CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

English as an international language is widely used around the world as a means of communication. It is assumed that around 90% of the people use English as a lingua franca. To be able to communicate, people should learn English through formal or informal education effectively.

English is one of the important subjects that are included in the curriculum. It has been taught from the primary up to university level of education. The Department of National Education has made English as a compulsory subject and positioned it as the first foreign language to be taught in school based on the curriculum. It has been evaluated from time to time, so as to prepare students to meet the challenges in the work-force. English is included as one of the subjects examined in the National Examination. In order to be able to communicate in English, students are expected to master the four language skills, namely; listening, speaking, writing, and reading. One of the language skills that will be focused in this study is the reading skill.

In the Educational Unit Level Curriculum, *(Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan: KTSP)* 2006 for high school students, it is stated that one of the main objectives of teaching English is to encourage the students be able to comprehend text in reading comprehension test. In line with it, reading comprehension has been included in *National Examination (Ujian Nasional: UN)*. At least, there are six reading comprehension texts that have been tested within it. Since the school

year 2003/2004 the English National Examination in Indonesia has included listening and reading skills with the number of the items of 20 listening questions and 40 reading questions. This fact shows that reading has a great position in learning English in the class.

Reading is the window of the world. It is a foundation skill for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment. The degree to which students can read and understand text in all formats (e.g. picture, video, and print) and all contexts is a key indicator to success in school and life. As a long life learning skill, reading goes beyond decoding and comprehension to interpretation and development of new. By reading comprehension, the students are able to gain information and to improve their knowledge. The goal of learning English is to enable the students in understanding the idea and meaning of the passage. Nunan (2003: 68) states that reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge and to build meaning.

According to Grabe & Stoller (2002: 9), reading is the ability to draw meaning from printed page and interpret this information appropriately. It means useless without both comprehending and interpreting any ideas of the text. Students are expected to get knowledge and understand about the context that has explained in the text. It means that students need to learn a considerable amount of information from a text.

Actually, most of the students found some difficulties in learning reading comprehension. They think that comprehending the text is a difficult task to do.

This assumption is wrong because reading comprehension is an activity that has a lot of fun.

Based on the researcher's experiences during the time spent in the Field Practice Experience *(Praktek Pengalaman Lapangan: <u>PPL</u>)* at the State Senior High School (*Sekolah Menengah Atas: SMAN*) 2 Tebing Tinggi, many students had difficulties in reading comprehension. They had problems in comprehending the text and getting the main idea of the text. In order to solve that problem, a good strategy, method, or technique should be used.

Skimming is one of an effective technique that is useful to enhance the reading comprehension. Kustaryo (1988: 5) states that it is a technique to look for the "gist" of what the author is saying without a lot of detail. Besides, a certain amount of practice is necessary in order to skim and fulfill the purposes. To skim by reading key words, the students should be convinced that some words can be skipped words and reading can be continued. With concentration and practice, students can select key words or phrases, in order to absorb the materials rapidly. If these skills are mastered and practised, students will find that skimming, when used accordingly will help them in their study.

In connection with the explanation and in order to gain the reading comprehension and look for the "gist" of what the author presents without a lot of details, the researcher is very interested in conducting a study on students' reading comprehension by applying skimming technique.

B. The Problem of the Study

The expectation of teaching reading in English is that students can read and comprehend the English text well. But in fact, many students fail to do it. So, the students cannot understand what the main idea of the text is. In order to solve it, the researcher would like to apply skimming technique to improve students' reading comprehension. Thus, the problem of the study is formulated as follows:

"Is students' reading comprehension taught by applying Skimming Technique higher than that taught without Skimming Technique?"

