CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Reading is the one of language skills that should be mastered by the students. The purpose of learning reading is to comprehend the writer's ideas or the way writer communicates with the readers by the written or printed words. Reading is the process of getting meaning of the content and the writer's idea about the topic. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand the idea and information in the reading texts. Besides, reading is important for the students in order to find out the available information in a passage. The ability to read will stay with them longer than the other skills and it is the skill that will be most convenient starting from junior high school up to university.

Since English in Indonesia is a foreign language, there are possibilities that the English language students may get difficulties in comprehending reading texts such as extracting main ideas, finding specific information, identifying reference, understanding the meaning of the word and understanding text structure. According to Nuttal in Mashulah (2013:3), there are five problems of students usually faced while they are reading not in their first language, especially when they try to comprehend the texts. Those problems are: the code or alphabet symbol, vocabulary and sentence structure, cohesive device and discourse markers, problem beyond plain sense and the concepts. All these problems are probably because Indonesian

students' first language has different form, sound, vocabulary and structure from that of English and some factor which influence reading comprehension are working memory, prior knowledge and unfamiliar reading material.

SMA Bukit Cahaya Sidikalang was chosen with one of the considerations that this phenomenon may be happened as well to the students at this school. Therefore, the preliminary study will be doing to make sure that this study is possible to conduct in SMA Bukit Cahaya Sidikalang. The preliminary study was done by interviewing the English teacher of eleventh grade students about her class especially when the focus of the lesson on reading. Based on the interview with the English teacher, until today, she still find a lot of students who makes mistakes while working on reading question, the mistakes resulted on their low reading material achievement. These mistakes happened probably because they do not understand the content of the texts.

Based on the informal interview with some Senior High School students, in reading English texts the teacher commonly uses conventional technique. The teacher read the text by her/him and asks the students to read the same text loudly. After that, the teacher finds difficult words and translates to Indonesian. Next, the teacher asks the students some questions related to the texts to be answered by them until the end of the class. Consequently, the students are bored in reading the texts.

Based on the observation at SMA Bukit Cahaya Sidikalang, reading English texts still seems difficult for the students. Many of the students face

some problems in comprehending English texts. It can be showed on their score in daily reading question (Appendix A, page 53)

Based on the observation score students' achievement in reading is still low, because it is under the minimal learning mastery standard (KKM). The rate of students' score is 70 until 72 while the KKM is 75 (appendix A, page 53). Students should have knowledge in many aspects especially in academic terms; one of the ways to get more knowledge is by reading. Because without knowledge, they cannot compete with other students in modern ages like nowadays.

According to Lems (2010:71), reading comprehension is the ability to construct meaning form a given written texts. Reading comprehension is not a static competency, it varies according to the purpose for reading and the texts that is involved. Reading becomes and involving interaction between the texts and the background knowledge of the reader. Reading comprehension is process of readers combining information from the text and their own prior knowledge to build meaning. Without comprehending the texts, the readers do not understand the texts well and are not able to get the meaning from the texts.

Ideally, nowadays, students in Senior High School should be mastering English reading skill as well. This is because of the information will get more from reading. Every kinds of information can be found when the students read and they understand what they read. To understand what they read, the students should master many vocabularies. Oberholzer in Mashulah

(2013:3) states that understanding what we are reading is far more important to us than knowing the mechanical skill of reading. Without understanding, reading would serve no purpose. It means that understanding texts is the goal of reading skill that should be achieved by the students in each levels of the language learning process.

This study conducts to know the difficulties that students faced in English reading and to give the solution for teacher to help the students in comprehending English reading texts. The solution is the teacher can change the strategy or teacher can use familiar texts to help the students to enrich their vocabulary. Based on the explanation above, it is very interested to conducting a research entitles "*Difficulties in Comprehending English Reading texts of Eleventh Grade Students at SMA Bukit Cahaya Sidikalang*" with the expectation that the result of this research can be used by both the students and the teacher in improving the English teaching and learning process.

B. The Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study above will try to answer the following questions:

a. What difficulties are faced by the Eleventh Grade Students at SMA Bukit Cahaya Sidikalang in comprehending English reading texts?
b. What factors are causing the difficulties faced by the Eleventh Grade Students at SMA Bukit Cahaya Sidikalang in comprehending English reading texts.

C. The Objective of Study

Derived from the questions of research problems, this study aims:

a. To describe the difficulties faced by Eleventh Grade Students at SMA Bukit Cahaya Sidikalang in comprehending English reading texts.
b. To describe the factors are causing the difficulties faced by Eleventh Grade Students at SMA Bukit Cahaya Sidikalang in comprehending English reading texts.

D. The Scope of the Study

This study focuses on students' difficulties in reading comprehension. According to Westwood in Mashulah (2013:14), there are many kinds of students' difficulties in reading, but this study is only limited on the discussion of extracting main idea, finding specific information, identifying reference, understanding the meaning of word and understanding text structure. The study would take place at SMA Bukit Cahaya Sidikalang.

E. The Significance of the Study

There are two benefits of this research, namely theoretical and practical benefits. The expected results of this both theoretically and practically are:

1. Theoretical Significance

This research will provide contribution for the readers to enrich their knowledge about the difficulties in English reading.

2. Practical Significance

a. For Teacher

This research will be useful for teachers to diagnose the students' difficulties in reading comprehension.

b. For Students

This research will be applicable for students to help them to be active to do their reading and to motivate them in reading as often as possible.

c. For Future Researchers

This research will be useful for the future researcher who wants to conduct a research in English teaching-learning process to get a reference.

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