CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, and definition of the key terms.

A. Background of the study

English as an international language for communication has been considered as an important subject in Indonesia. All aspects of language skills; Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing with structure and vocabulary as supporting materials are taught at schools to pursue the objectives: i.e. making the students master English (especially speaking and writing) as means of communication and (especially reading) as a tool of gaining science and technology.

Moreover, English become the only foreign language which is included in *National Examination (UN)* from Junior High School to Senior High School. Then, it became one of some decision maker subject for the students' graduation to know how well they understand English during their study. Thus, learning English has been important to do.

Based on the English curriculum, the objective of GBPP SLTP stated that the students of SLTP are expected to have some language skills, such as

Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing in the selected themes based on the level of development and their interest, the level of vocabulary approximately 1000 words and appropriate grammar.

Of all the language skills, Reading takes most of the class time because reading is more important source of most students. Reading may not be an activity whose practical value equals then that of writing and speaking, but like listening it plays a vital role in comprehension. It is also an important source of information and culture.

Nunan (2003:68) states "Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning". Besides, Snow *et al* (2002:11) interprets that reading as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. McWhorther (2003:2) states that reading is thinking. It is an active process of identifying important ideas and comparing, evaluating, and applying them.

There are some principles in teaching learning reading. They are exploits the reader's background knowledge, build a strong vocabulary base, teach for comprehension, work on increasing reading rate, teach reading strategies, encourage readers to transform strategies into skill, build assessment and evaluation into tour teaching, and strive for continuous improvement as reading teacher.

Based on the researcher's observation through conducting preliminary study during teaching learning reading recount text in the second semester of

VIII C at SMPN 1 Durenan, the researcher found that many students difficulty in comprehending recount text. It proved by the result of the students' reading recount test in preliminary study. The mean of students' score was 68.5, while the *Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM)* was 75. The result indicated that the students' comprehension ability in recount text was still low.

Besides, it was supported by the result of interview to English teacher and students' questionnaire in the preliminary study. The result of interview with English teacher showed that there were 70% students have difficulties in comprehending reading text, especially recount text. It included the difficulties in understanding the sequence of events, plot of story, the values, etc. As the result 50% students did not participate actively, did not pay attention, did not ask answer the question and they were not easer to work in group. Meanwhile the result of questionnaire showed that they like English but they feel hard to comprehend reading recount text. Most of them thought that there were so many vocabularies in English and they just knew very little about English. As the result, they could not answer the teacher's question related to the passage. This happened because they had difficulties in understanding the passage.

In preliminary study the researcher also found that the teacher' technique was a teacher-centered. However, in teaching reading the teacher used monotonous strategy. She did not use the strategy appropriately based on the material taught. The class became not relax. Consequently, the process

of teaching and learning not attractive and the students feel hard to understand the material.

To overcome this problem the teacher should employ more appropriate technique in order that the students feel enjoyable and become active in the classroom. One of the possible solutions which can fulfill these requirements is by the use of semantic mapping. This technique is chosen for several reasons. First, it is suited with the text type discussed in this semester (recount). Second, it offers several advantages as it is elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Vacca and Vacca (1998:403) states "The semantic mapping helps student identify important ideas and shows how these ideas fit together". Teachers can use a semantic mapping to activate and tap student's background knowledge. Besides, it can be a helpful reference for students to use in clarifying confusing points as they are reading. In addition, Skidell and Becker (2001:150) stated that making a map helps organize the information by showing details related to main ideas, helps remember what we have read. How the students can get these advantages of using semantic mapping in comprehending recount text is presented by this example. This example is recount text about manufacturing.
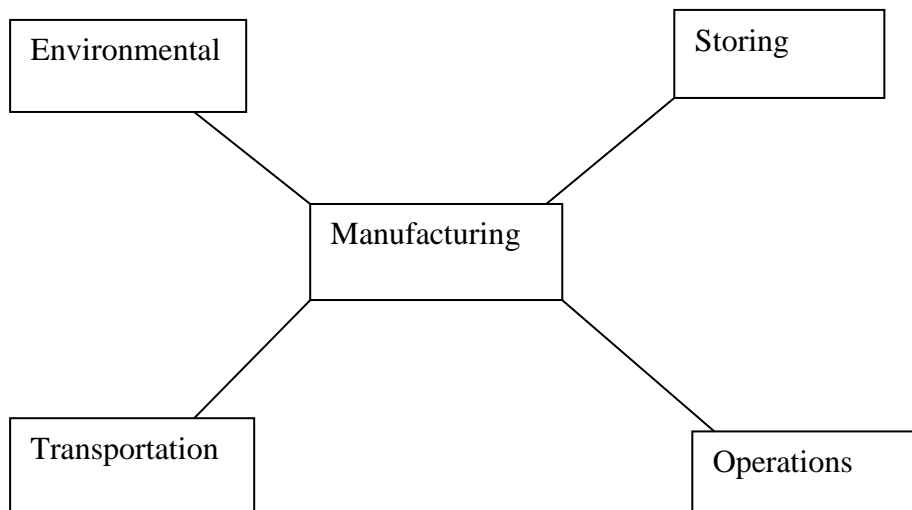
```
┌──────────────┐                              ┌──────────────┐
│ Environmental│                              │   Storing    │
└──────────────┘                              └──────────────┘
           \                                 /
            \        ┌──────────────┐      /
             \       │ Manufacturing│     /
             /       └──────────────┘     \
            /                              \
┌──────────────┐                          ┌──────────────┐
│Transportation│                          │  Operations  │
└──────────────┘                          └──────────────┘
```

