

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is seen as the underlying skill that could assist students in building their vocabulary and create a continuing language learning (Ahmadi, 2016). It has been considered as an indisputable part of students' academic achievement, which involves a compound comprehension process that has various objectives and context (Allan & Bruton, 1998; Harrison, 2004). Comprehending a text does not merely mean recognizing and understanding every word in the text. It involves a process where students are able to build up a mental representation of what is discussed in the text as a result of the integration of information that has been read (Townend, 2003). This makes reading becomes a skill that has always been emphasized in language learning, particularly in English learning.

Students who fail to learn reading during their primary grades would be lack in the ability to read well (Sloat *et al.*, 2007). This lead them to develop poor self-esteem, lack of motivation in learning, and various academic problems which drive them away from the expected learning objectives (Sloat *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, assisting students to have a good reading comprehension is an important goal to be achieved during the process of learning. By having reading comprehension, students are able to obtain information and comprehend concepts, enhance their general English skills, and develop new ideas and experiences (Mickulecky & Jeffries, 2004).

Since being introduced in 2004 by UNESCO, literacy which covers reading has become a major concern in Indonesia's education. Considering how important reading comprehension and literacy are, the government of Indonesia has implemented School Literacy Movement (GLS) program since 2015 in order to promote literacy to the students and build the culture of reading (Kemdikbud, 2015). It is a part of National Literacy Movement program which tries to build the literacy and reading culture in three fields, which are family, school, and society. In order to support the implementation of the literacy movement, Miller & Pennycuff (2008) suggest that schools and teachers need to work collaboratively in order to provide an effective teaching strategy in order to effectively promote reading.

The pre-observation result conducted in five junior high schools in Abang Sub-District, Karangasem Regency (SMPN 1 Abang, SMPN 2 Abang, SMPN 3 Abang, SMPN 4 Abang, and SMPN 5 Abang) showed that the teachers used Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) in promoting reading inside the classroom and during the process of learning. In this case, students' perception from the use SSR in this study is concerned with their reading comprehension, which involves top-down and bottom-up process to make meaning of the text. Takaloo & Ahmadi (2017) state that reading comprehension is the capability to recognize how and where to supply reading sources to achieve that comprehension goals. Thus, recognizing the reading sources and achieving the comprehension goals related to the use of SSR which enable the students to determine their own reading sources, in order to make them read in more concentrated and motivated through SSR. In this case, Stahl (2004) mentioned that SSR is a teaching strategy which assigns

students to read a self-selected text silently for a certain period of time. The idea of SSR is based on the fact that self-selected reading materials tend to encourage students to read with interest as it is the topic that they like and find pleasure in, which build their motivation in reading and a continuous reading culture that could improve their reading comprehension and other language skills. This is supported by Renner et al. (2014) which mentioned that the teacher allows the students to do self-selected book in order to enhance students' motivation and engagement in reading. Thus, Day *et al.*, (2007) also suggest that SSR has demonstrated improvement in motivation and attitude to read as well as better improvement in English proficiency.

Garan & Devoogd (2018) suggest that SSR comes in many variations of implementation, but the pure one is basically a time devoted reading where students choose the books or texts by themselves without any assessment, assignment, checking, or teacher's instruction. Some teachers apply SSR by checking the book type and the amount of book that have been read by the students. Some teachers also implement assessments, reading checklists, and discussion (Atwell, 2007; Gambrell, 2007; Reutzel *et al.*, 2008). Despite the differences of the teachers' involvement in the implementation, SSR is implemented by giving students at least 15 to 30 minutes to read a self-selected book (Stahl, 2004).

Since the students are expected to read silently by themselves, then the process required the students who have high interested and motivation in reading. As what is suggested by Gardner (2000) that highly interested and motivated students were willing to read by themselves and eventually enjoy the independent

process of learning. The teacher needs to provide a proper involvement and monitoring from the teachers to assure the students really read and comprehend the text. This is supported by Stahl (2004) who argues that when students are not monitored, students tend to merely follow the teachers' instruction without seriously comprehend the texts.

Further, considering the reading ability of the students in Indonesia, as what is showed by a investigation done by Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018, Indonesian students' reading ability is still low as it sits on the 72nd position out of 77 surveyed countries. It indicated that SSR were faced difficulties. Moreover, In Indonesia, English is viewed as a foreign language, it is possible that learners may encountered difficulties in comprehending texts. Several studies show that reading comprehension difficulty mainly caused by low vocabulary mastery, grammar knowledge, and reading interest (Albader, 2007; Atikah, 2009; Sasmita, 2012; and Chung, 2012).

