

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English is an International language is used as a means of communication among many people in the world. By knowing the important of English in the world today, students in the school need to master English to communicate with people from another country. In learning English, there are four skills to be mastered by students, namely writing, listening, speaking and reading. But reading is fundamental skill in learning English for students especially as foreign language. Reading is a process that is carried and used by readers who want to get the message delivered by the author through the medium of words or written language. Reading is complex cognitive process dependant on an interaction between information processing/ decoding skills and background knowledge combined with social experiences. Reading material is one of students' needs to attract students' interest in reading. Materials are anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of language (Tomlinson, 1998:2).

In general, most of the students are facing some problems in reading. Firstly, for most of students, reading an English text or passage is very difficult to be understood. Second, the students do not find the meaning of words and they are lack of skill in finding the main idea of a reading text. Most schools still focus on the textbook that consist of the difficult material to be understood. Textbook is an important resource for the teacher in assisting students to learn English.

Cunningsworth (1995:7 as cited in Lubis 2016) emphasizes that textbooks are best seen as a source in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner need.

In having a reading skill, the important things needs to be concerned is the reading material. Reading materials which suits the needs of learners would be easier for them to achieve the learning objectives. The readers must be able to understand what they have read related to the material. Richard (2005:251) stated that “Teachers needs to develop appropriate material for teaching reading because instructional materials serve as the basis of the language input and language practice to the students”. Appropriate selection and effective presentation of the materials appear to be keys of success in reading activity.

But, what is happening nowadays is the reading material is unfamiliar and complex (Lubis: 2016). This is the reason for the readers, reading comprehension is difficult. Therefore, reader needs strategy in reading. McNamara (2007:6) stated that “a reading comprehension strategy is a cognitive or behavioural action that is enacted under particular contextual condition, with the goal of improving some aspects of comprehension”.

Based on the statement above, reading material is the most crucial things in achieving reading comprehension. By mastering the material in reading, automatically readers will be understood about the meaning or the point that text provided. Furthermore, an observation conducted by the writer during her teaching practicum in junior high school showed that the students’ capability in comprehending English was poor. Based on the preliminary data that were taken

from SMP Negeri 1 Padang Tualang, Langkat on Saturday in April, 9th 2017 by interviewing the teacher, the teacher said that “The English textbook is quite good, but most students faces difficulties in understanding the meaning or the point of the text in the book. Text in the book is unfamiliar for the students in this school. The students cannot do the assignment because they do not know the meaning of word by word in the book, So that the students ask for teacher’s help or find the meaning by dictionary. The difficulty is caused by the specific topic that provided by text in the book that difficult to understand and unfamiliar topic”. The text is from the English textbook of grade eight students of SMP Negeri 1 Padang Tualang, Langkat **English in Focus for Grade VIII Junior High School** published by Pusat Perbukuan Departemen Pendidikan Nasional. The textbook is based School Based Curriculum (Kurikulum tingkat satuan pendidikan: KTSP) 2016.

This research will be focused on descriptive text based on preliminary data that have been done by the writer. The students in the school faced difficulties in understanding the meaning or getting point of the text because the text is unfamiliar and inappropriate with social culture and students’ environment. So, students cannot get the relation between the text with their environment. Most of text in the book provide unfamiliar topic for students junior high school in region. Moreover, the students also cannot distinguish the genre of the text. It is proven by the data taken by the writer in which one of reading materials, genre of Descriptive text, the data is as follows:

Text 1

Nusa Tenggara

Nusa Tenggara is the name for the chain of Islands which lies to the east Bali. Including the islands of komodo, Lombok, and Timor, Nusa Tenggara spans a variety of landscapes, from tropical forest, High volcanic lakes and dry savannahs. The largest islands are Lombok and Sumbawa, with hundreds of smaller island between. East Nusa Tenggara has 566 islands. The long northern arch of the island chain is the result of volcanic activity, whilst the southern islands are formed from coral deposits. Most of the eastern islands are arid, due to hot winds blowing from the continent of Australia and sparsely vegetated. The western half of Nusa Tenggara is moister and has denser vegetation. The northern part of the chain is known for deep lakes contained in the craters of extinct volcanoes, the most famous of which are coloured mineral lakes on Gunung Kelimutu in Flores.

The topic discussed is familiar for some people. But for the students in SMP Negeri 1 Padang Tualang, Langkat, the topic is unfamiliar. The students know or even have heard about Nusa Tenggara, but they do not know all about Nusa Tenggara. Most of students do not ever come to the place. Moreover, they cannot describe it and construct the meaning from the text above and not interested to read the text because they do not ever come to Nusatenggara. Besides, the word in the text is so difficult to understand by students.

In contrast with the standard competence number 5 for reading skill for Junior High School which say “*Memahami makna teks tulis fungsional dan esei*

pendek sederhana berbentuk descriptive dan recount text yang berkaitan dengan lingkungan sekitar” It means the topic of the text should be related to the students’ social cultural and environment.

Based on the facts above, it is line with the purpose of local content material. Local content material is a curricular activity to develop the competencies that are tailored to the characteristics and potentials of the region. So, it is needed to develop a reading text based on local content. The purpose of developing English reading material based on local content is to make students easier in gaining the meaning of the text. Reading materials based on local content will be presenting a text that consist of familiar topic and related to the students’ social cultural and environment. Then reading materials based on local content will support the needs of students in learning English.

