

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Background of the Study

English is learned from elementary school to higher education. There are some benefits of learning English. Firstly, for daily communication, English makes people easier to communicate with other people from various countries. Secondly, for the use of sophisticated technology, English helps people to understand the way to use existing technology such as computers, smartphones, application software, and other technologies. Thirdly, for career development, English is quite vital and a mandatory requirement to be able to work for certain companies, for example, public relations, staff officers at embassies, or flight attendants. Fourthly, for academic interests, English is very important for students to develop their English skills.

English has four basic language skills such as listening, speaking, writing and reading. Reading is one of important skills for students to have. Reading not only involves more than just reading each sentence in a paragraph; but it also requires comprehension (Tankersley, 2003:35). Comprehension involves understanding words, phrases, grammatical knowledge, and text experience to help students understand written texts. Students usually use background knowledge to create meaning in comprehension. It means that students can understand a text's meaning and construct their understanding based on their prior knowledge. Students who have mastered these skills were regarded as experts who understand what they read (Nation, 2009:29). In short, reading

comprehension is useful for gaining information and adding knowledge to the text deeply which automatically increase comprehension. This can be stated as a benefit of reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is the activity that needs knowledge of the world. The more the reader's knowledge, the more probable the material can be understood. Wooley (2011:39) said that reading comprehension is a process of figuring out what it means. The goal of reading is to get a general idea of what the text about. It means that reading comprehension is the process of making sense of what it read. Students try to figure out what a text about and get ideas or opinions from the text. There are many kinds of texts that should be taught and learned. One of text learned by students was narrative text.

Narrative text is a piece of text that tells a story. As noted by Marzono (2003:29), the story entertains the audience by doing so. The generic structure of narrative text consists of orientation, complication, resolution, and re-orientation (Grace, 2001:45). It assumes that a narrative text is a type of text that tells a story and included humorous events for the purpose of entertaining readers or listeners. Thus, Bruner (2000:32) added that narrative text deals with the creation of stories. It is used to refer to: a) a way of sculpting and structuring information through expressions of different media into readily understood forms that guide learners' comprehension; and b) a cognitive mode that learners use to make sense out of information or experience. Narrative text is one of text learned by the ninth-grade students of MTS Babul Ulum

However, when students learned to read narrative text there were some problems faced by students. Based on the preliminary research conducted through an unstructured interview with the ninth-grade teacher of MTS Babul Ulum Medan, Students had some problems with reading activities, especially when they read narrative text. Some of the problems found when students read narrative text such as they got difficulties to find the main ideas and information details in the text and also to make inferences that as a result, students were not able to understand and transfer the information from the text. Then, students' problems were also related to levels of reading comprehension in narrative text as the objective of this research. The levels of reading comprehension consist of questions that can direct and help students to understand the narrative text. There were three levels of reading comprehension used in this research. The three levels were literal, interpretative, and applied comprehension. (Vacca & Mraz, 2016).

Literal comprehension means what the text actually states. It focuses on reading the passages to identify the essential information and the facts that clearly stated in the reading material. Literal comprehension is to comprehend about facts and information details in order to get surface understanding. Common questions used to this level are *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* questions. *Interpretive comprehension* means what the text implies or means, rather than what the text actually states in the text. Interpretive comprehension focuses on reading between the lines and hidden throughout the text that requires the use of inference and understanding the relationship between events and characters or causes and consequences.

Students need to link like information to fully understand the text and also connect what they read with what they already know. The types of questions used in this level are open-ended and thought-provoking questions like *why*, *what if*, and *how*. *Applied comprehension* means what the text states (literal) and what the text implies (interpretive) and then extends (applies) the concepts or ideas beyond the situation. Applied comprehension focuses on understandings at the literal and interpretive levels are combined. Applied comprehension is to understand and interpret relationships and ideas in texts that are not stated or found in the words requires greater background knowledge on the part of the reader. Students need to infer or deduce the meaning from what they know and the messages in the text. It was about analyzing, synthesizing, and applying to other information (Vacca & Mraz, 2016:45). The types of questions used in applied level are *how would you*, *do you agree*, *what would have happened if*, *how might*, *what effect does*, *if you were . . . what would you*.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher assumed that students encountered challenges to comprehend what it was conveyed in the text. Some of the problems that students faced included recognizing main ideas, finding specific information, drawing inferences, comprehending long sentences in the text, understanding the vocabulary of the text, and other similar things. These problems made students were not able to understand the meaning from written material. The problems were then related to levels of students' reading comprehension as the purpose of this research. Each comprehension level has different indicators.

Regarding to the case, this research analyzed students' reading comprehension on narrative text based on three levels of reading comprehension at the ninth-grade students of MTS Babul Ulum Medan in odd semester academic year. In this research, there were four processes to conduct this research: Firstly, the researcher came to school to collect data on English learning outcomes of ninth-grade students at MTs Babul Ulum Medan regarding reading comprehension of narrative text. Secondly, the researcher performed data reduction based on the initial objectives that had been determined. And the next, the researcher displayed the data in graphical form and the last, the researcher drew conclusion by grouping data on three reading comprehension levels of students according to Vacca and Mraz (2016:45) namely literal, interpretive, and applied to determine the dominant level of students' reading comprehension on narrative text. The research was conducted with 26 students as research subjects to know the level of students' reading comprehension on narrative text, and also to find out some factors that cause the most dominant students' reading comprehension levels in narrative text at the ninth grade of Mts Babul Ulum. Therefore, this research was conducted to analyze students' reading comprehension levels in narrative text at the ninth grade of MTS Babul Ulum Medan

1.2 The Problem of the Study

Based on the background, the research problems are formulated as follows:

1. How are students' reading comprehension levels in the narrative text at the ninth grade of MTS Babul Ulum Medan?

2. What are some factors that cause the most dominant students' reading comprehension levels in the narrative text at the ninth grade of Mts Babul Ulum Medan?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to analyze students' reading comprehension levels on narrative text at the ninth-grade of MTS Babul Ulum Medan. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To describe the students' reading comprehension levels in narrative text at the ninth grade of MTS Babul Ulum Medan.
2. To describe some factors that cause the most dominant level of students' comprehension in reading narrative text at the ninth grade of Mts Babul Ulum Medan.

1.4. The Scope of the Study

This study focused on analyzing the levels of reading comprehension of ninth-grade students of MTS Babul Ulum in reading narrative texts. The researcher expected that students can improve their reading comprehension on narrative texts. This research focused on analyzing three levels of students' reading comprehension based on Vacca & Mraz (2016) theories. There were three level of comprehension, they were literal, interpretative, and applied. Then, the researcher also explored some factors that cause the most dominant students' reading comprehension levels in the narrative text at the ninth grade of Mts Babul Ulum Medan.

1.5. The Significance of Study

The results of this research are expected to be beneficial for English teachers, students, researcher and readers. It has two major significances, practical and theoretical significances.

1.5.1. Theoretical Significance

This research can be used to provide some information about students' reading comprehension on narrative text based on three levels of reading comprehension at the ninth grade of MTS Babul Ulum Medan in the academic year of 2022/2023. This research can be the reference for further research about levels of reading comprehension.

1.5.2. Practical Significance

1. For the students, the result of this research is expected to give students new experience in English learning, especially in learning reading so they can be more motivated to comprehend the read text.
2. For the researcher, the result of this research can be as a reference for other researchers to analyze levels of reading comprehension further
3. For English teachers, the result of this research is expected that the teachers know the students' reading comprehension on narrative text based on three levels of reading comprehension and the teachers were more creative in teaching reading so the students can be more enthusiastic in learning English in the class.