Therefore, considering the importance of reading and the relation of SSR towards students' reading comprehension, this study aims at (1) analyzing students' perception on the use of SSR to enhance students' reading comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang, and (2) investigating the advantages found by the students at SMPN 1 Abang from the use of SSR. The setting is chosen as the pre-observation data due to the result of pre-observation that the teacher at the school implement SSR in teaching reading. The current study is urgent to be conducted in order to investigate SSR as the strategy to promote reading and support literacy activity in the junior high schools.

Several studies related to the topic of SSR have been conducted previously. A study by Permatasari & Amir (2014) investigated the implementation of SSR for senior high school students and provided the several stages applied by teachers implementing SSR. Another study conducted by Singh, David, & Chuah (2012) examined the influence of SSR in English language learning with a positive result where SSR improves English Language proficiency and encourages reader's motivation in reading. A study by Garan & Devoogd (2018) analyzed the benefit of the implementation of SSR and revealed that it benefits students in terms of reading satisfaction and motivation to read. On the other hand, a study conducted by Stahl (2004) indicates that SSR is ineffective to be implemented to develop students' reading comprehension when there is no monitoring from the teacher.

The present study aims at analyzing students' perception of using SSR to enhance students' reading comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang and the advantages found by the students at SMPN 1 Abang from the use of SSR. SMPN 1 Abang is chosen as the setting of the study since it is one of the schools that implements Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) during the online teaching and learning situation. Further, the use of SSR towards students' reading comprehension is not yet identified. In this case, analyzing students' perception is important to be addressed in order to find better solution for better implementation in the future. The novelty of this study is the study object since it focuses on analyzing how SSR is perceived and what are the advantages found by the students regarding to the use of SSR. Besides that, this study also occurred in online teaching and learning, due to the situation of Pandemic Covid-19. Furthermore, conducting this study in the

8th grade of junior high school can be essentially helpful as teachers can recognize the good and bad sides from SSR, so that students' reading comprehension can be developed better.

1.2 Problem Identification

Some problems were found and have been identified. Those problem are presented as follows.

1.2.1 Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) comes as the most used strategy to promote students' literacy and build their reading comprehension based on the pre-observation in junior high schools in Karangasem Regency. Stahl (2004) suggests that SSR assigns students to read a self-selected text silently for a certain period of time so that they are encouraged to read with interest as it is the topic that they like and find pleasure in. Through SSR, students are expected to have motivation in reading and a continuous reading culture that could improve their reading comprehension and other language skills.

1.2.2 However, students' reading comprehension toward the language, especially English still in the low level. A study conducted by PISA in 2015 shows that students in Indonesia have low reading abilities. Further, the fact that English is seen as a foreign language in Indonesia only adds difficulties in the process of comprehending a text as students face problems that are mostly related with vocabulary mastery, grammar knowledge, and reading interest (Albader, 2007; Atikah, 2009; Sasmita, 2012; and Chung, 2012). The pre-observation, however, does not provide data related the successfulness of SSR which derived based on the students' perception in Junior High Schools in Karangasem Regency.

Therefore, considering the importance of reading comprehension and the fact that the successfulness of SSR based on students' perception haven't identified yet, this study arises to investigate students' perception and advantages of Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) on Reading Comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

This study emphases on investigating students' perception of Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) on Reading Comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang, especially for 8th grade students who carry out learning through SSR. It was focused on the investigation of the students' perceptions and describe the advantages found by students towards the use of SSR. Furthermore, this study occurred in online teaching and learning situation due to the pandemic Covid-19.

1.4 Research Problems

Regarding to the study background, the research problems are presented as follows:

- 1) How is the students' perception on the use of SSR to enhance students' reading comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang?
- 2) What are the advantages found by the students at SMPN 1 Abang from the use of SSR?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

There are two research objectives proposed in this study, such as:

- 1) To investigate students' perception on the use of SSR to enhance students' reading comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang.
- 2) To describe the advantages found by the students at SMPN 1 Abang from the use of SSR.

1.6 Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Theoretical Significances

This study expects to contribute to the education development, especially in Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) implementation toward students' reading comprehension in EFL Context.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

- For teachers

The study results are expected to provide clear and understandable information about Sustained Silent Reading especially in teaching English

- For other researchers

For other researchers, who want to do the same research, hopefully, this research can help provide information about Sustained Silent Reading