

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research background, the identification of the problem, the limitation of the problem, the statement of the problem, the research objective, and the research significance.

1.1 Research Background

English as a global language has brought an important role in humans' life. To communicate well with other people from other countries with different languages, people usually use English. Thus, English functions as a lingua franca or a bridging language. Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia decided that English is the first language that has to be taught in Indonesia. Consequently, English has been taught from elementary school as a local content. English also becomes a compulsory subject in Indonesia. Thus, teaching English becomes very important because it can help students to prepare themselves to face a competitive era.

Based on the 2013 curriculum, it is mentioned that four skills in English must be mastered by Indonesian students. Those skills include speaking, writing, listening

and reading. One of the language skills that cannot be separated from other language skills is reading because through reading, students can expand their knowledge and find various information.

Clark and Sibelstein (1987) state that reading is a cognitive activity, which deals with text to construct meaning. In other words, people interact with text and use their prior knowledge combined with visual information in comprehending messages. Concerning this, Nuruddin, Seken and Artini (2013) claims that reading is a process of comprehending texts to get information about what is being read and what makes it easy for people to find the world around them. However, to understand information in a text, students need to comprehend what they read. In teaching reading, teachers should create a creative procedure of teaching activities to enable students to comprehend meanings.

According to Snow (2002), reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning simultaneously through interaction and involvement with a written language. By doing those activities, students are expected to get the content of the reading materials and achieve their purpose and expectation. In addition, Woolley (2011) states that reading comprehension is an activity of understanding meaning from text. The goal of reading comprehension is to achieve an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to gain meaning from isolated words or sentences.

Regarding the importance of reading comprehension in learning a language, several problems are still faced by students when they try to comprehend text. One of the problems is students' boredom. It is because teachers use a conventional text, which contains many sentences, without providing any attractive illustrations. It is also supported by Harmer (2007), who proposes that young learners tend to get bored when they learn something. They cannot fully keep their attention if they are taught without any attractive ways. Their attention towards something is only in a short period compared to older learners. It is because they learn indirectly, which means that their comprehension about something only comes from what they see and hear without any further intervention to know how things happen.

Further, many ways can be used to help students to comprehend texts. One of them is by using media. According to Wahyuni (2013), media are used to convey information or transfer the teaching materials. Sukarno (2008) states that using media in teaching English can help teachers create a good classroom climate. A good medium can create a good atmosphere in the classroom and it can enable students to avoid boredom. One of the media that can be used in teaching reading is a story in the form of a comic (Comic Strips). Using comic strips in the classroom is not only as an instructional tool but also as a way to make learning more interesting and memorable for students.

Comic strips are defined in this study as a sequence of pictures that tell a story. Among visual genres, comic strips have been noticed by many researchers because they are communicative, popular, reachable, readable, and they combine

visual perception with academic purposes (Liu, 2004: 230). Furthermore, according to Nugroho (2017), some benefits of using comic strips in the classroom include increasing students' motivation and making the teaching-learning process run well. It can also stimulate students' senses to process information presented throughout the story. It can be a refreshment and amusement for students in the classroom. It contains moral values that can be delivered to students through a story. In addition, it can attract students' attention and make the student actively participate in a reading class. Thus, comic strips are a good medium to help the students comprehend a reading text.

Another research has been done by Syaifullah and Nasution (2014). Their study focused on the effect of comic strips in teaching reading a descriptive text. The result of the study showed that comic strips were effective media for teaching reading, especially descriptive text. It can be shown from the improvement of students' scores in the post-activity. The use of comic strips also helped students memorize easily based on the visualization contained in the comic strips. The researchers also stated that teaching reading by using comic strips can decrease students' boredom. The treatment gave students different distinctions of teaching, which made the learning process run smoothly.

Another similar research has been done by Myartawan and Parianingsih (2011). They conducted collaborative classroom-action research (CAR) in SMPN 2 Kediri. The purpose of their study is to improve the reading comprehension of the second-grade students at SMP N 2 Kediri by using English-medium comics as

teaching materials in teaching narrative text. The study was conducted in one cycle, in which the second researcher became the teacher during the implementation stage. The results of the study showed positive results of the use of English-medium comics both in terms of students' achievement in reading comprehension and their responses towards the use of comics in their reading class.

Another study was also conducted by Arroyani (2010). She conducted an experimental study with a posttest-only control design in SMPN 2 Tanggunharjo Grobogan. The result of her study showed that using comic strips as teaching media in teaching narrative text could improve students' reading skill and motivate the students to learn English. Comic strips could create fun, competitive, and memorable English learning. It could be seen from the significant improvement of students' scores between the control group and the experimental group.

According to Curriculum 2013 in Indonesia, students at the eighth grade of junior high school are required to comprehend and produce various written texts, monologues, and essays in the form of procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative, report, news item, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, review, public speaking. This research only focuses on narrative text because it consists of telling a story, having characters, setting, and actions. These are suitable for the features in the comic strips.

In this research, comic strips were used to investigate whether this medium was effective if used in a different situation. This study is an experimental study,

whose purpose is to examine whether comic strips as a medium creates a significant difference in students' reading comprehension between those taught with comic strips as the medium and those taught with conventional media. This study was conducted in the eighth-grade of SMPN 1 Negara in the academic year of 2019/2020.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background above, the students were expected to remember word meanings, draw inferences about the meaning of a word in a context, find answers to the questions, and draw up the ideas in the content. To achieve those sub-skills in reading comprehension, students should be taught from an early age that is also known as young learners, considering students' characteristics; easy to get bored. Moreover, according to Brendon in Juhana (2014) children respond to the language well through visual things rather than abstract things.

1.3 Research Scope

The limitation of this study was investigating whether or not Comic Strips as media gave any significant effects towards the experimental group of the eighth-grade students' reading comprehension at SMPN 1 Negara in the academic year of 2019/2020. Two groups were chosen as the samples, the experimental group that was taught with Comic Strips as the teaching media and the control group that was taught with conventional teaching media.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Are there any significant effects of comic strips in teaching narrative text on the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Negara?

1.5 Research Objective

The main purpose of this research is to investigate whether or not there are any significant effects of comic strips in teaching narrative text on the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Negara.

1.6 Research Significance

This research is expected to give theoretical and practical significance. The theoretical and practical significance of this research can be described as follows.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study is expected to give more insightful knowledge about the implementation of Comic Strips to develop students' comprehension. This study would show the evidence of whether or not Comic Strips can be used in improving the eighth-grade students' comprehension.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this study will be significant for students, teachers, and other researchers.

1. For teachers

This study is expected to give new knowledge for teachers about the implementation of comic strips as the teaching media in reading comprehension for young learners.

2. For students

This study is expected to increase students' motivation in reading English through the use of comic strips as the teaching media.

3. For schools

This study is expected to be a reference regarding the improvement of the learning process conducted by the teachers so that the objectives of the learning at school could be achieved optimally.

4. For other researchers

This study is expected to be used as a source of reference for further research.