CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Reading is a part of the way we use language in daily life to gather information, communicate with others and also for enjoyment. Reading always occurs in context, that is, what we read is part of a broader situation or an extended text (Solomon and Burns, 2002). Text here refers to a complete piece of language which is related to a particular context. Reading is a complex, purposeful, interactive, comprehending, flexible activity that takes considerable time and resources to develop. Reading is rapid, which means that readers should maintain flow of information at a sufficient rates to make connections and inferences vital to comprehension. The reader has a purpose for reading, whether it is for entertainment, information, or study. Reading for a purpose provides motivation an important aspect of being a good reader. So reading is flexible, meaning that the reader employs a range of strategies to read efficiently.

Reading is a foundation skill for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment. Harmer (2003:68) states that reading is a process of recognition or interpretation of written materials and it ideals with language form. It involves letter, words, phrases, and clauses. Through reading, people can increase their experience, develop new concept, solve their problem, study how the words are used, how to implement the grammatical rules, and enrich their knowledge. Thus, reading is

important to send the message to students, parents, and other members of the community.

The ability to comprehend a text becomes an important part of mastery and increasing students' knowledge. However, the ability to read and comprehend a text cannot be obtained naturally, but through a learning process which is partly teacher's responsibility. Thus, the teacher is required to be able to help students in developing their ability in reading comprehension. As for reading strategies used by the teacher is believed to be able to help students to get better understanding and make them active readers.

Although reading is supposed to be the most important skill, students often find difficulty to understand the reading text without having prior knowledge because they are lack of vocabulary knowledge and they lack of a direct tool to help them in comprehending the text. Based on the observations of teaching and learning activities in English subject, especially in reading aspects, it was found that students still found it hard to comprehend a text. This phenomenon happened since they were confused by the meaning of the text. When they tried to find the meaning they got confused. Thus, comprehending a text is hard to them.

This is supported when the researcher observed students of grade X of Accounting Program at SMK Negeri 13 Medan. Students were asked to read a text in the textbook. There were only 5 people asked to read. However, the students were confused or even could not understand the content of the text. The students could not retell the story or translate the text. They found it hard to understand the meaning of the text and they could not answer the questions related

to it. The lack of students reading comprehension in English was also supported by the students' scores of reading. Most of students got the scores below the passing grade (KKM) of SMKN 13 Medan, that is 70.

The students of SMKN 13 Medan were interviewed about their lack of ability in comprehending a reading text. They told that they could not understand some phrases related to it. In this case, students could not interpret figurative meaning in the reading text, because they interpreted the meaning word by word to be able to understand what they read. They gave wrong meaning from reading a text in the *"Bahasa Inggris"* textbook entitled "Issomboshi" such as "cute cry" becomes *menangis imut* which is supposed to mean the sound crying baby; "Needle sword in a straw case" becomes *pedang jarum dalam kotak jerami*, it is supposed to mean rushed to bring the sword; "Put on a cup for a sedge hat" becomes *memakai cangkir untuk topi pendakian*, it is supposed to mean wearing a big hat, "Started out with a chopstick staff" becomes *dimulai dengan staf sumpit*, it is supposed to mean start with stack raft.

The language that use figures of speech is called 'figurative language' and its purpose is to serve three elements of clarity making beauty in the language (Tajali, 2003: 100). However, as any figure of speech has a figurative meaning, it may cause ambiguity which influences the clarity. Figurative language has some specific features which make it different from non-figurative language.

Figurative language is understood through comprehending the literal meaning of a word or phrase in sentences, then it is connected to the context where the

figurative language takes place in order to know what hidden meaning and message that a writer wants to convey (Harya, 2016). Therefore, figurative language is one of the important things for students to learn, in order to increase their reading comprehension skill.

Reading text is kind of teaching and learning media that most commonly used in every teaching and learning process. Even though many innovative media have been developed to help the educators to teach in new ways, reading texts are still used to help students to practice reading skill. Figurative language is easily found in the reading text, for example, in the narrative text entitled 'The Story of My Big Brother, Donnie". In this story, some figurative languages are found such as, "The basketball court seems to be calling his name" (personification), "He is a cheetah on the basketball court (metaphor), "he is so excited he is about to explode!" (hyperbole), etc.

From the example above, it is seen that figurative language is used to beautify the word and has implicit meaning. The students must be able to comprehend the reading text by understanding the figurative language, not to translate it word by word. Student should be able to identify any words or phrases belong to figurative language in the reading text. Thus, based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested to conduct a study to analyze figurative language in the reading texts of the textbook.

B. The Problem Identification

Based on the observation, there are some problems in reading comprehension found in SMK N 13 Medan that make students confused in comprehending a text. The students are not able to understand the content of the text since they are lack of vocabulary, and students tend to translate the meaning of the text word by word in which letting them making mistake in understanding the word. The student's difficulties in reading comprehension are affected by unfamiliar syntactical grammar, the concept of the words, etc. Those reasons led them to feel bored, unmotivated and think that English is a difficult subject. Besides, the teacher as a learning facilitator only gave tasks to students and let them to answer the questions alone by themselves. The teacher not care to their students, whether the students understand or not with the lesson taught nor interactive with students in the classroom. Thus, it is important to the teacher to determine figurative language in the reading texts to be taught to their students in order to improve students' reading comprehension.

C. The Problems of the Study

The problems of this study are formulated as follows:

1. What types of figurative language are used in "*Bahasa Inggris*" textbooks for grade X students?
2. What type of figurative language is dominantly used in "Bahasa Inggris" textbooks?

D. The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are shown in the following:

1. To investigate the types of figurative language in "*Bahasa Inggris*" textbooks for grade X students.

2. To find out the dominant type in "Bahasa Inggris" textbooks

E. The Scope of the Study

This study will be focused on analyzing figurative language used in reading texts in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook semester I and *Bahasa Inggris* textbook semester II which are used in the Accounting Program at SMK N 13 Medan, and to find out the dominant type in "Bahasa Inggris" textbooks.

F. The Significances of the Study

Theoretically, the findings of this study will increase the knowledge in literature, specifically about the meaning of figurative language in reading text.

Practically, the result of this study will be useful for:

1. The English learners, to find the references about figurative language.

2. The students, who want to get more examples of figurative language from reading text as well as constructing their knowledge or experience in figurative language in reality.

3. Teachers, to understand about figurative language as a good learning material for students as well as to overcome students' difficulties in understanding figurative language in reading text.