

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

English language is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world that must be mastered by everyone, especially in Indonesia to support professions or success in entering the era of globalization. As commonly known, learning a foreign language is more difficult than learning a native language or a mother tongue. It is because the foreign language has different aspects and system such as pronunciations, spelling, accents and others. Although mastering English is not easy, the English language learners have to be able to master the language. They have to be able to speak, read, listen, and write in English. According to Isik and Yilmaz (2007), language consists of four skills; they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All of these skills have relation each other and affect the learners' skill in mastering the language.

Reading as one of essential skills that has to be mastered by the students because it can improve their knowledge about the new words which so far they do not know before. Then, reading also can increase their fluency in spoken words and their brain's memory. Besides that, reading also has a function in order to know everything that happened in the world. Therefore, students should be able to read and understand the purpose of the text that they read.

Actually, there were common factors that influenced the students' problems reading comprehension in English, such as lack of vocabulary mastery.

This problem made students get wrong perceptions especially to get the meaning of certain words and sentences. Then, the students also had limited understanding about the texts. For example, they did not know what the purpose of reading descriptive, narrative, and other text types.

Based on the researcher observation at SMAN 4 Pekanbaru, the researcher found that the students got problems in comprehending reading texts especially to find main idea and get the meaning of words and sentences. This happened because they had lack of vocabulary and limited understanding about the texts. However, lack of reading strategies seemed significantly influenced their reading comprehension.

Then, the result of interviewed with English teacher at that school while the researcher did teaching practice on August-October 2017, she found that the students had limited knowledge of vocabulary which had an effect for them in mastering English particularly in reading the texts. This problem influenced the students' achievement in English, especially reading. Despite that problem, this also happened due to lack of students' interest in learning English even though the teacher has done some efforts to improve the quality of teaching reading.

In teaching reading, the students did not only need to know about vocabulary, but they also needed to know appropriate reading strategies that they will apply to solve some problems in reading. Actually, there were various reading strategies that can be applied by the students to solve their problems in reading such as Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), Role

Play, Jigsaw Learning, Guided Reading, Reading aloud, Semantic Mapping and some others.

One of the strategies that can be applied by the teacher in teaching reading is semantic mapping strategy. Semantic mapping strategy was aimed to overcome the problems that face by the students in comprehending the reading texts. This strategy is like a mind graphic of the readers. According to Baleghizadeh & Naeim (2011), semantic mapping strategy falls under the board category of graphic organizers. It means that, semantic mapping is one part of graphic organizer, which one graphic organizer is a diagram or illustration of a written or oral statement. Besides that, According to Antonacci (1991), semantic mapping is a visual strategy for expanding vocabulary knowledge by presenting categorized words related to one another. In other words, it is a strategy which helps students to improve their vocabulary knowledge through draw their mind into the pattern which connected each other. Semantic mapping can be used for making a connection between students and the text that they have read. By using this strategy, teacher can realize the weaknesses of the students in comprehending the texts. However, semantic mapping strategy also has weaknesses. It make the way of students' think will be divergent such as will be less focus on one problem and need more repair in making semantic mapping to look neater.

In addition, the researcher's reason choose semantic mapping strategy as the strategy that can be used for teacher in teaching reading because the researcher has already implemented this strategy to the students at SMAN 4 Pekanbaru while did teaching practice there and found that some students got interest on it.

Furthermore, a number of researches have been carried out studies regarding the effect of semantic mapping strategy on learning reading. Assadollahfam and Parvar (2012) applied the impact of semantic mapping instruction on Iranian EFL learners. They explained that the use semantic mapping instruction promotes reading comprehension of expository texts. Krisnawati (2014) worked with 7th grade students of Junior High School and showed the use of semantic mapping in teaching reading comprehension was able to improve the students' ability. Farina (2013) examined the effect of semantic mapping strategy on the reading comprehension of the first year students of Senior High School in Pekanbaru and found that this strategy can be an alternative strategy for improving students reading comprehension.

Overall, most of the researchers have done several researches dealing with semantic mapping in the classroom. However, this research was focused on classroom action research which was performed to improve the students' reading comprehension through semantic mapping strategy. Finally, the title of this research is **“Improving Students’ Reading Comprehension through Semantic Mapping Strategy at the First Grade of SMAN 4 Pekanbaru”**.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Referring to the background of problem which was explained above, the students' problems were; Firstly, students seemed to have difficulty in finding the main idea from the text. It can be seen that most of students could not answered the question relating to the main idea. Secondly, they got difficult to get meaning of word and sentences especially in term of vocabulary mastery. Moreover, they

found hard to understand the words that they never heard or learnt before. Thirdly, uninteresting and unfamiliar students toward the text is. It made the students felt strange and bored while reading. Moreover, the students got the long text to read. The last one was the teacher's method in teaching reading did not work enough for students even though some strategies such as Guided Reading, Reading aloud, and some others have been applied.

1.3 Focus of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, there were some problems faced by the students in reading. One of the problems was influenced by the teacher's method in teaching reading. In this research, the researcher focused on one of the reading's method; semantic mapping strategy. This strategy implemented to improve students' reading comprehension.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problems above, formulation of the problem was formulated as follow:

- 1.4.1 To what extend could semantic mapping strategy improve students low reading comprehension of the first grade students of SMAN 4 Pekanbaru?
- 1.4.2 What factors influence the students' reading comprehension by using semantic mapping strategy of the first grade students of SMAN 4 Pekanbaru?

1.5 Objective of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purposes of this research were:

- 1.5.1 To know whether the semantic mapping strategy can improve the students' reading comprehension of the descriptive text of the first grade students of SMAN 4 Pekanbaru
- 1.5.2 To find out the factors that can influence the students' reading comprehension of the first grade students of SMAN 4 Pekanbaru

1.6 Significance of the Research

The result of this research was expected to provide the following benefits:

- 1.6.1 For Students
 - a. Improving learning outcomes in English language especially for reading comprehension.
 - b. Giving good contribution during the learning process so that the students can be more active in reading.
- 1.6.2 For Teacher
 - a. Demonstrating another variety of teaching strategy for teaching reading.
 - b. Providing some information about the advantages of using semantic mapping strategy in improving and enhancing the learning system to reading comprehension for students.

1.6.3 For School

Increasing the quality of teacher in implements the reading in the classroom.

1.6.4 For Other Researcher

Contributing the other researchers in understanding the better strategy to improve students' reading comprehension and interested in examining the same issues.

1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding in this research, the terminologies used in this research can be defined in the following:

1.7.1 Semantic Mapping

Semantic mapping is a visual strategy for expanding vocabulary knowledge by presenting categorized words related to one another, Antonacci (1991). Here, semantic mapping is used as a strategy in teaching reading that will be expected to improve the students' reading comprehension.

1.7.2 Students

Student is a person who is taking part in setting goals and objective of learning. In this research, students referred to first grade at SMAN 4 Pekanbaru.

1.7.3 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of meaning construction as a result of blending content and message of the text with the readers

existing knowledge and skills during reader text interaction, Pardo (2004). Based on the practical research in the field at SMAN 4 Pekanbaru, reading comprehension is complex activity that covers all of English skill in teaching and learning process.

1.7.4 Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is kind of text which is aimed to describe a particular person, place or things, Gerot and Wignell (1995). Based on the practical research in the field at SMAN 4 Pekanbaru, descriptive text is one of the text types learnt by the students at the first grade of SMAN 4 Pekanbaru.