

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter contains the background of the study, the statement of the problems, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, and the definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is one of the global languages. It is used in every aspect of human life such as in economy, science and technology. Considering the importance of English, the students in Indonesia have to be given opportunities to learn it.

As the follow up of our government, the National Educational Department with the government regulation number 061/U/1995 stated that in the SMP curriculum the English subject is taught as a compulsory subject which functions as a means to develop the students ability in science, technology and culture (SMP Curriculum, 1995:1).

There are four skills, which are taught in SMP they are: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. In this writing the attention is focused on the third skill that is reading as mentioned above. The writer is interested in this research because based on the writer's experience she always finds that the reading items always appear in most of the test sections.

The main goal in a reading process is the comprehension of meaning. Thus, we now recognizing the term reading comprehension someone tries to understand and construct the meaning of a text through the thinking process in a certain time, to obtain the information that is needed.

In fact the junior high school students knowledge of English is still insufficient to be able to read and understand an English text whenever they are asked to. The writer can make the conclusion based on some previous researchers who found that:

1. It is still very difficult for SMP students to grasp the meaning of their reading regardless of how intensively they have read. Walawenggu (1995:1) stated that this is caused by a number of problems rising in the process of teaching and learning English as a second language. Such problems, for instance, are: lack of practice, poor vocabulary and ambiguity in the English language in which one word has more than one meaning.
2. Supriadi (1995:36) also stated that reading a text in a foreign language is more difficult than reading it in one's own language (mother tongue). It may be caused by some differences in the foreign language; such as, different word order, different spelling, different pronunciation etc. These differences may cause problem when the purpose of teaching reading is for comprehension.

From the result of the previous studies mentioned above the writer can say that the reading comprehension ability of the students is still lower than the expectation because the problems originated from either the teachers or the students. Problems, originating from the students, for instance of, lack of vocabulary and confusion with teachers instruction. Meanwhile problems originating from the teacher, among others are inappropriate teaching techniques and complete ignorance of the students need for suitable topics.

Based on the problem above, the writer was interested to make a study on reading under the title: "A Study on the Reading Ability of the Eighth Grade Students of SMPN 5 Kupang in the School year 2018/2019 "

1.2 Statements of the Problem

The problems of the study are formulated in the following questions:

- a. Are the eighth grade students of SMPN 5 Kupang able to understand the text they read?
- b. What is the students' level of ability in reading the texts?

1.3 Objective of the Study

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

- a. To find out and to know whether the eighth grade students of SMPN 5 Kupang understand the text they read.
- b. To find out and to know the student's level of ability in understanding reading texts.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is as follows:

1. For the English teacher

This study informs the teacher of English about the ability of the eighth grade students of SMPN 5 Kupang in reading text, so that they can improve the teaching of English especially the teaching of reading comprehension.

2. For the writer:

It is a good chance for the writer to apply her knowledge she got from the university especially in doing a scientific research.

3. For Students:

By reading the result of the study the students will be helped to know their understanding and the level of ability in reading a text.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

There are four language skills that should be mastered by the students. Those skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading is considered as a core skill for other skills because other skills can be mastered easily if the students have good ability in reading. Reading is also broad to be studied, therefore in this study the writer only limits on the ability of the students in answering the questions in the text they have read, in terms of literal comprehension.

1.6 Definition of Terms

To help the readers in understanding the writing well, the writer would like to provide the meaning of some terms used in this study as follows:

1. Ability

Ability is a potential capacity or power to do something physically or mentally as stated by Hornby (1982:2). Dealing with the study, ability means capacity or power of the eighth grade students of SMPN 5 Kupang in comprehending a reading text provided.

2. Reading

It was written by Anderson (1984) that reading is an activity of contacting the eyes on printed materials by which the readers get the information from the text they read. Related to this study reading means an activity of contacting the eyes on printed materials by the students of the eighth grade of SMPN 5 Kupang in order to get information from the text they read.

3. Reading comprehension

It was stated by Smith and Robinson (1980:205) that reading comprehension is the understanding, evaluating and utilizing of information and ideas gained through an interaction between reader and author. In this writing reading comprehension means the ability of the students to understand, evaluate and utilize information and ideas gained through an interaction with the author from reading text.

4. SMP N 5 kupang

SMPN 5 Kupang is one of the state Junior High Schools in Jln. Fran Seda, Kelapa Lima-Kota Kupang East Nusa Tenggara Province.