

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Efficient comprehension, thus, requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge (schemata). To improve the students' ability to comprehend the text, therefore, teachers have to help students change their inefficient reading habits (reading word by word, focusing too much attention on form, relying heavily on dictionary, etc.) by teaching them efficient reading skills. A guided reading is an effective way to do this. In this way, the students can learn how to read in different speeds and for different purposes.

In Indonesia, English Language Teaching (ELT) focuses and emphasizes on the students' ability of the four language skills namely: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The English instruction focuses on English grammar and reading comprehension. Reading is one of the language skills which needed be taught in language classroom. Students need to be able to read texts in English either for their careers, for study, or simply for pleasure (Fauziati, 2009: 32). Reading texts also provide opportunities for students to learn vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and even good models for English writing; the way sentences, paragraphs, or texts are constructed. Reading texts

can introduce interesting topics and stimulate discussion (Harmer in Fauziati, 2009: 32).

However, it is a fact that many graduates of Elementary Schools failed in reading tests. The students still encounter some difficulties in using their English for comprehending English texts because they do not have adequate grammar and vocabulary mastery for understanding them. The students still have difficulty in reading since they may have no interests and motivation and the purpose of reading was never explained to them. As a reading teacher, the writer saw that the same condition also happened in SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh, Sragen. It was unfortunate that many students still had difficulties in reading English texts. Therefore, it is the teachers' task to teach reading in such a way, so that the students can follow the lesson eagerly.

The students of class 8D at SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh Sragen were lacked of reading ability. The fact in class showed that the students had problem with their reading comprehension. It caused the writer's deep concern as reading is very crucial part in English subject. It can be identified from their English score. The score received by students are not yet as target of minimum passing grade. From the data of the students English score in the semester 1 Academic Year 2009/2010, the students of class 8D SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh Sragen gained only 5.5 as a mean score in their reading comprehension.

The writer tried to find out the causes of the problem by conducting reading assessment as a pre-test. The assessment aimed to test the ability of students on their reading comprehension. The teacher also held interview and

class observation to get supporting data about the cause of the students' lack of reading comprehension.

The data of the pre test showed that only 54% of the students got score above 65. The minimum passing grade of reading class for class 8D is stated that 75% of the students has achieved score 65. Comparing with the students' reading assessment and the minimum passing grade requirement, the students of class 8D can be categorized as lack of reading comprehension. The students sometimes are unable to get complete understanding of the texts. This might be caused by the fact that many of those students do not know the essential information needed to understand a word, including how a word combines with other words.

As the researcher observed, there were many problems that must be solved soon. The students' problem was that their reading comprehension was low. It was due to the fact that they were lack of practices in reading, some students had low motivation especially in reading texts, and their mastery on vocabulary and grammar was still limited. To get the other data, the writer did some interview dealing with their lack of reading comprehension. It is important to get the answer of the problem above. Students' honest answers are very important to get the data. Besides, the researcher also interviewed the other English teachers, and some students' parents.

By observing the students' interview result, most of students felt they were lack of reading. Hence, they found difficulties to gain ideas from the reading materials.

Since the students felt that they were also lack of vocabulary and grammar, it discouraged them to read more. In short, the students themselves had low motivation a factor which will be very significant in mastering second language acquisition (Brown, 2001: 150). In this case, interest also becomes a crucial factor to consider in deciding teaching-learning activities for the students. In other words, there should be interesting atmosphere that encourage the students in learning reading.

Beside that, the teaching learning of reading class in class 8D at SMP Negeri Plupuh Sragen process did not encourage the students to read more. At the lesson, teacher read what is happening on material. When teacher read the book and explained, the students were listening through teacher's explanation. This method is classical method and creates students get bored at short time. Moreover, this method also creates lack of understanding in student and cannot create clear purposes of teacher in teaching; therefore, it influences the student's score. The teacher still taught the students with routine activities without realizing that it would make the students bored and lost their attention in the material. As a result, they got nothing from the lesson. Douglas stated that, "*Routine activities in learning can make the students bored. As a result, their motivation and participation in learning will decrease*" (Douglas, 1987: 48)

From class observations and informal interviews with English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh, the writer concluded that teachers' method in teaching reading was monotonous. The teacher only uses one technique over

and over again to teach reading. In the reading class, the students still have their inefficient reading habits, such as reading word by word, focusing too much attention on form, relying heavily on dictionary, etc. As a result, the reading lesson becomes monotonous and boring. On the other hand, they may have no interest and motivation in following the lesson since the purpose of reading is never explained to them.

From students' social environment and family background point of view, it can be noticed that most of the students (60% of students) come from modest family. Their parents are farmers, sellers, housemaids, and factory workers. They are under welfare family. It means it is difficult for them to gain English out of school, such as English course.

From the interview result of the students' parents, it can be described that the students got problems in English especially reading comprehension because the parents said the students did not like English (20%), they never studied at home or they preferred watching TV than studying (60%) and they had to help the parents working after school (20%). Moreover, the parents also admitted that many of them (up to 40%) could not assist their children in studying because they were very busy to work.

The reality, however, shows that most students in class 8D of SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh Sragen have difficulties in learning English, especially in mastering reading comprehension. Many problems often appear during the teaching and learning reading. The causes of the problems are that: 1) the

material is not interesting, 2) the limited time and teaching equipments, and 3) the technique of delivering material is not suitable and interesting.

Because of the causes, the students are less motivated to learn. It is indicated by the cases: 1) the students get difficulties in understanding the content of the text, 2) the students get difficulties in grasping the meaning of the words, sentences, or paragraphs, and 3) the students' attention to learn English is decreasing. Therefore those students need strategies in order to overcome the problems.

