CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Learning english engages various language skills which lead students to be a versatile learner. There are four skills that must be achived by students, they are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Among the four language skills, reading is one of the most essential skills to develop. This statement is asserted by Rob and Susser " Reading is the most emphasized language skill in a traditional foreign language teaching" (1990).

In the digital world where information is easily accessed, the ability to read is important. According to Chang (2002), many EFL students may not need to speak English in their daily lives but they need to have a good reading comprehension because there are so many accessible informations written in English.

Being aware of how important reading is for the students, the job of language teachers is to develop and improve their ability in reading comprehension. To be able to reach this goal, language teachers should always try to make their reading lessons effective by applying the most suitable strategy in accordance with the theories (**Bilokcuoglu, 2012 : 1).**

Unfortunately, there are still many students who have limitation in learning English. Based on writer's observation and preliminary research of Grade VIII of students of SMP SW Alwashliyah Medan, she found that not all

of the students were able to achieve the standard score of Minimum Standard Competence (KKM) of reading comprehension test. The standard score of KKM was 70. From 32 students, it found that there were 8 students who did not pass the Minimum Standard Competence (KKM) and the amount were increase in the second semester into 10 students. The following table shows the recapitulation of students score during the final examination in recent year.

Table 1.1. Students' Reading Comprehension Score

Semester (Year)	Score	Number of students	Percentage	Mean Score
1st semester (2012/2013)	< 70	8 students	25 %	67.54
	≥ 70	24 students	75 %	
2nd semester (2013/2014)	< 70	10 students	31 %	65.35
	≥ 10	22 students	69 %	

Specifically, students also found difficulties in reading comprehension. They found difficulties to extract the idea and informations included in a text. They often focused on a long written text and read the text repeatedly to find the key concepts. It made students trapped in boredom and even frustration. They did not know how to find the purpose of their reading. Written text is hard to remember and it forces students to read it again and again to find an information. The problems are caused by the teacher who did not encourage them to activate their prior knowledge in pre-reading activity.

Furthermore, teachers mostly used traditional teaching method, without applying any strategy to overcome students' problem in reading. In addition, they did not teach genre to students. Whereas genre is important for readers. In Indonesia itself, government has regulated a genre based – teaching. As cited by Depdiknas (2006) that students must be able to communicate both in written or orally based on genre namely descriptive, narrative, recount, report, explanation, etc. Genre help

students to figure out the purpose of a written text by scoping writer's intention through communicative purpose.

Teachers believed that teaching by using traditional method is enough. In fact, students need a renewed strategy to present a more interesting way of reading and such a traditional teaching can not afford their needs.

Grabe (2002) claims that reading requires efficient knowledge of world and a given topic also an efficient knowledge of the language. As it is stated, reading requires a rich background, and also some ability to comprehend the texts. Research by Afflerbach (1990) found that readers who had a well-developed knowledge base are more likely to have a strong ability to recall relevant information. Background knowledge helps students to interpret reading materials in an individual way. Thus, it is important that teachers teach students how to use their own background knowledge as a strategy for comprehending text.

The statement is also asserted by cognitive psychologists who believed that all of a person's prior knowledge was stored in the cognitive structures of the brain. Therefore, in order to acquisition of new knowledge to take place and to be meaningful, prior knowledge or schema needed to be activated within these structures by means of an introductory instructional strategy (Ausubel, cited in Daniel 2005). Thus, Ausubel (1960) developed the new strategy that he termed advance organizers. Advance organizer can take various shape such as outlines, timelines, charts, diagrams, and concept maps (Anderson, Yilmaz, 2004)

Concept maps are diagrams that represent organized knowledge (Novak & Gowin, 1984). Concept maps can be used as a knowledge representation tool to reflect relationships that exist between concepts that reside within an individual's long-term memory (Jacobs-Lawson & Hershey, 2002). The teacher can use concept maps as a

connector to link students' prior knowledge with new informations from the text they just read. Elorriaga in Abu Nada (2008) stated that in recent years it has become apparent to many educational researchers that representing knowledge in a visual format allows one to better recognize and understand incoming information. It is easier for the brain to interpret data when information is presented in visual formats; visual symbols are quickly and easily recognized. Using concept maps in learning process, including a strategy to accompanied with. The strategy encourage student to present their existing prior knowledge. It provides pre – reading activity which allow students to draw some words related to the topic will be discussed in shape of box according to their prior knowledge. After the students read the text they can also draw the new words according to the new informations they got and relate them to the previous words. They will comprehend the new information by comparing it with the existing knowledge in visual format.

This strategy is expected to lead students becoming critical thinker and avoid boredom in class. Furthermore, it provides an interesting learning to help teachers creating a meaningful learning for students and improving students' reading comprehension.

Those findings motivated writer to conduct a research to find out the effect of implementing concept mapping strategy in teaching reading comprehension to bring about better outcomes in students' reading comprehension achievement.

B. Problem of the Study

The problem of the study is stated as following :

"Is there any significant effect of Concept Mapping strategy on the students' reading comprehension achievement in descriptive text ?"

C. The Scope of the Study

Based on Depdiknas regulation about genre based teaching, the type of the text is limited into descriptive text. Concept mapping as strategy of reading comprehension also use concept map as media in teaching. This study will be focused on identifying the effect of using concept mapping strategy on students reading descriptive text comprehension achievement.

D. The Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out the significant effect of applying concept mapping strategy on students' comprehension achievement in reading descriptive text.

E. The Significance of the Study

The finding of this study is expected will be useful for :

1. The teachers as the reference to improve their informations about learning strategies which can be applied to increase the quality of teaching process.

2. The students in improving their reading comprehension in descriptive text by using concept mapping.

3. Other researchers, who are interested in doing related research as the reference of information.