

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significant of the study, scope and limitations, and definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is purely human and non instinctive method of language ideas, emotion, and desires by means of system of voluntarily produced symbols. These symbols are, in the first sentence, auditory and they are produced by organ of speech (Sapir, 1912: 8). In this definition, he states that language as a bridge in expressing one's feeling, ideas, emotion and desires by using oral and written forms. In another definition language can be said a means of communication and interaction we use in social life.

There are so many languages in the world and one of them is English. English is an international language which is used in various aspects of life such as politics, economy, education, commerce, technology, and so forth. Take for example in education aspect, many books are written in English. Therefore, students are expected to master language main skills such as, listening, speaking, reading and writing. While, language sub skills are grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation as supporting materials. Both the skill and sub-skills play an important role in teaching and learning English.

Reading is one of English skills. It is language process requiring the understanding of written language. It constantly involves guessing, predicting, checking and asking oneself question. This should therefore be taken into consideration when devising reading conversation exercise.

Reading is one the basic skills besides listening, speaking, and writing which must be acquired by a learner of the English language. Reading can be defined as an active attempt on the part of the reader to understand a writer's message. Smith (1983: 6) says that in the process of reading the reader interacts with and tries to reconstruct what a writer wishes to communicate.

Reading is becoming more and more important in the knowledge acquisition and remains the most effective human activity for transforming information. Based on the statement the writer may say that reading is an activity done by a reader to get information in a text and through reading one can know many things happening in the world.

Grabe (2002L: 29) states that reading comprehension is an extraordinary of balancing and coordinating many abilities in a very complex and rapid set of routines that makes comprehension seemingly effortless and enjoyable. Reading as one of the English skills taught at all levels of education considered as the core skill if a reader wants to improve his/her speaking, writing, listening, pronunciation skill and grammar mastery. Reading can help the achievement of other language skill.

The essential goal of reading activity is comprehension. Comprehension refers to the ability to understand what is read. In real life, there are so many difficulties that the student face. The textbooks used in school contain reading

passage and followed by exercise. It is expected and even to learn improve pronunciation. With all these, students can help develop other language skills.

The fact shows that many Indonesians are not accustomed to reading habit. Because of this habit, the students might encounter some problems in reading, is that they cannot understand or comprehend what they are reading. In line with this, they cannot answer the question or doing the exercise given.

Based on the background above, the writer feels interested to conduct a study under the topic **“A STUDY on READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY of the SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS of SMP NEGERI 16 KUPANG in the SCHOOL YEAR 2017/2018”**.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study is stated in the following questions:

1. Are the students of the seventh grade of SMPN 16 Kupang in the school year 2017/2018 able to comprehend English texts?
2. What is the level of ability on reading comprehension of the seventh grade students of SMPN 16 Kupang in the school year 2017/2018?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study has the following objectives:

1. To find out if the students of seventh grade of SMPN 16 Kupang in the school year 2017/2018 is able to comprehend English texts.

2. To find out the level of reading comprehension ability of the seventh grade students of SMPN 16 Kupang in the school year 2017/2018.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study has some significance for the English teacher and the writer, as presented below:

1. For the English teacher

This study can be used as a feedback for the teacher to teach English especially reading comprehension of his or her students

2. For the Writer

By doing this study, the writer will enrich to know more about reading comprehension.

3. For the students

This study is very important to students, because they are able to know and improve their knowledge about reading comprehension.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

This study is about analyzing the ability of reading comprehension of the seventh grade students of SMPN 16 Kupang, especially the students of class VII B. In this study the writer wants to know about student's level of ability in reading comprehension. There are three levels of comprehensions: literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, and critical comprehension. In this study the writer will focus on literal comprehension and inferential comprehension. There are five types

of reading text taught in SMP Narrative text, Descriptive text, Recount text, Procedure text, Report text. In this study the writer only focuses on comprehending descriptive text.

1.5 Definition of Terms

To help the readers understand the terms used in this study, the writer presents some definitions of terms as follow:

1. Ability

Ability is potential capacity or power to do something physically or mentally (Hornby, 1982:2). Dealing with this study, ability means the students capacity in comprehending reading text.

2. Reading

Reading is an activity of contacting the eyes on printed material. By which a reader is led to record the information for the brain to process and create a news similar text to that of the original one (Anderson, 1984).

3. Comprehension

Comprehension is a process by which people understand the meaning of the written or spoken language (Richard 1985). In this study, comprehension is a process by the second year students of SMPN 16 Kupang understanding the reading text they have read.

4. Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is a process of using syntactic and rhetorical information found in printed text to reconstruct the reader's main, using the

knowledge of the words he or she possesses, plus appropriate cognitive skill and reason ability (Devine 1986: 73).

5. SMPN 16 Kupang

SMPN 16 Kupang is one of the Junior High Schools in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara Province. It is a public school that is located on JL.Supul Raya, Pasir Panjang which writer uses this as location research.