

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem identification, problem limitation, research question, the purpose of study, and the significance of the study, both theoretical and practical significances.

1.1 Research Background

Teaching English as a foreign language in junior high school focusses on the competencies, which are reading, speaking, listening, and writing. These skills are taught in an integrated way because one skill cannot be performed without another. Each of the skills has a typical contribution to language mastery. One of the language skills, which has to be mastered by students in language learning is reading skills.

Reading is one of the language skills that should be mastered in learning a language. According to Perfetti, Smelser & Eds (2001), reading skill is an individual's standing on various reading assessments. Hill (1994) states that reading is the process of understanding a written text which means extracting the acquired information from it as efficiently as possible. Reading is very important in learning because every activity always has a relationship with reading in the classroom. Wales (2011) states several reasons why reading is very important. Firstly, reading can help people to learn and discover new things. Secondly, reading can improve literacy skills which increase opportunities within education and learning, work and employment. Thirdly, reading can improve social skills, in which improvements in reading and literacy can affect

individual's contributions to society. Moreover, reading can enrich students' vocabularies, general knowledge and their understanding about other cultures.

According to National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000), there are five essential elements of reading, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It can be seen that comprehension is one of the five essentials. According to National Reading Panel (2000), comprehension is important to develop of children's reading skills and therefore their ability to obtain an education. When NSP began its analysis of research data that still existed about reading comprehension, three main themes emerged: reading comprehension is a cognitive process that integrates complex skills and cannot be understood without examining the critical role of vocabulary learning, instruction and its development; active interactive strategic process is critically necessary to the development of reading comprehension; the preparation of teachers to best equip them to facilitate these complex processes is critical and intimately tied to the development of reading comprehension.

Zarrillo (2007) states that comprehension is an understanding of what is being read. Comprehension depends on readers' characteristics such as basic reading skills, decoding, vocabulary, and sensitivity to text structure. According to Ningsih (2017), the process of reading comprehension needs physical and mental to get information from the text. The physical is the part of the body such as faced particularly, and mental is memory and perception and memory as part of thought are involved in it. Reading comprehension refers to an interactive process of understanding text to make sense of word meanings within the text and to interpret messages.

The curriculum in junior high school focuses on helping students become increasingly independent learners and preparing them to succeed in high school and beyond. It makes Indonesian curriculum make to achieve success in learning. Curriculum 2013 (K-13) is a curriculum used by Indonesian education system. K-13 is implement in Indonesia because the goal of education in junior high school is to improve students' competences, personality, and knowledge as well as to prepare the students to be skillful and be able to continue their education to higher level, and K-13 can help the students more active because curriculum 2013 is more conceptual.

EFL teachers get some problems and challenges from their students in teaching reading. Those problems are lack of motivation in reading caused by difficult vocabulary, low effort and learning strategies that are not effective, and having no reading habit. Teaching reading has become more challenging in the EFL classroom because by asking them to read from the beginning until the end of the text does not guarantee they gain an understanding. The same problems also happen in junior high school in Indonesia, especially in Bali.

Moreover, in teaching reading a teacher can use the strategy that can make the students more active. For example, the researcher applies small group discussions to support the students as readers and thinkers. According to Brewer (1997:23), the purpose of small group discussion is to analyze and evaluate the information for supporting evidence to reach an agreement on general conclusions, and also to circulate and contribute information to a particular topic. Besides, according to Kenz & Greg as cited in Putri, Suparman & Suka (2014), small group is a small member of the person,

works together through interaction whose interdependent relationship allows them to achieve a mutual goal.

According to Brewer (1997:28), small group discussion is developing the cognitive and effective abilities of participants. In addition, there are some advantages of small group discussions. Those are participants may more easily understand another participant's explanation than a presenter's explanation, and it is a good way to get participants interested in a topic. According to Annamalia, Manivel, and Palanisamy (2015), small group discussion increased the students' thought, helped them in better communication, interactive, friendly, bridged the gap with teacher, and also can improve the students' communication skills.

Several studies have been conducted related to the effectiveness of using small group discussion toward students' reading comprehension. The study conducted by Darise (2018) in order to find out the improvement of students' ability by small group discussion method with some steps in reading comprehension. The results show that the students' reading comprehension was improv and has a positive effect on reading comprehension. Another study also has been conducted by Putri, Suparman, and Suka (2014) where the studies aimed to find out whether there was any significant increase in students' reading comprehension achievement after being taught by using small group discussion techniques. The result shows the students' reading comprehension of anecdote text by using small group discussion techniques was increase. The last study, has been conducted by Indah (2018) in order to find out the students' response in applying small group discussion technique in teaching reading comprehension and to know the impact using this technique. The result showed that the students can improve

their reading comprehension and has a positive response towards the small group as a way to improve student's ability in reading comprehension.

