

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of Study

A language functions as a means of communication. It is the representative of ideas that human beings have in mind, therefore, human beings can share and grasp ideas one another in the way of communication.

Today's world is positioning English as an international language that is used by human beings. In Indonesia, English is a prominent foreign language which is taught at schools – covering all levels. In junior and senior high schools, English is one of the subjects tested in National Examination. This fact shows that English is an important subject in education, and as a result, students should have good competency in using English as a foreign language.

English competency includes four basic skills that students should attain in learning English; they are listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The receptive skills are listening and reading, while the productive skills are speaking and writing. One of the important receptive skills is reading. Reading is a process of drawing meaning or grasping information from a written text and forming interpretation of that information (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). People – especially students – will get much information and wider knowledge by reading because written texts function as sources of information and knowledge. Since reading is a receptive language skill, comprehension is a useful requirement that readers should have.

Educational Unit-Oriented Curriculum for Junior High School states that reading comprehension is an important competency that students should have besides writing, listening, and speaking. Students are required to be able to comprehend meanings of interpersonal and transactional written text as well as genre-based written text in the form of Narration, Procedure, Report, and Description.

Reading requires skills. Students in EFL (English as Foreign Language) class should have reading skills in order to be able to comprehend the materials or texts they read. One of reading skills is decoding skill. When someone read a text, he or she decodes the words to get their meanings. Students as the readers should know the meaning of each sentence to attain comprehension. However, there is a problem when students do not know the meaning of certain words that are not familiar to them. As a result, it is difficult for them to comprehend the text.

The writer found this problem when she did Practical Field Experience Program at a junior high school in 2011. This problem was also found in SMPN 1 Binjai based on the observation – that was an interview with the English teacher. The students had difficulties in reading texts containing unfamiliar words. The basic cause of this problem is lack of vocabulary so a process of comprehending meanings is difficult; besides, media and techniques in teaching-learning process also give influence . Therefore, students need to build their vocabulary by using certain techniques in order to acquire comprehension.

Vocabulary is a group of words that human beings know and comprehend to draw meanings of language. French (2002:2) defines vocabulary as the collection

of words that someone encounters through reading process. For students of English as Foreign Language (EFL) class, understanding vocabulary is a good skill in reading comprehension. In order to understand a writer's ideas and information in a written text, students as readers have to know meanings of many words. Some researchers have emphasized the important correlation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension saying that greater vocabulary knowledge makes comprehension easier (Carlo et al. in Karbalaei, A. et al., 2012). This is the reason for why vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension are strongly related (Rice, 2009).

Using appropriate technique in learning vocabulary can build students' vocabulary understanding. According to French (2002:2), vocabulary-learning strategy or word-learning strategy includes three techniques; they are analyzing context clues, recognizing word parts like prefixes and suffixes, and looking for words within words.

One of those techniques that was used in the research conducted was analyzing context clues. Context clues are words that surround a word or phrase the reader do not know and function as clues to get its meaning (French, 2002).

Using context clues as a technique in reading report text can help students understand meanings of words they do not know, and then they can comprehend information delivered. Therefore, it is good for students who are in junior high school to use this technique in learning English because it is useful for them to build comprehension in reading. This technique also helps teacher in presenting an effective procedures in teaching reading.

This word-learning strategy – Context Clues Technique – had been applied in a research conducted by the writer. The aim of this study is to find out if using this technique can improve students' comprehension in reading report text.

B. The Problem of Study

Based on the background of the study, the problem is formulated as follow: “Does using Context Clues Technique improve students' comprehension in reading report text?”

C. The Objective of Study

In relation to the study, the objective of the study is to find if using Context Clues Technique significantly improves students' comprehension in reading report text.

