

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. The Background of the Study

English is one of essential subjects should be learnt in school. There are four skills in learning English; reading, listening, speaking and writing. Reading is a fundamental skill in learning English for students especially as foreign language. With strengthened students in reading skill; it will help students in making progress in the lesson because reading is the basis in learning every subject for students. In mastering reading skill, the medium that usually used by teacher and students in learning process is textbook. Cunningsworth (1995:7 as cited in Bahri 2016) emphasizes that textbooks are best seen as a source in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner needs. Textbook is an important resource for the teacher in assisting students to learn English. And the goal of reading is comprehension.

But, reading can be challenging, particularly when the material is unfamiliar, technical, or complex. That is why for some readers, comprehension is always challenging. They may understand each word separately, but linking them together into meaningful ideas often doesn't happen, as it should.

Reading is an interaction between the writer and the reader. In understanding the text, readers tend to comprehend the text based on their background knowledge. As stated by Nunan (2003:67) reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build

meaning. In addition, Lems (2009:170) states that reading is an evolving interaction between the text and the background knowledge of the reader.

Besides combining the background knowledge with what they get from text, a good reader also has to have strategy in reading. It will help the reader understanding the text easier. Nunan defines (2007:68) strategic reading is as the ability of the reader to use a wide variety of reading strategies to accomplish a purpose for reading. Based on *Content Area Literacy Guide* (2007) stated that learning strategies refer to the specific strategies students learn how to use independently to understand a new concept or master a skill. One way to think about learning strategies is to consider what an effective practitioner of a discipline does to solve a challenging problem.

Moreover, English is included as content area reading. Content area reading is a text which discusses specific content such as mathematics, science, and social, that is why each content area has its own language or vocabulary. This is in line with Moth (1987 in Mustafa Bachrudin's resume, 1996, p.3-4) who has observed that content area texts—which are expository, as opposed to narrative, in form—are characterized by such features as heavy concept load, technical vocabulary, hierarchical patterns of main ideas and details, and unfamiliar content.

Content area reading materials present students both with new and often difficult words, as well as with familiar words that may be used in new ways. If a student does not know the meanings of a sufficient proportion of the words in these reading materials, he or she may become frustrated and skip important

words, which can make comprehension impossible (Texas Education Agency, 2002:7).

The statements above are supported by numerous researches that shows the ability of Indonesian students in reading English texts was very low (Syatriana, 2010:28 in Handayani, 2013). Furthermore, an observation conducted by the writer during her teaching practicum in a junior high school showed that the students' capability in comprehending English texts was poor. Likewise the previous researches, based on the preliminary data that is taken from SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan on Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016 by interviewing the teacher. The teacher says that, "The English textbook is quite good but students still face hardship when they find difficult words. The students used to ask for teacher's help or find the meaning from dictionary. The difficulty is also caused by the specific terminology that appears in the text which is unfamiliar". He adds that students like to read a text which contains some pictures. The text is from the English textbook which the grade VIII students of SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan use is **Interactive English 2 for Junior High School Grade VIII** published by Yudhistira. The textbook is based School Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan : KTSP) 2006.

### **The Life of Endangered Animals**

Humans have control over much that happens on our planet. The world of animals undisturbed by human contact is quickly shrinking.

Many wild animals are affected by the world of humans. Many animals are killed because humans want to use a part of the animal for some specific purposes. Luckily, there are some organizations trying to protect animals which are endangered by contact with the human world.

The orang-utan of Indonesia is one species of primate which wildlife groups want to protect. Orang-utans live high in the forest treetops for much of their lives. When companies began widespread logging in the forests where orang-utans live, many orang-utans lost their homes or were killed.

The topic discussed is familiar but the words that construct the text are unfamiliar and the text structure is unclear as a descriptive text. It can be seen that the text is constructed by some technical terminology.

In contrast with the standard competence number 5 for reading skill for grade VIII Junior high school which says” Memahami makna teks tulis fungsional dan esei pendek sederhana berbentuk *descriptive* dan *recount* yang berkaitan dengan lingkungan sekitar”. It means that the text should be related to the students’ surroundings or familiar.

Considering the facts above, it is needed to develop a good reading text based on content area by adding some illustrations or glossaries and footnotes to support the text and in order to help students in understanding English text better.

### **B. Problem of the Study**

Based on the background of the study described above, problem of the study being identified is as follows:

How should English reading materials be developed for grade VIII students in Junior High School based on content area?

### **C. The Objective of the Study**

In line with what has been stated in the problem of the study, this study tries to develop English reading materials for grade VIII students in Junior High School based on content area.

#### **D. The Scope of the Study**

This research will focus on developing reading materials for grade VIII students in Junior High School based on content area. The scope of this study is just for descriptive and recount text in the first semester of Grade VIII in Junior High School.

#### **E. The Significance of the Study**

The finding of this research can be useful theoretically and practically in providing information about developing reading materials for Junior High School.

Theoretically, this study is expected to add a new horizon towards the reading materials development. Meanwhile, the practical significances of the study are as follows:

1. The English teachers and school can keep on developing the reading materials which can be used as the reference in the learning process.
2. The students will be able to understand the text easier and become familiar with the new words.
3. Other writers who are interested to conduct further research regarding to the development of reading materials for Junior High School.