Figure. 1.1. Semantic Map Sample

The learning goal of the semantic mapping implementation is to enable the students to comprehend a reading text (recount), which includes the skills to (1) find the main idea in each paragraph, (2) find the supporting idea, (3) identify information of text, (4) identify the details of the text as a whole, and (5) make summary.

The procedure of applying semantic mapping is not too complicated. It is divided into three sections; (a) *pre-assignment strategy*, this procedure utilizes the students' prior knowledge and helps the teacher prepare their students in teaching and learning, (b) noting the result of teaching and learning, (c) *post-assignment strategy,* this procedure gives opportunity for students in accumulating the result of teaching and learning. These three procedures, then are divided again into five steps; (a) *Introducing the topic*: the teacher introducing a topic to students; (b) *Brainstorming:* the student is

given opportunity to propose the words that have connection to the topic; (c) *Categorization:* the teacher gives time to the students for categorizing the words; (d) *personalizing the map*: the students take word into categorizations that have been they made; and (e) *Post-assignment synthesis*: the students is given time to accumulate all of activities that they have done.

The implementation of this technique is expected to be able to improve the students of grade VIII C ability to comprehend a recount text. The technique is developed in such away for the purpose of facilitating students to comprehend recount text.

B. Formulation of the Problem

In accordance to the background of the study above, the problem in this study is formulated as follows:

How can the modified of a semantic mapping improve the students' reading comprehension ability in recount text of VIII C at SMPN 1 Durenan?

C. Purpose of the Study

This strategy is intended to describe how the modified of a semantic mapping can improve the students' reading comprehension ability in recount text of VIII C at SMPN 1 Durenan.

D. **Significance of the Study**

The results of the study are expected to give contributions for teacher, students and reader. For the teacher, the result of this research can give information as one of references about an alternative technique to improve students' comprehension in reading text, especially recount text.

The result of the study also on the other hand gives a direct contribution to the students at SMPN 1 Durenan. The students will get benefit from the semantic mapping implementation as it helps them improve their skill in comprehending a recount text.

Finally, for the reader, the result of the study can be used as a means to improve the students' skill in comprehending recount text.

E. **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

As a classroom action research, this study is conducted to one class students only that is class VIII C at SMPN 1 Durenan. This study focuses on the implementation of the modified semantic mapping to solve students' practical problems in comprehending a recount text.

F. **Definition of Key Terms**

The definition of key terms is given in order to avoid misunderstanding of some words used in this study. Some terms used to be defined are as follows:

1. Reading comprehension ability is a primary focus of instruction in the post primary grade, after reader have largely mastered word recognition skill, although comprehension of text should be an internal part of reading instruction with beginning reader as well.

   (Snow, 2002:10)

2. Semantic mapping is a popular graphic representation that can use to help students identify important ideas and show how these ideas fit together.

   (Vacca and Vacca, 1998:403)

   So, the semantic mapping involves drawing a diagram of the relationships between words according to their use in particular text.

3. Recount text is a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the order in which they occurred. Its purpose is to provide the audience with a description of what occurred and when it occurred.

   (Anderson and Anderson, 1998:24)