In short, the writer will develop descriptive text based on local content which hopefully will increase the students’ motivation in order to help students in understanding English text better. Moreover, students not only achieve the learning objectives in the subjects of English, but also improve the knowledge about their environment such as influential person, things and place through developed reading material in descriptive text based on local content that located in Langkat District.

B. The Problems of the Study

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

- a. What reading materials are appropriate for the grade eighth Students of descriptive text based on local content in SMPN 1 Padang Tualang, Langkat?
- b. How should English reading materials of descriptive text be developed for grade eight students of SMP Negeri 1 Padang Tualang, Langkat based on Local Content?"

C. The Objective of the Study

In line with what has been stated the problem of the study, this study tries design English reading materials that needed by students and to develop English reading materials for grade eight students of SMP Negeri 1 Padang Tualang, Langkat based on local content.

D. The Scope of the Study

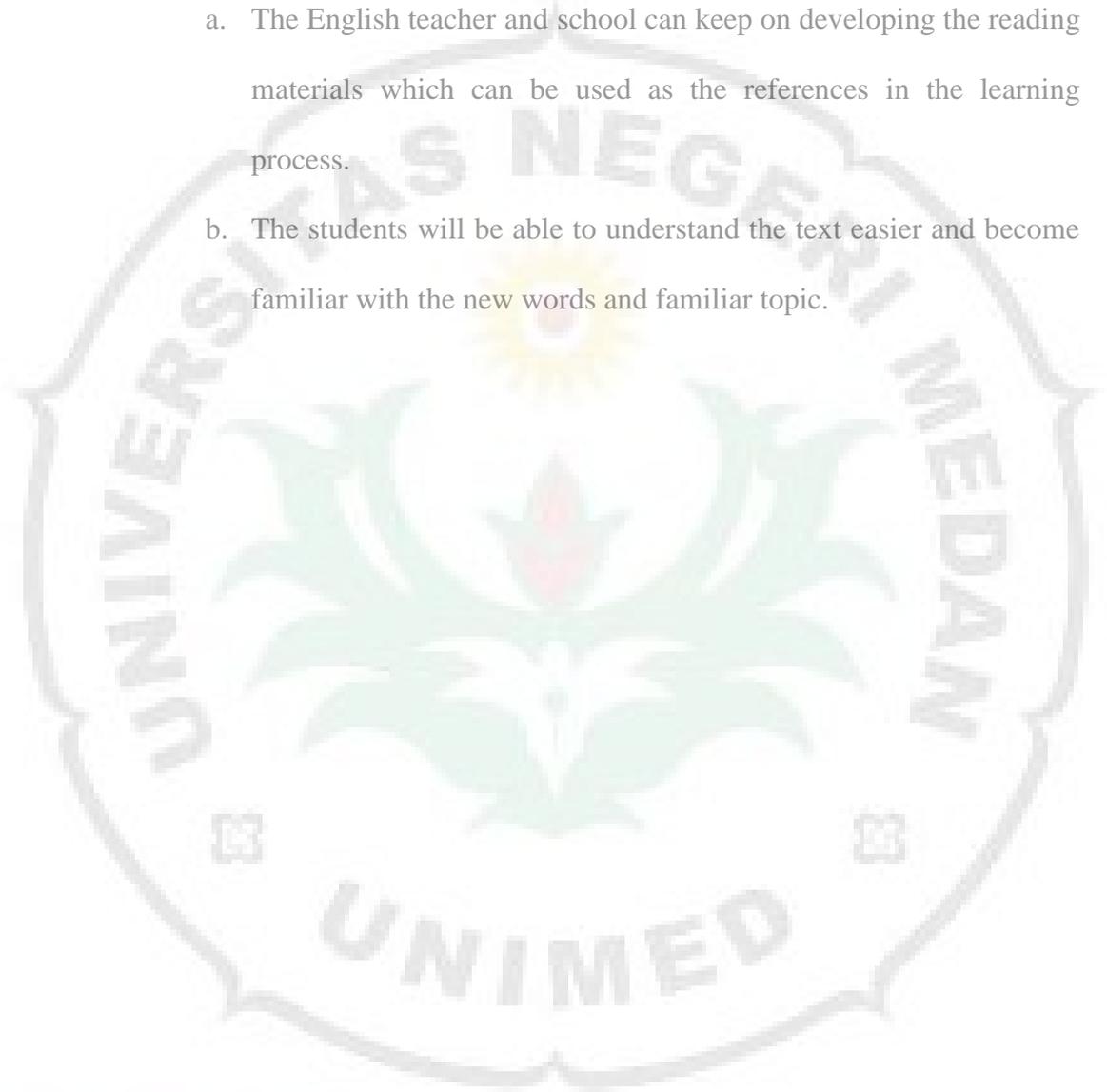
This research will focus on developing reading materials for grade eight students SMP Negeri 1 Padang Tualang, Langkat based on local content. The scope of this research is only focus on descriptive text in the first semester of grade eight in SMP Negeri 1 Padang Tualang, langkat.

E. The Significances of the Study

The findings of the study can be useful theoretically and practically in providing information about developing reading material for SMP Negeri 1 Padang Tualang, as follows:

1. Theoretically, this study is expected to add a new horizon towards the reading materials development.
2. Practically:

- a. The English teacher and school can keep on developing the reading materials which can be used as the references in the learning process.
- b. The students will be able to understand the text easier and become familiar with the new words and familiar topic.



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