

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Reading means different things to different people, for some it is recognizing written words. While for others it is an opportunity to teach pronunciation and practice speaking. However reading always has a purpose. It is part of our daily lives and generally assumed that everybody can do it. The reason for reading depends very much on the purpose for reading. Reading can have three main purposes, for survival, for learning or for pleasure. Reading for survival is considered to in response to our environment, to find out information and can include traffic signs, advertising, and timetables. It depends on day-to-day needs of the reader and often involves an immediate response to a situation. In contrast reading for learning is considered to be the type of reading done in the classroom and is goal oriented. While reading for pleasure is something that does not have to be done. For Nuttall (1996: 168-169) the central ideas behind reading are: the idea of meaning, the transfer of meaning from one to another, the transfer of message from writer to reader, how we get meaning by reading and how the reader, the writer and the text all contribute to the process. We can conclude that reading is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought. Reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text. Readers usually make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and experience with text.

As an English teacher I am often frustrated by the fact that my students have difficulties in reading comprehension. It can be seen from their low score, they cannot answer WH-questions and answer inference questions properly, they cannot identify the general idea or the topic in a paragraph, and they cannot identify the main idea of the paragraph. Furthermore the students have low motivation, do not actively participate in any activity undertaken in reading class. Base on my observation I find that some of the students are often late, they come to the reading class reluctantly, they are often talking about unrelated topic and they often forget to bring the text book. All of the facts above indicated that make my reading class was not an inspiring class.

The problems above may be caused by several reasons; could be the teacher, could be the techniques or the materials. On my informal interview indicated that reading is difficult because the text book is too difficult, the text is too long, the text uses difficult vocabularies and the text has nothing to do with their lives as the result they have difficulties in comprehending the text and lack of attention to the text. Further more the text books are designed for language learning purposes. The language in text books is specific and concentrating on academic aspects containing a series “false-text indicators” that include: perfectly formed sentences; a question using a grammatical structure, gets a full answer; repetition of structures and do not include incidental or improper English. The artificial nature of language and structure used, make them very unlike anything that the learner will encounter in the real world and very often they do not reflect how the language is really used. Further more the topics in the text books are often out of date where as the authentic materials keep students informed about what is happening in the world, so they have an intrinsic educational value.

To overcome this problem I have tried many ways in improving my students' reading ability such as; using different text book from different Author and selecting interesting topics from many text books but they are useless. The students' reading comprehension is still disappointing. I will use different materials in order to solve this problem. For this reason, I would like to teach my reading class using authentic materials. Authentic texts has been defined as "...real-life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes" (Wallace, 1992: 145). The source of authentic materials that can be used in the classroom are infinite, but the most common are news papers, magazines, TV programs, movies, songs, literature and internet. Authentic materials help Students bridge the gap between the classroom and the outside world. Even if the classroom is not a real-life situation, authentic materials do have a very important within it. The authentic materials enable learners to interact with the real language and content rather than the form. It means the texts relate with students' daily lives such as: health, love, education, jobs, movies etc. Those make students more interested in reading the text. It supported by Nuttal (1996: 172) "Authentic texts can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people". Those are the reasons that authentic materials can improve students' comprehension and authentic materials are therefore written for native speakers and contain real language.

By using authentic materials in my reading class I do hope that students' comprehension is improving and their attitudes toward reading become positive. As we know that reading is one of important skills for students and their future. I expect a lot in every cycle there are interesting activities which are indicating students' improvement in reading comprehension.

B. Related Research

This research is in line with S. Anthony's research which is written in her journals the reasons for reading depends very much on the purpose of reading. The use of authentic materials in classroom is discussed, with the students benefiting from the exposure to real language being used in real context. Other aspects which prove positive when using authentic materials are that the students are highly motivating, giving a sense of achievement when understood and encourage further reading.

This research supports Charles and Lawrence Kelly's journal on using authentic materials in ESL classroom. They said that they have been using authentic materials for over 10 years and have found that they complement English classes by enlivening the class and creating a more positive attitude toward learning. They also mentioned that they have an extensive collection of materials that include menus, maps, newspaper inserts, store advertisements, travel brochures, catalogs, phone books, real estate pamphlets, and various pamphlets of sightseeing and tourist information. They have found that using sets of materials are particularly appealing.

The research by A. G. Martinez in *ESL Journals*, February 2002 writes about the advantages on using authentic materials in ESL classroom. The statement in their research is in line with this action research especially about the advantages of using authentic materials such as: Students are exposed to real discourse; authentic materials keep students informed about what is happening in the world, so they have an intrinsic educational value. Books, articles, newspapers, and so on contain a wide variety of text types, language styles not easily found in conventional teaching materials. They can

encourage reading for pleasure because they are likely to contain topics of interest to learners, especially if students are given the chance to have a say about the topics or kinds of authentic materials to be used in class.

C. Problem Formulation

The problems of the research are formulated as follows:

1. Can and to what extent authentic materials improve students' reading comprehension?
2. How is the process of teaching and learning situation when using authentic materials are used in reading class?

D. Purpose of the Study

1. To identify whether and to what extent authentic materials can improve Students' reading comprehension.
2. To describe the process of teaching and learning using authentic materials in reading comprehension.

E. Significance of the Study

The findings of this class action research will give benefit to:

1. The students:
the students' reading comprehension will be better and their motivation to read will improve.
2. Teachers:

the result of this research can be useful input in teaching reading using authentic materials.

3. The writer:

the writer will have more knowledge in selecting and using good authentic materials in teaching reading.

4. The institution:

the result of this study can be used as an alternative to compose “Lesson Plan” and arrange the further research.