D. The Scope of Study

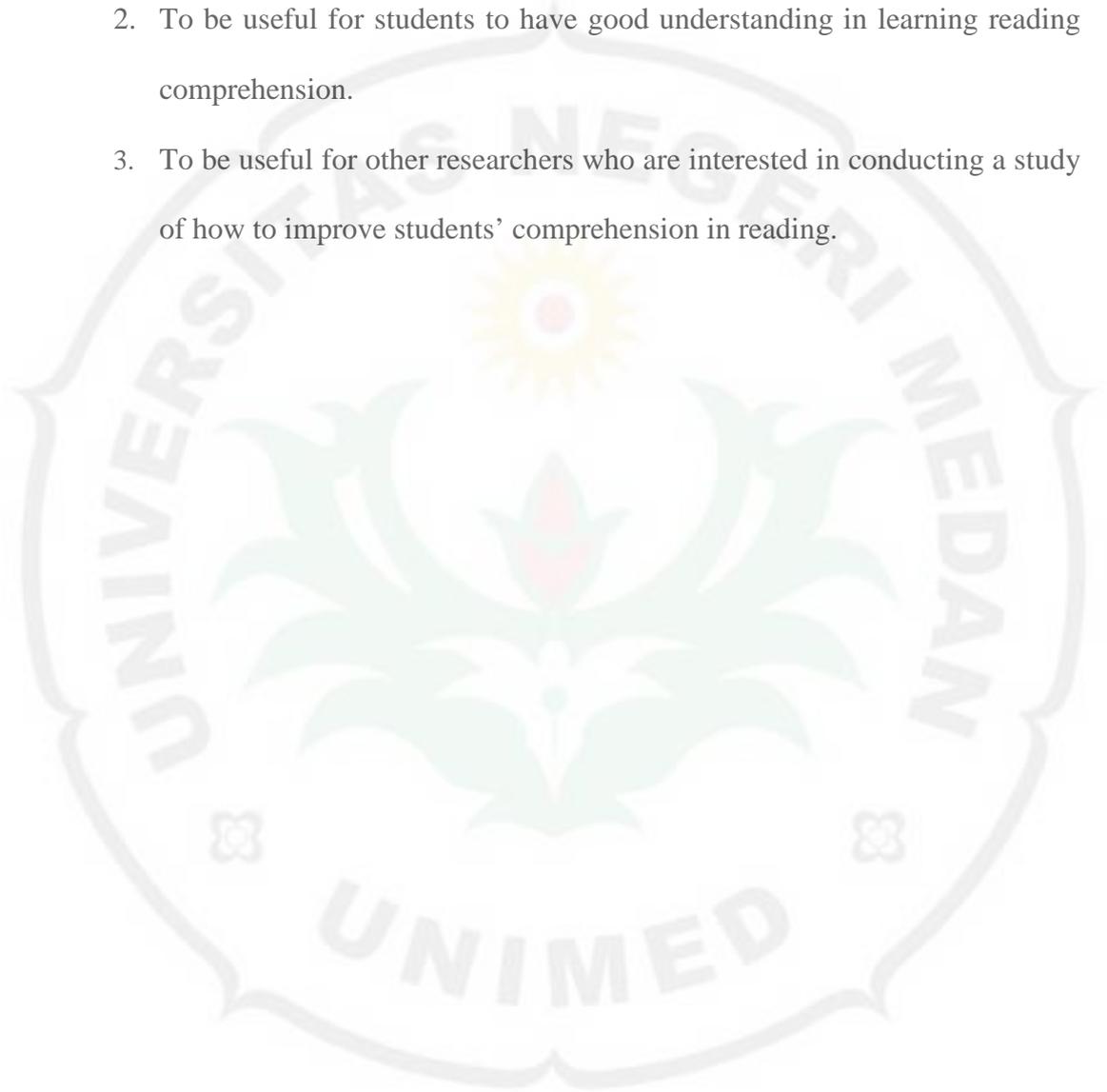
The scope of the study is limited on investigating third year students of Junior High School; that is focused on improving students' comprehension in reading report text by using Context Clues Technique.

E. The Significance of Study

The findings of this study will be expected:

1. To be useful for teachers to improve their quality of teaching reading comprehension.

2. To be useful for students to have good understanding in learning reading comprehension.
3. To be useful for other researchers who are interested in conducting a study of how to improve students' comprehension in reading.



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