

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of Study

Human is a social creature that needs each other to hold out in this world. So that, there is language to help human to communicate with each others. Language is the use by humans of a system of sounds and words to communicate. It is used to express someone's idea, thinking, and feeling in form of speech and writing.

Today, English becomes universal language. There are about 1 billion English speakers in the world, and the number is growing. It is the native language of some 400 million people in 12 countries. Another 400 million speak English as a second language and several hundred million more have some knowledge of English, which has official or semiofficial status in 60 countries (Wegmann & Knezevic, 2007, p. 6-7). Now, English becomes one of important subject that must be taught in many schools of many countries. It is also happened in Indonesia, English becomes a subject that taught in the school from elementary school, junior high school and senior high school, even in university.

English has four skills, there are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The main point of this research is reading skill. According to Tarigan (2008, p. 7), reading is a process that is carried and used by readers to get the message that wants to convey by the author through the medium of words/written language. Reading is a tool to transfer knowledge from the author to the reader. By reading

we can understand what the author wants to tell us. We can know the author's feeling, though, and experience without experience it before. We can know many things that we do not know before. It is like a free ticket to have a journey around the world.

Damianti (as cited in Dalman, 2013, p. 6) said that reading is the result of interaction between perceptions of the symbols that create the language through language skills that the readers have and their knowledge about natural environment. In reading, the readers interact with the text. The readers have to use their language skill and their knowledge to make them easier to understand the text. By using their language skill, the readers can understand the pattern of language such as, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and so on. The readers can learn how to construct a sentence, paragraph, even an article. It is important for the readers also to use their prior knowledge to make them easier to understand the content of the text.

According to Macmillan English Dictionary for Advance Learners (2002, p. 1173), reading means the process of recognizing written or printed words and understanding their meaning. It means that reading is not only read what is written in the paper but it is a long process. When reading there are some process from recognizing what is written, identifying the patterns, finding the main idea, analyzing the supporting details, comparing with prior knowledge, and understanding the meaning of the written text.

Reading is an important skill that must be learned. It is important because with it we can find many new vocabulary, we can learn the structures of the text,

and with it we can improve our ability in learning a language. Allah SWT in Al-Qur'an surah Al-'Alaq verses 1-5, states:

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

In general, surah Al-'Alaq verses 1 - 5 are the first revelations revealed to the Prophet Muhammad that explains about the command of reading to the Prophet who is an “*Ummy*”, he could not read and write. The command reads by mentioning His name, because He creates everything that exists in this universe. He created man from a clot of blood, showing His power. God again repeats the command to read in the third verse because according to ‘Abduh (1999, p. 250) the intelligence of reading is an ability that cannot be mastered by a person except by repeating and familiarizing with what there is in other human beings, then the repetition of the divine command replaces the required repetition of the reading in learning to read in terms of making the Prophet had such abilities.

Allah taught us by quill. That is to make people understand and learn by quill or pen, as He teaches them by oral. The quill or pen is a tool made of inanimate objects, there is no life to it and does not have the ability to provide understanding to humans. So He Who has made this dead thing a tool for understanding and explanation, neither does He also make you to be a reader and someone who can give an explanation who is also a teacher, especially you are an

*“insan kamil”* or a perfect human. He was the one who taught knowledge to humans, whereas in the early days of their creation, they knew nothing. So it is not surprising that the One who from beginning give knowledge to humans, while they had no knowledge at all, now He teaches them the intelligence of reading, whereas you have the potential to know very much knowledge other than that and you are truly ready to receive it.

Based on the explanation, the relationship between the verses and this research point out that reading is an ability whose object is very broad not only to understand something written but also unwritten covers everything that exists in this universe. It is also an ability that is able to make us know many things that we have never known before. It also related with the command of reading as a capability that is not present just like that but need the habituation and repetition in order to make us understand. Ability to read here related to this research because this study discusses the ability of students in understanding the short functional texts. The ability to read is one part of the English language skills that students must master in order to improve their language skills. Because previously they were not able to understand English, well it needed repetition to better understand a text as mentioned before repetition needed to improve their ability.

Short functional texts are a variety of short texts that aims to facilitate human activity in their daily live, it can be regarded as one of the objects that read around us. According to Bestiana & Achyani (2016, p. 199) short functional text is a short written text contains of useful information that help people to do or to finish their daily routine. It called short because almost all of the texts are very

short. It did not take long time to read and understand. There are many types of short functional texts, such as labels, lists, instructions, announcements, warnings, short message or memos, greeting cards, invitations, and so on. The researcher interested to do a research about this topic because short functional text is not only a part of topic in students English Book that they have to learn for their study, for their exam. It is also important for their daily routine. For example; label can help us to know the expired date, it help us to avoid poisoned consequence of uneatable product. Shopping list can help us to remember items that we have to buy; it helps us to do not buy unnecessary things. Short message and e-mail can help us to communicate with someone far away from us. It did not need much cost or time and it can make things easier for us because, now we are in a modern era where people in different city and different country can have in touch by using many technology and applications such as Facebook, e-mail, messenger, and so on. So, it is important for us to learn about short functional texts.