C. The Objective of the Study

Skimming is a technique used to look for the main idea of text without looking a lot of details. It is a prediction strategy used to give a reader a sense of the topic and purpose of a text, organization of the text, the perspective or point of view of the writer, and its usefulness to the reader. By using this technique, the text will be understandable to the students. Furthermore, the students will be interested in getting different instructions from what the teacher asks in class. Related to the problem of the study, the objective of this study is to discover whether there is a significant effect of applying skimming technique on the students' reading comprehension.
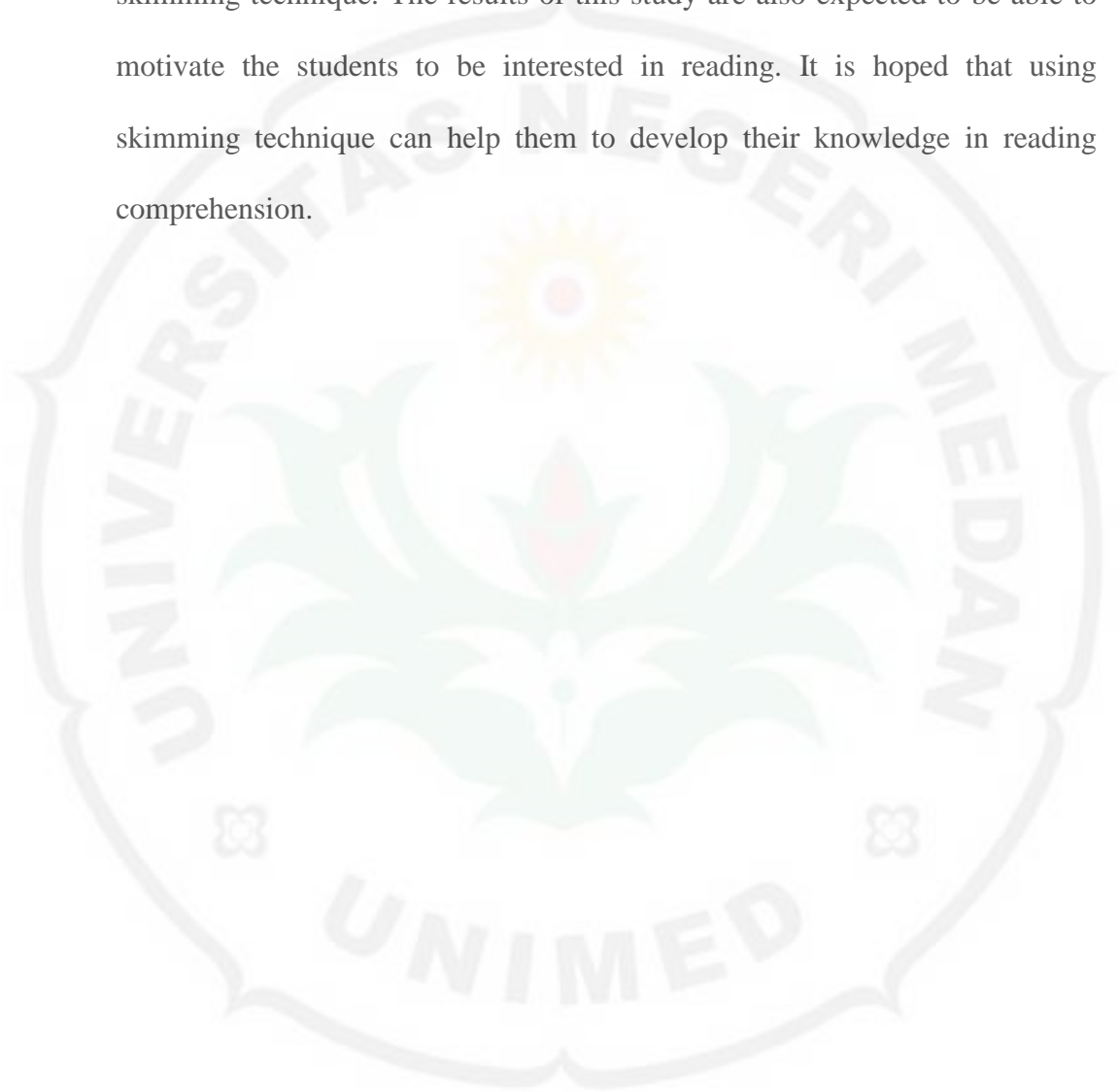
D. The Scope of the Study

There are some techniques that can be applied in reading comprehension. One of these techniques is skimming technique that helps the students to comprehend the text. Skimming technique gives advantages to the students for being able to predict the purpose of the text, the main topic, or message, and some of the developing or supporting ideas. In line with applying this technique, this study is focused on the application of skimming technique in teaching reading comprehension to Grade XI Senior High School.

E. The Significance of the Study

As this thesis is concerned with the effect of skimming technique on Grade XI students' reading comprehension, the findings of this research are expected to be useful and relevant to the theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to be able to enrich and enhance the theory of teaching reading by using skimming technique. The result of this study can be used as a reference for those who want to conduct the same research.

2. Practically, the results of this study are expected to be useful for English teachers to overcome the students' problem in reading comprehension. By using skimming technique, it is hoped the students can be encouraged in reading. It is also one of an alternative technique in improving the ability of students' reading comprehension, particularly teaching reading by using

skimming technique. The results of this study are also expected to be able to motivate the students to be interested in reading. It is hoped that using skimming technique can help them to develop their knowledge in reading comprehension.