The study would be slightly different from previous studies. Concerning the result of previous researchers, the researcher was interested in conducting a similar study but in a different method, different schools and a different grade with the previous study, which was done by other researchers. Small Group Discussion toward Balinese students. The researcher has conducted pre-observation and informal interview with an English teacher in SMP Negeri 1 Sawan in order to collect some data and information that were needed for conducting this research. Based on the results of the interview and pre-observations, the researcher found that there was no researcher that has been conducted a research related to students' reading comprehension. The other reason was researcher found that the eighth-grade were lack of reading comprehension. So based on the reason, the researcher related with students' reading comprehension through small group discussion. This research was in form of experimental research about the effect of Small Group Discussion on the reading comprehension for grade eight at SMP Negeri 1 Sawan.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background above, reading is one of the English skills that should be developed by the students. According to Harvey (2007), if students are struggling to understand what he or she reads, then a reading comprehension may help them. In reading comprehension students are expected to be able to develop grade basic skills of reading comprehension namely concluding word meaning, recalling the meaning of

words, finding answers to question, weaving together ideas in the content, attitude, tone, and mood, identifying technique of writer, following the structure of a passage, recognizing an author's purpose and drawing conclusion from the content (Davis as cited in Alderson 2000).

The reading skill of grade eight students at SMP Negeri 1 Sawan was low. Reading skill in this school was low because of some factors from students, teacher, activity, and media. Firstly, students needed longer time when reading text, because they depended on the dictionary and their teacher as a facilitator while they were reading a text. Secondly, the teacher helped the students comprehend the text-only by translations the meaning of words or sentences; the teacher became the center in reading activity, and students just only listened to what the teacher explained. Thirdly, reading activity in the classroom was always the same in each lesson. The teacher just instructed to translate the text and sometimes there were only some students active in discussing sessions. The last factor is the media factor. The Media is used in learning reading just a coursebook. The teacher just put a story from a course book; it made the students have a limited vocabulary.

Many techniques can be applied in the classroom to help students to improve their reading comprehension and one of them is small group discussion. Based on several studies, small group discussion is an effective techniques for students' reading comprehension.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This study focused on investigating the implementation of small group discussion in teaching reading comprehension. The instruments are lesson plans and post-test to collect the data. Two classes used in this study. One class was the experimental group, treated by using small group discussion. On the other hand, another class as a control group was treated by using a conventional strategy. In conventional strategy teacher-oriented class was applied. The students did the task individually and the prior teaching focused on the result instead of the process.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the explanation above, the research question of this research can be stated as follows:

“Is there any significant effect of Small Group Discussion on Reading comprehension for grade eight students at SMP Negeri 1 Sawan?”

1.5 Research Objective

Based on the problem mentioned above, the objective of this study is to investigate whether or not small group discussion gives a significant effect on the grade eight students' reading comprehension at SMP Negeri 1 Sawan.

1.6 Research Significance

The significance of this study is divided into two (theoretical and practical):

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge, especially in the field of educational area. Specifically, the result would contribute to the theoretical aspect of the reading comprehension of students.

1.6.2 Practical

a. For Teacher

After knowing the effectiveness of using small group discussions on students' reading comprehension, the teacher can choose small group discussions as a strategy in teaching reading. Besides, the teacher can motivate students to increase their ability in reading through small group discussions.

b. For Researchers

Other researchers can learn some theories about the use of small group discussions on reading comprehension. The theories are useful for other researchers to gain information related to this research. Specifically, other researchers would get information about the use of small group discussions on students' reading comprehension. Besides, they also can challenge herself in conducting this research because she needs to know more about the use of small group discussions on reading comprehension and the important thing was the researcher can finish her thesis through this research.

The result of this study would be useful for the other researchers who are interested to conduct a similar study. This study can be a reference for the other researchers to get some information related to this study especially, about the use of small group discussions on reading comprehension. The other researcher also can use some literature review from this research to support their research.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Conceptual Definition

1. Reading

According to Pourhosein Gilakjani (2016), reading is an interactive process in which readers construct a meaningful representation of a text using effective reading strategies. Effective reading strategies considered significant skills that have received a special focus on students' reading comprehension proficiency.

2. Reading Comprehension

Ahmad & Ismail (2012) stated reading comprehension as a combination of the cognitive and metacognitive processes, which the readers have to make inferences on the context or at the end of a story by using information from various sources: the title, the illustration or generally from the previous paragraph.

3. Small-Group Discussion

Brewer's (1997:22) states that small group discussion is a technique to circulate and contribute information on topic and evaluate and analyze the information for supporting evidence to reach an agreement on general

conclusions. It helps students improve their reading comprehension and thus become better readers.

1.7.2 Operational Definition

1. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension in this study refers to the skill of the students at the grade eight of SMP Negeri 1 Sawan in understanding the meaning of texts.

2. Small-Group Discussion

In this study, small group discussion is a technique used by the researcher to know the students' reading comprehension ability.

3. Conventional Strategy

This strategy is defined as a teacher-centered strategy used by the researcher in the learning process at SMP Negeri 1 Sawan. This strategy was a kind of strategy of teaching reading that was often conducted in the classroom. In this strategy, the teacher has no variation in presenting the material so that the teaching-learning process creates a boring situation.