancta Familia Sikumana Kupang in the school year 2015-2016 to understand reading English text.

5. SMPK Sancta Familia Kupang

SMPK Sancta Familia Sikumana Kupang is one of the private Junior High Schools in Kupang city which is located in Oebolivo III Street of Sikumana.