

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is very important for communication. People use language to express ideas, feelings, emotions, etc. Without language people cannot communicate.

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. In learning this language students commonly have troubles. In their attempt to master the English language, they have to spend a lot of energies. They have to practice again and again in order that they are good in English.

In learning English students must learn to write, to listen, to pronounce, to read, to speak and so on. Indonesian students start learning English at the elementary school. They learn it at the Junior High School (SMP). The process continues at Senior High School (SMA).

Reading is one of the English skills. It is related to the establishing of readers' understanding of the so – called “written language”. Reading can help readers improve their listening, speaking, writing, pronunciation skill and grammar mastery. Through reading learners have to understand the concept of what they read and are hoped to speak out the concept they have read. By reading learners also try to learn grammatical unit and vocabularies. They learn the phonological units about how to produce the sounds and try to connect the sounds nearly correctly. The teacher will be as the model of the appropriate pronunciation and learners can imitate and repeat it. If learners read, more and more, they can write based on their background knowledge which may come from what they have read.

Reading is for comprehension. Comprehension is the ability to understand what has been read. In learning English, many books are available. They contain reading passages and followed by exercises. Very commonly, students have problems to comprehend what they read.

Reading is a good aspect in learning because people can get a lot of information or knowledge. In reading, readers typically make use of their background knowledge, such as vocabulary, and grammar and strategies to help them understand the written text better. Talok, (2011: 189–190) says that reading means “reading and understanding”. In this way of seeing reading, comprehension is the core layer in reading. Thus, when reading, the starting point is from the core layer to another layer, from inside to outside. In other words, comprehension is much more important than other factors affecting reading, such as ability to spell every letter, to pronounce words, to make correct pause, to make appropriate stress and rhythm.

Based on some experiences, the majority of students cannot understand what they read and could not answer the question based on the reading text. 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 the Ability of Reading Comprehension of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 8 Kupang in the School Year 2015/2016.**”

1.2. Statement of Problems

The topic of this study is specified into some problems. The problems are formulated in the following questions.

1. Are the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 8 Kupang in the school year 2015/2016 able to comprehend text they read?
2. What is the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 8 Kupang in the school year 2015/2016 in comprehending the text they read?
3. What are the difficulties faced by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 8 in the school year 2015/2016 in comprehending the text they read.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem statement above, the objectives of this study are as follows.

1. To find out whether or not the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 8 Kupang in the school year 2015/2016 is able to comprehend the reading text.
2. To find out the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 8 Kupang in the school year 2015/2016 in comprehending the reading text.
3. To find out the difficulties that might be encountered by the eighth grade students of SMA Negeri 8 Kupang in the school year 2015/2016 in comprehending the text they read.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be beneficial for the teacher at the researched school, the students, and the writer herself.

1. The Writer

The result of this study can be useful for the writer as a prospective teacher in preparing herself to become a teacher in the future. The writer is also trained in how to conduct a research and to write a scientific writing.

2. The English Teacher

The result of the data analysis and the suggestion can give valuable contribution to the teacher of English about the ability of students in reading text, so that they can improve the teaching of English especially the teaching of reading comprehension.

3. The Students

By doing the test on reading 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 of English text.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is reading comprehension. According to Heilman et al (1981: 242) there are three main kinds of reading comprehension, they are: literal comprehension, interpretative comprehension, critical comprehension. In this study the writer limits herself to study only literal reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 8Kupang in the school year 2015/2016.

1.6 Definition of Terms

There are some terms that are necessary to be clarified to avoid misunderstanding from the readers.

1. Reading

Reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately (Grabe, Wiliam and Stoller, 2002:9). In this study reading refers to the ability of the student's to draw meaning and interpret from the printed page.

2. Ability

It is a potential or power to do something physically or mentally (Hornby, 1974:2). Here, the ability means the power of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri8Kupang to comprehend reading text.

3. Comprehension

Karlin (1964:115) stated that comprehension is an active process in the construction meaning. Besides that Hornby (1987:2) comprehension is the mind's act or power of understanding. Related to this study; comprehension means power of students to understand the reading texts.

4. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a process of making sense of written ideas thr through meaning interpretation and interaction with language (Thorndike in

Heilman. et al, 1981:242).Dealing with this study, reading comprehension means the capacity of understanding a reading text of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 8 Kupang.

5. SMP Negeri 8 Kupang

It is one of public schools located on S.K Lerik Street, Kelapa Lima District, Kupang Municipal