

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

English is important because of its position as a dominant international language. It is used worldwide by various nations in almost every aspect of life including Indonesia. It has become the language of politics, trades, cultures, technology and etc. All the sources of technology are written in English. Therefore, the continuous advancement of commerce, science and technology have forced students in Indonesia to master English. Without mastering English, the development of science and technology in Indonesia will be adopted slower by students since most of the science and technology books are written in English.

In Indonesia, English is taught and learned from the kindergarten to university level. In cultural field, it is issued as an effective tool of communication to promote and exhibit our culture in the international show or exhibition. In the economic field, it has important role for trading and negotiating business matters, especially in business agreements of exporting and/or importing the goods and services. By having those considerations, English is very useful in human beings' daily life.

There are four skills in English, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Most students consider that reading is the most difficult one and boring activity. They sometimes are unable to get complete understanding of the texts. This might be caused by the fact that many of those students do not know the essential information needed to understand a word, including how a word

combined with other words. 'Younger and poorer readers often rely on a single criterion for textual understanding: Understanding of individual words' (Garner & Alexander: 1989)

Reading is considered as one of the most important skills which language students should obtain, particularly as it helps to build vocabulary and leads to lifelong learning and improvement in first and second language skills. "The ability to read is acknowledged to be the most stable and durable of the second language modalities." (Bernhardt, 1991 cited in Zhang & Guo, 2005, p.111). Carrell (1989) states reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second or foreign language. In other words, reading represents the role of other skills in English. When a student learns reading, it means that s/he also learns listening, speaking, and writing at the same time.

Reading is essential to students' academic achievement and involves a complicated process. Sloat, Beswick & Willms (2007) state that failure to learn reading during primary level may cause a student to be lacking in the ability to read well. In addition, students with limited literacy skills may develop poor self-esteem, lack motivation, display behavioral and academic problems; thus leading them to be alienated from regular curriculum (Sloat, et al, 2007).

Moreover, it is an essential skill for all students at all levels. The students are required to be able to read. The most important step to prepare students to comprehend writing material is to help students understand the reading comprehensions. Sometimes, the students are bored with the materials which are presented in reading comprehensions task. Although some teachers have used the strategy or some reading instructions to make students interest in doing the

reading comprehensions task yet they are just cheating or guessing the answer of the text. Since their concentration is only focused on the individual words not the wholly context. In other words, the students think that to understand the idea of the text, they should know meaning of all words written in the text.

Reading is considered as an essential component of a college preparatory for English language program. There are further reasons to recommend placing reading as one of the language programs more central in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) class. First, students can usually perform at a higher level in reading than in other skills; second, they can understand accurately written materials that they have not yet prepared to discuss orally or in writing with excellent accuracy.

In fact, reading is not as easy as people think; it is not easy to have the ability of drawing meaning from the printed page and interpret the information appropriately. Consequently, students will need to read the text two or three times to get even approximate sense. All of these activities take time and many less motivated students give up. Reading passage is bound to be too difficult for them and they predict that the whole experience will be frustrating and be motivating. In other words, reading passage can increase students' curiosity to comprehend it or on the other hand, they will get bored and frustrate and finally they will give up comprehending it. Such attitudes often due to unsuccessful experience in reading. If in the past students have been given reading text which are too difficult and have no interest and where teachers failed to gain or encourage their interest then they are likely to assume that the reading activities to be boring.

In other words, students may use their productive skills, yet still be able to comprehend texts with some degrees of proficiency. Reading, whether in the first or second language context, involves the reader, the text, and the interaction between the reader and the text.

The fact that must be realized is that to be able to access the world's scientific and technological information, English teaching in Indonesia has been started by giving much more attention to the implementation of developing reading comprehension. However, one of the greatest problems is that reading comprehension of junior, senior and university students in Indonesia are still poor (Soejoto, 2002). This indicates that the improvement of the teaching of reading comprehension is very essential. Consequently, there are several factors affecting reading comprehension.

Nowadays, the ability to read and understand written materials in a foreign language is very important. It indicates that reading ability is one of the requirements to succeed not only in academic life but also in occupation, since most information and references are written in English. This condition turns out to be one of the major concerns in developing English teaching in Indonesia. Thus, it is understandable that reading and speaking ability should be acquired by Indonesian students. It is the fact that the majority of the students are not independent readers and do not achieve good ability of it. The fact shows that when the students face the time-test, some of them cannot use the time wisely and answer the question correctly.

It is said above that **most** Senior High School students have difficulties in some English test, especially in **reading** comprehension. They found difficulties to understand reading text. **One of the** text is Narrative text. Narrative text is defined as literature written primarily **to tell** a story. The data are taken from the first and second semester in three years in State Senior High School 8 Medan. The detail is presented in the table below.

