CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Reading is one of crucial English skills in language learning besides listening, writing, and speaking. Reading ability affects the other skills ability. There are some definitions of reading. Moreillon (2007: 10) states that reading can be simply defined as making meaning from print and from visual information. However, it is not as simple as what imagine. Reading is an active process that requires a great deal of practice and skill. It is a complex task which seems to go on inside people's heads. In order to be readers, learners must take their ability to pronounce words and to "read" pictures and then make the words and images mean something.

However, there are still many students who do not realize the importance of reading to support their life into a better direction. UNESCO (2012) reports that index of reading ability of Indonesian students reach in 0,001. It means that out of one-thousand-Indonesian-students, there is only one who has reading ability. In line with the description above, Indonesian student must be able to have the reading skill to decrease the phenomenon. This must be instilled to Indonesian students early, that is Junior High School. Dealing with the terms of Junior High School as a continuation after primary school, the students still get the material related to basic education as well. The materials used also must suitable with the students' need, specifically for reading materials as one of the most important teaching materials to sharpen the reading skill.

Unfortunately, English is like simply as complementary subject. Teacher does not give any directions to comprehend the words in the text. In every English Subject, the student just answer the questions in their English textbook in which the most of materials are not appropriate with the syllabus.

In the syllabus, students must respond to the meaning and rhetorical stages of a simple short essay accurately, and fluently relating to the surrounding environment in the form of descriptive text (based competence 5.3 of KTSP). The fact is the students learn the unsuitable text with the based competence which is about environment. The phenomenon is also supported by the preliminary data that points out the students' weakness in comprehending the text in their book.

Table 1.1 the Second Year Student's Score of Reading Skill in The First Semester at SMP Negeri 1 Kotapinang in Academic Year 2015/2016

Semester	Score	Number of Students	Percentage
1	<75	144 students	58.3
	>75	55	22.3
	=75	48	19.4
TOTAL		247	100

Source: English teacher's evaluation of Grade VIII in SMP Negeri 1 Kotapinang

Based on the preliminary observation in SMP Negeri 1 Kotapinang it was found that 144 students have lower scores than 75 on their reading comprehensions. The Minimum Mastery Learning (MML) is 75, 144 students have not got the MML which its percentage is 58.3%, 55 students got score more than MML which its percentage is 22.3% and 48 students got score 75 which its

percentage is 19.4%. It also can be seen that only 103 students from 247 students who passed the individual MML score.

From the preliminary data above, most of students do not master English lesson which they have in educational process, especially for reading materials. This evidence is a phenomenon of unsuccessful goal of education. Actually, there are some various factors influencing this unsuccessful goal of education; such as: unsuitable English reading materials, teaching method or strategy, student's low motivation, lack of vocabulary etc.

The book which they use is English in Focus for Grade VIII junior high school (written by Artom Wardiman) which is published by *Pusat Pembukuan Departemen Pendidikan Nasional*, *PT Madju Medan Cipta* in the middle of 2008. The teacher usually teach their students by using available textbooks. Textbooks are a source of teaching materials which are widely used in teaching and learning process. It is the conventional source of learning for students. However, it is still quite capable of giving a good contribution to the teaching and learning process. Some of learning materials cannot be taught without the aid of textbooks.

The teacher also added that the lack of vocabulary is still shown by the students of this school in comprehending the words, even a basic word such as chalk, cupboard, board marker and eraser. They also have not been able to pronounce the basic word well. This reality shows that the student's vocabulary mastery in learning English is still low. The students also need to increase their ability of mastering vocabulary to support their skill in English Reading

Material.

As someone who knows well what students need in learning process, the teacher has a right to take a decision about teaching materials (agree with the syllabus) which will be presented to the students, teaching methods in the classroom, and evaluation that will be got by the students, Thus, if teachers find that existing materials do not fulfill their students' need. They should develop teaching materials in order to meet the students' need because the teacher has a responsibility to facilitate students in learning process in the classroom.

Reading can help people to comprehend their environment. The teacher needs an appropriate and effective reading learning materials to help the students comprehend their environment effectively. The teacher has to design the learning materials carefully considering that learning materials are important to make the teaching learning process run well and to achieve the goal of the learning.

Beside the learning materials, the strategies or methods used by the teacher in students' learning activities are also have the significant effect for students' learning. Wells (1999) states that inquiry is pursuing significant questions through using questions and ways of researching from a range of knowledge systems. Meanwhile, Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics defines inquiry learning as learners develop processes associated with discovery and inquiry by observing, inferring, formulating hypotheses, predicting and communicating.

In line with the processes, Postman and Weingartner (1969:31) states that, Inquiry method is motivate and recognize the students to be good learners and

sound reasoners center their attention and activity on the dynamic process of inquiry itself, not merely on the end product of static knowledge. Inquiry is a learning process through questions generated from the interests, curiosities, and perspectives/ experiences of the learner. One important element in this strategy is the teacher modeling or thinking out loud about how to figure out the meaning of the word. This can be done by sharing the associations that come to mind when using structural analysis. Inquiry can be considered a philosophical approach to teaching any number of subjects, not just science or can be considered a mere method.

In line with the processes, Kuhlthau (2007: 24-25) states that in the process of inquiry-based learning, from generating a questions or problem to be solved up to communicating and sharing their findings, learning through inquiry empowers students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become independent thinkers and lifelong learners. Hacker (1999) also states that through reflecting on the process during inquiry-based learning activities, students are given opportunities to explore and understand both the cognitive and affective domains of "learning to learn". Therefore, the design of Inquiry based learning materials will involve in the construction of knowledge through learners' active involvement through observations, inquire, collect, analyze, synthesize information, draw conclusions, and communicate the result.

Considering the problems above, the researcher plans to develop inquiry-based learning materials for grade eight of junior high school. The reading materials developed based on students needs by using inquiry based learning. The

reading materials are made by following the inquiry based learning steps by stating the goals of the study, formulating problems & proposing hypotheses (make relevant questions referring the goals of the study), collecting data, testing the hypotheses, & formulating conclusions (list the vocabulary needed by using many sources which can be done in pairs, read a text and answer the questions the share the answer to other pairs and finally make conclusion of what has just been learnt.

B.   The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study above, the writer makes the identifications of the study as:

1.   What reading materials are suitable for students of Grade VIII in SMP Negeri 1 Kotapinang?

2.   How to design English reading materials based on inquiry learning which is suitable to the needs of students of SMP N 1 Kotapinang?

C.   The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1.   To analyze the suitable English reading Materials for students of grade VIII in SMP Negeri 1 Kotapinang.

2.   To develop the suitable English reading materials based on inqury learning for students of grade VIII SMP Negeri 1 Kotapinang.

D. The Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is developing reading materials based students need. It will be applied in grade eight junior high school. And the skill that will be concerned is reading comprehension especially in descriptive text.

E. The Significances of the Study

Findings of this study are expected to provide information which may have theoretical as well as practical value for English teachers.

Theoretically, the findings of the study later will add some new theories and information in the area of developing English reading materials. Meanwhile practically, the findings become source of reference for the English teachers especially in Junior High School in their attempts to develop the materials in English material.

The technique and activities used by the English teachers from this study are also expected to enrich the students' motivation in learning English. Briefly, this investigation can enlarge the teachers' view regarding the current issues, especially developing reading materials in teaching English.