One of the strategies that the English teachers use is that using media in teaching reading. The use of media to teach English is aimed to courage the students' motivation to read and to improve the students' reading comprehension. Many kinds of visual aids can help teachers teach English, for example: text pictures, objects and people. Visual aid is one of important factors in foreign language teaching. Actually, there are several techniques used to increase the students' attention to the lesson and produce better learning.

The achievement of student's score was considered as a serious problem by the teacher. Therefore, he needs to apply learning process which considering new method. The teaching process which is held create student not get used to in reading. By applying correct methods, the teacher can arouse the students' motivation to learn English, especially reading

This action research is carried out in the classroom by implementing the use of pictures as a media in teaching reading. By using pictures, hopefully,

the students will be more interested in learning reading, and furthermore, they will gain better result in their reading comprehension.

Therefore, by using passages and pictures as teaching media, the writer expects that reading ability of students class 8D of SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh would increase. The participation of the students and the active involvement of the teacher were very crucial. In another words, the students needed to be active in taking a role as a learner. And the teacher had an important role and strategic position in developing student's reading skill. This strategic role relates with the teacher's roles as facilitator, motivator, learning resources, and organizing in teaching and learning process. In this classroom research, the teacher facilitated the students' learning activities in the classroom, motivated the students to dig up their potencies, and organized the teaching learning process during the action research. In this case, the writer takes position as a teacher, and he was helped by a collaborator to observe and to help him during the activities in classroom action research.

The classroom action research tended to build the students' interests and motivation to read the text. In doing the research, it is important to establish the target that wanted to be reached. The target of this research is that the students can improve their understanding of the text. Based on the target above, the researcher finally wishes that:

- 1) 80% of the students can understand in comprehending the text in terms of:
 - a) finding the main idea; b) getting the content of the text; and c) raising the reading score,

2) 80% of the students can study more active to interact in the classroom and have higher motivation to study.

To gain the target of the research, the researcher will train the students to comprehend the text and help them to find main idea, supporting idea, explicit information, and master vocabulary. When the students are able to comprehend the text, it is expected that they can reach the understanding of the text.

Indeed, the writer is interested in improving the students' reading comprehension and in this research he will try to apply pictures as a media in teaching reading. Thus, the writer will do a research entitled **"IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION USING COMBINATION OF PICTURE AND READING MATERIALS (An Action Research on the Second Grade Students of SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh Sragen Academic Year 2010 / 2011) "**.

B. Problem Identification

SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh Sragen Regency, Central Java, as one of Junior High Schools in sub district Sragen Regency, has some problems in teaching-learning English, especially in teaching reading. The problems are the teachers' method was monotonous, the students still have inefficient reading habits such as reading word by word, focusing too much attention on form, relying heavily on dictionary, etc., and they have low motivation in reading class. This condition is caused by many factors. One of them is the use of inappropriate

strategies, approaches, methods, techniques or models which may help the students understand the reading text better. The implementation of various different methods, strategies or techniques in teaching reading will make the students enthusiastic in following the lessons.

The classes will be boring if the teacher only uses one technique over and over again to teach reading. The students may get bored and the teacher himself will be frustrated because they do not follow the lesson. This condition, eventually, will influence their comprehension of reading texts.

The above fact urged the writer, as an English teacher, to find the solution in order that the students of SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh, Sragen, will have motivation in reading and understand reading texts. In line with this problem, the writer will try to find out whether or not using pictures and reading materials can improve students' motivation and reading comprehension.

C. Problem Limitation

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the study, the writer only focuses the studies on the use of pictures in teaching reading to the 8D students of SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh, Sragen Regency, so that the ability in comprehending reading texts will be improved.

Here, the existence of pictures are important to help the students' in learning reading and comprehending the texts. By using pictures as a media, the teacher helps the students to develop skill and confidence in searching the

meaning and the content of the texts. Besides that, the teacher can make the students to focus on the use of the language in the reading texts.

D. Problem Formulation

Based on the background above, the problems in this research can be stated as follows:

1. Does the use of combination of picture and reading materials improve the students' reading comprehension in learning English of the second year students of SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh Sragen?
2. How effective can pictures and reading materials improve the students' reading comprehension?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the use of pictures and reading materials as media to teach reading in class 8D of SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh Sragen?

E. Objectives of the Research

From this research, the author wants to achieve some objectives; the general objective and the specific one.

1. The General Objective

The general objective is to describe the implementation of pictures as a media in teaching reading in class 8D students of SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh Sragen.

2. The Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the research are:

- a. to clarify whether the use of picture and passages improves the students' reading comprehension in learning English of the second year students of SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh Sragen
- b. to clarify the effectiveness of pictures and passages in improving the students' reading comprehension
- c. to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of the use of pictures and passages as media to teach reading in class 8D of SMP Negeri 1 Plupuh Sragen

F. The Benefits of the Study

Herewith, the author expects that this research would give several benefits, both theoretical and practical.

1. Theoretical Benefits

- a. To enrich new theory(s) in teaching foreign language, like English
- b. To become the reference for next research(es) whether with the similar or different approach

2. Practical Benefits

a. For the Teacher

- 1) Gets knowledge to improve teaching strategy in English class especially in teaching reading.

- 2) Improves professionalism and abilities in teaching, especially in teaching English.
 - 3) Identifies students' necessities and problems.
- b. For the School
- 1) Betterment on teaching and learning English.
 - 2) Solution(s) for students' problem(s) especially in English.