**Table 1.1 The Students' Achievement in Reading Narrative Text**

| Science Class | XI IPA 1 |    | XI IPA 2 |    | XI IPA 3 |    | XI IPA 4 |    | XI IPS 1 |    | XI IPS 2 |    |
|---------------|----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|
| Semester      |          |    |          |    |          |    |          |    |          |    |          |    |
| School Years  | I        | II | I        | II | I        | II | I        | II | I        | II | I        | II |
| 2006/2007     | 66       | 67 | 66       | 66 | 65       | 66 | 60       | 66 | 66       | 66 | 65       | 66 |
| 2007/2008     | 66       | 68 | 66       | 68 | 65       | 67 | 63       | 65 | 66       | 65 | 65       | 67 |
| 2008/2009     | 67       | 69 | 67       | 68 | 60       | 65 | 65       | 66 | 67       | 66 | 60       | 65 |

Table 1.1 shows that **there** are six different classes, Grade XI IPA 1, 2, 3, 4, and IPS 1, 2. The score of **each** class is divided by the total number of the student that results the average scores of each class and semester.

Finally, reading is a **productive** skill. Although one **may** read fictions for pleasure, one often reads **nonfictions** with eyes to perform the pleasure reading therefore serves to integrate a variety of language activities and purposes. Scientific and technological **information** written in English are available in large number nowadays. To access **such** information, the students need to be able to

read and understand written sources. One of the requirements of understanding the text is having linguistic competence. Linguistic competence is the system of rules that governs an individual's tacit understanding of what is acceptable and what is not in the language they use.

Considering the importance of reading in mastering English, government expects the students' achievement in each skill of English as global language including reading by determining the graduation standard of high school students that is called National Examination (Ujian Nasional: UN), and reading is included in one skill to be tested.

In line with the above consideration, the improvement of teaching reading comprehension has long been a challenge to the teachers of English and researchers as well. Reading is the basic skill in mastering a foreign language since reading is an English proficiency beside listening, speaking and writing.

Moreover, the Senior High School Curriculum concentrates on the use of genre. According to 2007/2008 the Competency Standard for Senior High School (Depdiknas, 2007 :2) the students should be able to comprehend short functional text, dialogue and monologue text in form of Narrative, recount, news item, descriptive, report, exposition, explanation and discussion. They are not hoped to write a text in a certain genre, but they are expected to be able to comprehend some sorts of text and answer some questions related to the text. Therefore, it is important for the students to master genres, besides language proficiency, because they will be able to understand a reading text by mastering them.

By having some facts related to reading comprehension, students need methods in order to overcome their lack desire of reading comprehension. By having those methods, students are expected to achieve good comprehension in reading. There are many methods can be used to increase students' reading comprehension. Two of them are Task-Based Language Learning Method and Cooperative Learning Method.

Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to do meaningful tasks using the target language. It functions to activate students to master the material they learn. This method puts the teacher's role not as teacher but merely as facilitator. In this way, students are encouraged to be more active. Meanwhile, Cooperative Learning (CL) is defined as students working together to attain group goals that cannot be obtained by working alone or competitively. It facilitates students to work in a group. It is very good to use because students will feel more comfortable to learn when they are among their friends. They will not feel shy when they make mistakes anytime they propose their point of view. So, this method will help students to increase their self confidence.

These two methods actually are not new anymore. They apply students centered approach where the students are in active learning while the teacher is just a facilitator. These two methods will be treated to different linguistic competence students because students must have different linguistic competence that will be affected to their achievement in reading. Besides those methods, the researcher will carry the reading comprehension focus to Narrative text. Based on

Senior High School syllabus developed by government, Narrative is taught in all grades of Senior High School. That is why the researcher considers that Narrative is the most important genre since it is taught in all grades of Senior High School.

### 1.2 Problems of the Study

The problems of this study are formulated in questions as follows.

- 1) Is the students' achievement in reading Narrative text taught by Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) higher than that is taught by using Cooperative Learning (CL) ?
- 2) Is the students' achievement in reading Narrative text with high linguistic competence higher than that of low linguistic competence ?
- 3) Is there any interaction between teaching methods and linguistic competence on the students' achievement in reading Narrative text ?

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study can be described as follows.

- 1) To find out the different effect of Task-Based Language Learning and Cooperative Learning on the students' achievement in reading Narrative text.
- 2) To find out the different effect of high and low Linguistic Competence on the students' achievement of reading Narrative text.
- 3) To find out the interaction between the Teaching Methods and Linguistic Competence on the students' achievement of reading Narrative text.

#### 1.4 Scope of the Study

There are some teaching methods that can be used in enhancing the students' competence in reading Narrative text. But in this case the researcher just concerns this study on the use of two methods, namely Task-Based Language Learning and Cooperative Learning. These two methods are the methods that can help the students in mastering English specifically in reading skill.

Cooperative Learning is a successful teaching method in which small teams, each student of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. According to Kagan (1991: 116), there are over fifty forms of cooperative learning. Each has its appropriate depending on the nature of the student population and the type of educational outcome to be fostered. But, there are some forms of cooperative learning that have received the most empirical attention. They are Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD), Jigsaw, Constructive Controversy or Structured Controversy Group Investigation, Learning Together, and MURDER. But in this case, the writer will concern only to one of cooperative learning form namely jigsaw.

On the other hand, in Task-Based Language Learning, the writer will concern to one type of task only namely problem solving. The writer chooses this type of task since it is the complete task that involves expressing Hypothesis, describing experiences, comparing alternatives, and evaluating and agreeing a solution.

Beside the knowledge of Task-Based Language Learning and Cooperative Learning, there are other factors in the term of types of genre. Therefore, in this