CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents introduction. Section 1.1 presents background of the study. Section 1.2 scope of the study. Section 1.3 presents statements of the problems. Section 1.4 presents purposes of the study. Section 1.5 presents significance of the study. Finally, section 1.6 presents organization of the thesis.

1.1 Background of the Study

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

In secondary school reading skill is still given a first priority. The objective of teaching is the development of communicative ability in English embracing four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) with an emphasis on reading ability. The order of language skills to be taught has been changed from reading, listening, writing, and speaking to reading, listening, speaking, and writing. (Huda, 1999).

Wells (in Depdiknas, 2003) puts forward four literacy levels namely performative, functional, informational, and epistemic levels. At performative level, students are able to read and write, and speak with used symbols; at functional level, people are hoped to be

able to use language for daily needs such as reading newspaper; at informational level, people can access knowledge with their language; while at epistemic level, people can transform knowledge to a certain language.

For secondary school (SMP) graduates, its curriculum (Depdiknas, 2004) targets the students at the second level that is functional level. At this level, regarding reading skill students are demanded to understand various meanings (interpersonal, ideational, textual meanings) in various interactive written texts. In fact, students' reading skill still shows unsatisfactory yet. It can be seen from their final results of exam which are still far from the targeted passing grade. Yet the teaching of English in Indonesia in general and in secondary schools in particular is not successful (Huda, 1999). Moreover the government has issued the passing grade for students to be achieved. The passing grade covers some lessons including English with minimal score not lower than 4.26 for each lesson. This policy is of great concern not only for teachers and students but also parents.

The present study tries to investigate problems faced by teacher and students on teaching and learning reading comprehension through interactive read-aloud. Reasons for choosing this kind of technique, among other things, are that this technique has been documented many times effective to boost students' reading comprehension (Krashen & Trelease in Herrel and Jordan, 2004:27) and it allows teachers to validate their teaching reading strategy in support of their students. Hopefully this study can contribute and support teachers in meeting some of the more daunting challenges of teaching reading.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This study focused on teaching to develop the students' reading comprehension of Junior high school. Some alternative techniques would be very possible to be applied in the teaching for better improvement. One of them is an interactive read-aloud. Interactive read-aloud provides students with examples of what good readers do. It also enables the students to share their understanding and vocabulary that help them strengthen their linguistic abilities.

1.3 Purposes of the Study

The purpose of this study is to portray and document the typical problems and development of the year-two students at SMP Negeri I Bandar Mataram in Central Lampung by providing at least eight treatments focusing on improving the students' reading comprehension. The purpose could be translated into these specific objectives:

1. To find whether an interactive read-aloud can improve the reading ability of the year-two students of SMPN I Bandar Mataram.

2. To investigate problems the teacher faces in teaching reading through interactive read aloud.

3. To explore problems the year-two students of SMP Negeri I Bandar Mataram face in reading comprehension.

1.4 Significance of the study

Hopefully, this study contributes to the development of EFL reading instruction especially for English teachers of Junior high schools. Further, this study is expected to

enlighten and enrich English teachers with varying teaching reading strategies. As for students, whose teacher applies the technique suggested in this study, this study is expected to give them opportunity to demonstrate their growing skills in authentic tasks and in a no stressful environment. Students can also actively engage in the classroom activities. Finally, the findings of this study may inspire other researchers to conduct research on other issues in teaching reading.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction. Chapter two presents review of related literature. Chapter three elaborates the methodology of the research. Chapter four presents the discussion of the research findings, and chapter five draws the conclusions and offers suggestions.