

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

English as an international language has been needed and spoken by people in the world. Nowadays, English becomes the most important language to learn because it is the common language used in international communication. Furthermore, English is intended to help students who want to continue their study into higher education or institution. It has also a great role in helping them to comprehend literatures that are written in English.

Indonesia is one of many countries that places English as one important language that has to be taught in the educational system. It becomes one of subject matters in schools, especially in secondary level of education schools. Students are obliged to learn English because it is stated in the National Education Curriculum and one of important factors that influence their passing of examination.

English consists of four languages skill namely reading, writing, listening and speaking. According to Carell (1988), reading skill is the most important skill in second or foreign language learning. In line with Carell, Rivers (1981: 147) states that reading is the most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language. Furthermore, Kim and Krashen (1997) confirm that those who read more, have larger vocabularies, do better on test of grammar and write better.

Basically, reading is a process of deriving meaning from written or printed text. Although reading is a receptive skill, reading is an active and interactive process. Anderson (1999) explains that reading is an active process that involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning. Moreover, reading is an activity with purpose. A person may read in order to gain information or verify existing

knowledge, or in order to critique a writer's ideas or writing style. Wallace (1996: 6-7), classifies the purpose of reading based on the personal reading which consist of reading for survival, reading for learning and reading for pleasure. Meanwhile, Grellet (1981: 4), states that there are some ways of reading namely skimming, scanning, extensive reading, and intensive reading.

Last, both teachers and students need to recognize the knowledge of reading definition and purposes. It facilitates teachers to determine the appropriate approach for teaching reading. For students, it helps students' awareness of reading process and reading strategies.

In Indonesia, the aim of teaching reading in SMA is based on the reading objectives in English curriculum. In the recent English curriculum in Indonesia, namely SBC (School-based Curriculum) or Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP), according to Badan Standard Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP) or National Standard Beaureau (2006: 31) for reading competence, it is stated that in reading competence, the students are expected to understand the meaning of interpersonal or transactional written text in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion and review in daily lives contexts and to access knowledge from it.

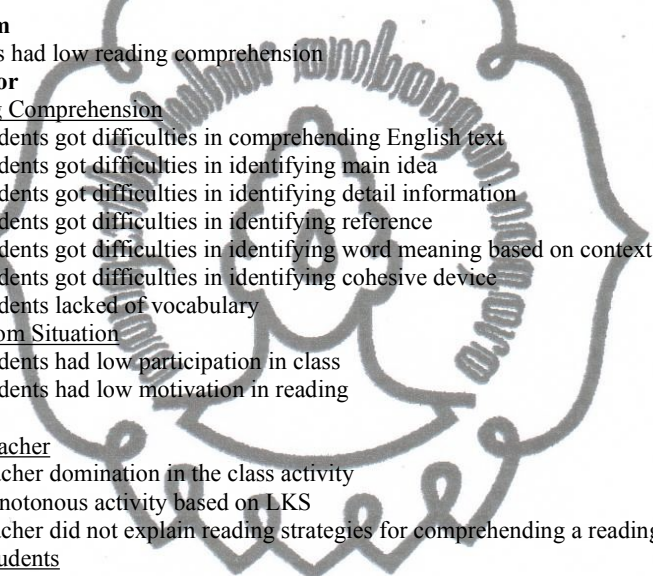
Based on the observation conducted in the eleventh grade students of SMA N 6 Surakarta, it was noticed that the students had low reading comprehension. They also could not reach the KKM score, that is 72. It can be seen from the pre-research observation in the result of pre-test; the mean score of pre-test was 61 which the score of each indicator was 58 for identifying main idea, 67 for identifying detail information, 65 for identifying reference, 46 for identifying word meaning based on context, 70 for identifying cohesive device.

In addition, the result of questionnaire also showed that they had low motivation in reading although they had high motivation in lerning English. They felt bored in reading because the teacher usually used LKS for teaching reading. They

always had monotonous activity in reading class. As a result, they got difficulties in identifying main idea, detail information, reference, word meaning based on context and cohesive device when they were reading.

The description of the problem can be seen in the table below:

Table 1.1. The Results of Pre-Research Observation

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- A. Problem**
1. Students had low reading comprehension
- B. Indicator**
1. Reading Comprehension
    - a. Students got difficulties in comprehending English text
    - b. Students got difficulties in identifying main idea
    - c. Students got difficulties in identifying detail information
    - d. Students got difficulties in identifying reference
    - e. Students got difficulties in identifying word meaning based on context
    - f. Students got difficulties in identifying cohesive device
    - g. Students lacked of vocabulary
  2. Classroom Situation
    - a. Students had low participation in class
    - b. Students had low motivation in reading
- C. Causes**
1. From teacher
    - a. Teacher domination in the class activity
    - b. Monotonous activity based on LKS
    - c. Teacher did not explain reading strategies for comprehending a reading text
  2. From students
    - a. Students felt bored and exhausted because of the English schedule which always in the last hour.
    - b. Students did not have a reason to read a reading text

Those cases were faced by the eleventh grade students of SMA N 6 Surakarta. The teacher needs to give students with preparation in order to students are ready to read. Besides, the teacher also has to be creative to help the students in understanding English text.

One of the ways in improving the students' reading comprehension is optimizing pre reading activity. Pre reading activity allows students to think about what they already know about a given topic and predict what they will read. Before students read any text, teachers can direct their attention to how a text is organized, teach unfamiliar vocabulary or other concepts, search for the main idea, and provide

students with a purpose for reading. Most importantly, teachers can use pre reading activity to increase students' interest in a text.

In comprehending a text, the students need some motivation background knowledge, and some strategies and skills. Williams (1989: 37) states the purpose of pre-reading activity are to introduce and arouse interest in the topic of the text, to motivate students by providing reasons for reading or helping to specify their own reasons, and to provide some language preparation for the text. In addition, Yeeding (2007) investigated the effects of pre-reading activities on students' motivation and reading comprehension ability. Results showed that the activities subjects were highly motivated, enthusiastic to read and. After the experiment, their score were significantly higher.

Based on the description above, the writer chooses and determines the research entitled **“OPTIMIZING PRE-READING ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE STUDENTS’ READING COMPREHENSION (A Classroom Action Research at the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade of SMA N 6 Surakarta in the Academic Year 2012/2013).**

### **B. Problem Formulation**

Based on the background of the study above, the problems are formulated as follows:

1. How can the use of pre-reading activities improve the students' reading comprehension?
2. How is the classroom situation when pre-reading activities are implemented in the reading class?

### **C. Objectives of The Study**

The objectives of the study in the research are as follows:

1. To identify how the use of pre-reading activities can improve the students' reading comprehension.

3. To describe the classroom situation when pre-reading activities are implemented in the reading class.

#### **D. Benefits of The Study**

The result of the study is expected to give several benefits. It is expected to give contribution for better English language learning. The benefits are for students, teachers, and writer as follow.

1. For the students

It is hoped they will get better learning system which make them be able to improve their reading comprehension and learn English with enjoyment.

2. For the teachers

It is hoped this research will give contribution in choosing appropriate technique to be used in teaching English, especially teaching reading.

3. For the writer

It is hoped she will get a valuable experience that can be used for doing a better action research in the future.