The previous study of this research is written by Husna (2014), entitled “The Ability in Understanding News Item Texts of the Eleventh Grade Students at Man 2 Model Banjarmasin Academic Year 2013/2014”. In this previous research, Husna told us about the eleventh grade students’ ability in understanding news item texts by identifies the mean of the students’ score that is average. She also told us about the students’ difficulties in understanding news item texts. But, the weakness of her research is she did not tell us about the solution of the students’ difficulties in understanding news item text. In addition Milyani (2013), written a research entitled “The Ability of Eight Grade Students at MTs Al-Ikhwan

Banjarmasin Academic Year 2012/2013 in Understanding Personal Letters". In her thesis, she told us about the eighth grade students' ability in understanding personal letter and their difficulties in understanding personal letter. The result of her research is the students' ability in understanding personal letters, thank you letters, letters for teacher, and invitation letters. Letters for friend is the students' most difficult type in understanding personal letters by the eighth grade of MTs. Al-Ikhwan Banjarmasin with the highest total score of wrong answer. The weakness of her research is she did not give the proposed solution for the students' difficulties in understanding personal letter.

In this research, the researcher focus on identifying students' ability in understanding short functional texts and their problems in understanding short functional texts, and also to know the teacher's effort to increase students' ability in understanding short functional texts. The researcher identifies the mean of students' score to find out students' ability and then categorize it based on the standard. Then, the researcher analyzes the students' answer to identify their problems. In the last, the researcher interviews the English teacher of ninth grade students to know the teacher's effort to increase students' ability in understanding short functional texts.

This research takes a place in SMPN 1 Batumandi. Based on observation, researcher found that the students consider that English is a difficult subject. They have difficulties in learning English subject because they do not understand the structure of the text and lack of English vocabulary. The researcher chose the ninth grade because it is the last grade in the junior high school where, they will

have the national examination to pass their study in the junior high school. Since, English is one of the main subjects for their exam. So that, the English teacher wants to reteach the subject, especially the topic of short functional texts because, there are many kinds of short functional text. The ninth grade also has been learning many things about short functional texts, more than the other grades.

Based on the description above, this research conducted entitled “**The Ninth Grade Students’ Ability in Understanding Short Functional Texts at SMPN 1 Batumandi Academic Year 2016/2017**”. In this research, the writer wants to improve students’ ability and identify their problems in understanding short functional texts. Also to know the teacher’s effort to increase students’ ability in understanding short functional texts. In the end, the writer hope that this research can give good benefit for the students, English teachers, the readers, the future research, and also for the writer self.

## **B. Statement of Problems**

1. How is the ninth grade students’ ability in understanding short functional texts at SMPN 1 Batumandi academic year 2016/2017?
2. What are the ninth grade students’ problems in understanding short functional texts at SMPN 1 Batumandi academic year 2016/2017?
3. What are the teacher’s effort to increase the ninth grade students’ ability in understanding short functional texts at SMPN 1 Batumandi academic year 2016/2017?

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

The objectives of this study are, as follow:

1. To identify the ninth grade students' ability in understanding short functional texts at SMPN 1 Batumandi academic year 2016/2017.
2. To identify the ninth grade students' problems in understanding short functional texts at SMPN 1 Batumandi academic year 2016/2017.
3. To know the teacher' effort to increase the ninth grade students' ability in understanding short functional texts at SMPN 1 Batumandi academic year 2016/2017.

### **D. Significance of Study**

The result of this this study hopefully can give some benefit, as follow:

1. Giving information about students' ability and problems in understanding short functional texts.
2. Giving information about the teacher's effort to increase students' ability in understanding short functional texts.
3. Giving reflection about a research in reading ability, especially in understanding short functional texts.
4. Enriching writer's knowledge and experience in the scientific research.



### **E. Limitation of Study**

Based on the question of the problems above, the problems of the study is limited in the ninth grade students' ability in understanding short functional texts and their problems in understanding short functional texts and also the teacher's effort to increase students' ability in understanding short functional texts at SMPN 1 Batumandi academic years 2016/2017.

### **F. Definition of Key Terms**

1. Reading is a process that is carried and used by readers to get the message that wants to convey by the author through the medium of words/written language (Tarigan, 2008, p. 7).
2. Short functional text is a short written text contains of useful information that help people to do or to finish their daily routine. There are many types of short functional texts, such as labels, lists, instructions, announcements, warnings, short message or memos, greeting cards, invitations, and advertisement (Bestiana & Achyani, 2016, p. 199). But, in this research, researcher will focus on short message, letter/e-mail, announcement, advertisement, and notice/warning.
3. Problem is thing that is difficult to deal with or understand (Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, 2008, p. 350).

## **G. Research Paper Organization**

This research is divided into five chapters as follow:

The first chapter contains of the introduction, which consist of background of study, statement of problems, objectives of study, significance of study, limitation of study, definition of key terms, and research paper organization.

The second chapter contains of the theoretical review, which consists of the definition of reading, reading comprehension, reading comprehension skills, types of reading, short functional texts.

The third chapter contains of research method, which consists of research design, research setting, population and sample, research instrument, indicators of short functional texts, design measurement, data collection procedure, and technique of data analysis.

The fourth chapter contains report of the research result which consists of findings and discussion.

The fifth chapter contains of closure, which contains of conclusion and suggestion.