CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the background of the study, the research questions, and the purposes of the study as well as the significance of it. The clarification of key terms and the outline for the organization of this paper is also highlighted.

1.1 Background

As one of the four skills in English, reading plays an important role in enhancing students' English ability. More importantly, reading has a function as a tool to access information worldwide. Reading widely is a highly effective means of extending our command of language, so it plays an important role in classrooms where language learning is the central purpose (Nuttall,2000). However, according to McLaughlin (in Celce-Murcia, 1991) reading is the most complex and difficult skill students should master at school. Infact, the students do complex interactive processes in reading.

The purpose of teaching reading in the context of English learning is comprehension. As stated by Kirby (2007:1) "reading comprehension is the process by which we understand the text we read. it is the purpose of reading, why we teach it, and why we care about it". The purpose is in

1

line with the objectives of teaching reading in high school. Rukmayadi (2011) said that in high school, the process of teaching reading has some specific objectives, they are: 1) to enable students to develop basic comprehension skill so that they can read and understand texts of general nature; 2) to use reading to increase their general knowledge; 3) to decide about reading purposes; 4) to adapt their strategies of reading; and, 5) to develop the ability to read critically.

As stated by Rukmayadi (2011), one of the objective in teaching reading that should be developed is basic comprehension skills. Therefore, students who have good comprehension skills can read and understand the text easily. Those comprehension skills, according to Brown and Palinscar (in Resnick&Resnick, 1992), consist of the use of the background knowledge in processing information, evaluating content skill critically, predicting, interpreting, and concluding skills. It is important to bring those skills to the students through designing appropriate methods and strategies in teaching reading comprehension. According to Brown (2001), reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate efficient comprehension strategies for the majority second language learners who are already literate in their native language. It means that reading strategies is important to help the student comprehend the text well.

2

The study conducted by Sunandar (2006) also shows that many teachers in some Indonesian schools only employ conventional method covering activities of making list of difficult words, translating their meaning into the students' mother tongue language, asking students to read loudly and/or silently, and having students answer the questions related to the text. Whereas this kind of method may cause negative effect on the students' reading skill (Rukmayadi,2011). In addition (Schwerdt&Wuppermann,2009) said that conventional teaching method connected with many disadvantages: students' attention wanes quickly during the learning process and information tends to be forgotten quickly when students are passive. Moreover, teachers emphasize learning by listening, which is a disadvantage for students who prefer other learning styles.

According to explanations above, it is important to find out the solution to solve the reading learning problems and to develop the students' motivation in comprehending the text.

Furthermore, a pre interview which was conducted, indicatesthe lack of understanding of the Vocational School Students in Subang about learning reading, especially reading descriptive text.

Many efforts have been done in teaching reading for the students. Thus the researcher proposed an alternative learning strategy called

3

Cooperative Learning Methods to make learning reading easier because Cooperative Learning can make the students help each other.

Slavin (1995:20) states that "Cooperative Learning is a variety of teaching methods in which students work in a small groups to help each other learn academic content". He further elaborated that in cooperative learning, students are expected to help each other, discuss, and argue with one another, asess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding.

The explanation above shows that Cooperative Learning involves small groups so that individuals work together to maximize their own and each others' achievement. Considering the background above, the researcher is concern in a research entitled "The Implementation of Cooperative Learning Methods in Improving Students' Reading Comprehension"

1.2 Statementof The Problems

The research is specifically incorporated into methodological teaching investigation, because this research deals with particular phenomena of teaching English. For this inquiry, the researcher formulates the problems in the following questions :

4

1. To what extent doesthe Implementation ofcooperative learning methodimprove students'reading comprehension?

2. What are the students' responses toward the cooperative learning methods in teaching reading?

1.3 The Scope of Study

The study focuses on the application of Cooperative Learning Methods in improving students' reading comprehension. To be exact, the reading text used in this study is descriptive text. The study was conductedat class XI Tata Boga (Culinary Class) in one Vocational School in Subang, West Java.

1.4 The Aims of the Study

This study is aimed at achieving the following objectives :

1. To find out the students' reading comprehension improvement by the implementation of cooperative learning methods.

2. To find out the students' response towards the implementation of Cooperative Learning Methods in teaching reading.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

It is important to formulate what becomes the benefit of the research and how far it would contribute to the development of science. This research is conducted in order to give theoretical and practical benefits.

The theoretical benefit of the research finding is it can be used to enrich the theory and methodology in teching reading especially in descriptive text using cooperative learning. On the other hand, the practical benefit of the research finding is it can be used by the students, the teachers, school administrators and the researchers who are interested in analyzing the reading teaching learning process.

1.6 Clarification of Related Terms

In order to avoid unnecessary missunderstanding, some terms used in this research are clarified as follows :

1. Cooperative learning refers to teaching method that is used for improving ability in reading. Slavin (1995) stated that cooperative learning refers to a variety of teaching methods in which students work in small groups to help one another learn academic content.

2. Reading comprehension refers to the level of understanding of written language. "Reading comprehension is the process of

6

simultanously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with writen language" (Ervin 2006:8).

3. Comprehension improvement refers to the scores of the students in comprehending the descriptive text using cooperative learning model. The indicator in improvement of students' reading comprehension uses *Minimum Mastering Criteria* (MMC) or *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal* (KKM); student who achieve the MMC is considered to be successful (Government Document,2006).

4. *Mastering Criteria* (MMC) or *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal* (KKM) is the minimum criteria to declare learners achievement of the lessons. KKM value is determined by the subject teachers with the approval of the school (Government Document,2006).

1.7 Organization of Paper

To communicate this study with ease to the audience, this report is writen relatively consistent with the writing organization suggested by Paltridge & Stairfield (2007 cited in Emilia,2008). Chapter one describes the background of the study, the statement of problems, the scope, the purposes, the significances of the study and the clarification of the key terms followed by the organization of the paper. Chapter two discusses some theoretical concepts about the nature of reading, Cooperative

7

Learning, Descriptive Text and some previous findings underlying the context that may influence the results of this study. Chapter three presents the methodology of this study, the design, brief environment where this study is conducted, the instrument used and how to analyze the collected data to answer the research questions. Chapter four is devoted to describe the two cycle treatments which is directly followed by the analysis the data, under the first and second research questions. Chapter five contains the summary of the report from the research problems, treatments, and results. Finally, the conclusion in relation to the study, the suggestions for the study are presented.