

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Some factors that play important role in the process of teaching and learning are learning materials, teaching methods, assessments, the students, and the lecturers (Kitao 1997 in Dirgayasa 2014). As teaching materials are the most influencing, it is vitally important to evaluate the existing teaching materials. Dar (2012) proposes that teaching materials are the vital things used to transfer knowledge from teachers to learners. Materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important influences on what goes on in the classroom. In addition, Dar also purposes that a right selection of learning materials makes teaching and learning process a worthwhile activity that will create an efficient, effective, and meaningful classroom environment. On the contrary, if the materials presented are out of students' need or out of students' sociocultural background to which they cannot relate to, then teaching and learning becomes a monotonous activity. The students will have low motivation in studying and will not be active in the class. It is, therefore, the good learning materials that can fulfill the students' need are required.

In English language learning, there are four skills that must be mastered by the students. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. From the four skills, reading is a receptive skill which is fundamental to build the knowledge and insight of learners. It is one of the most important skill of all. Nunan, Hedge, Alyousef (in Arifani 2016) state that reading as one of the influential factors in

EFL teaching and learning affords considerable contribution toward EFL learners language development on contextual vocabulary, grammatical pattern, and cultural expose. So, to have the good reading skill, the students must be supported by providing them the well-selected reading materials.

However, most teachers in Indonesia still rely on textbooks as the primary teaching resource. Although the materials in the textbook have been matched with the existing basic competence in the curriculum, the contents are still not relevant with students' sociocultural environment. The contents of the materials are all the same, no matter where in the region the students are, in the city or in the village. Meanwhile, Indonesia has varieties of area, such as urban area, rural area, tourism area, and coastal area with different characteristic. Thus, the students of each area have the different needs. One example can be seen is Tanjungbalai. As one of the coastal area in North Sumatera, Tanjungbalai has its own local content that the students in that city are familiar with. The city is well known for its marine products such as shell, and is called as "Kota Kerang". Besides, this city is also known with the Malay culture that is symbolized in yellow colour. The language in this city is also unique. The people use Tanjungbalai language to communicate with each other in their daily life.

On 19th of April 2017, an interview was conducted to the English teacher of the grade ten students in SMAN 2 Tanjungbalai to get the preliminary data. Some questions were given to the teachers, for instance *What curriculum is implemented in the school?*, *What English textbook is used for the grade ten students?*, *How well the*

students know or recognise the topic explained in the reading text? How is the students participation in class especially in learning English?.

Based on the teacher's response, it is known that the school implements 2013 curriculum revised edition. The textbook used for the grade ten students is the book given by the government entitled Bahasa Inggris 2016 revised edition. From the existing textbook, it is known that the reading texts are not relevant with the characteristics of Tanjungbalai that is as a coastal area, for instance "Tanjung Puting National Park", "Taj Mahal", "Visiting Niagara Falls", "The Battle of Surabaya", "B.J. Habibie", "Cut Nyak Dien", "Issumboshi", "Malin Kundang", and "Strong Wind".

The materials in the existing textbooks are good, and prepared in accordance with the curriculum in the education system of Indonesia. However, in terms of contents, the materials are too general and not appropriate to the sociocultural environment of the students in Tanjungbalai. It is clarified by the teacher who says that the topics are not really recognized by students. It makes them difficult to comprehend the text. Because not only they have to comprehend the text, but they also have to imagine how the topics in the texts look like. Thus, the students are not really interested in learning process that then lead to the low participation in class. This problem must be solved to increase students' ability in learning English.

Considering those facts, localizing the English reading materials will be the best solution. Dar (2013) proposes that localizing learning materials will present cultural values related to each area where the students live so that the students can

easily identify and relate to. Localizing English reading materials can be implemented by using local content. According to Maryono (2016), local content in teaching is an activity to develop competencies that are adjusted to the characteristics and potency of a region, including the area excellence. Local content material will help the students to be active and feel confident in the class, as what they are learning is something they are familiar with.

This study will focus on developing English reading materials (the texts and the exercises) based on local content for the grade ten students in SMAN 2 Tanjungbalai. The use of local content can make students easier and more interested in learning English. These new English reading materials will be totally different with the existing one, because the topics are much more familiar to the students so they will be more active in the learning process as what they are going to learn is something that they can easily relate to. In addition, the materials will also be prepared in accordance with the English reading basic competences for grade ten students in 2013 curriculum. It aims to fulfill the standard of competencies that has been set by the educational government.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background above, there are some problems related to the English teaching-learning process at SMAN 2 Tanjungbalai, they are:

First, the existing reading materials of descriptive text are not appropriate to the students' sociocultural environment. Second, the students get difficulties in

comprehending the English reading text, as they can not relate directly to the texts they learn. It makes students uninterested in learning English.

Because of the limitation of knowledge and time in investigating the English teaching-learning process in this study, therefore this research will just focus on developing English reading materials based on the students' sociocultural environment.

C. Scope of The Study

This study will be focused on developing English reading materials based on students' sociocultural environment. It will be applied in the grade ten students of SMAN 2 Tanjungbalai. The skill that will be concerned on is reading.

D. Problems of The Study

Based on the identification of problems above, the problems of study are:

1. How are the existing reading materials for the grade ten students of SMAN 2 Tanjungbalai.
2. What English reading materials are needed by the grade ten students of SMAN 2 Tanjungbalai?
3. How are the English reading materials which represent the characteristics of students' sociocultural environment developed for the grade ten students of SMAN 2 Tanjungbalai?

E. Objectives of The Study

In line with the problem of study, the objectives of this research are as follow:

1. To investigate how are the existing reading materials used by the grade ten students of SMAN 2 Tanjungbalai.
2. To investigate the English reading materials needed by the grade ten students of SMAN 2 Tanjungbalai.
3. To develop the English reading materials for students of SMAN 2 Tanjungbalai which represent the characteristics of their sociocultural environment.

F. Significance of The Study

The finding of this research can be useful both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research can provide information and theories about developing English reading materials by using local content. Meanwhile, practically it can be useful for:

1. Teacher, especially for senior high school teachers in Tanjungbalai, this research can be a reference in attempting to develop English learning materials.
2. The students, the students can get more motivation to learn English because they can integrate into their environment condition. This research can also be the reference for the senior school students in Tanjungbalai who want to read the English reading texts that are integrated to their environment condition.
3. Other researchers, this research can be a reference to the next researchers who want to conduct a research about developing learning materials by using the local content.