

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses some issues which are related to the topic of the research. They are background of the research, problem of the research, objective of the research, operational definition of the research, significance of the research and scope of the research.

1.1 Background of the Research

Language has an important role to develop intellectual, social, emotional aspects and to determine success in studying all subject matters. It expectedly helps the student to reflect their experiences to show their idea and feelings and also to understand any kinds of meaning. English, then, is chosen as the first foreign language to be learned by students in both formal and non-formal education in our country. For students in Junior high school, though English is given only as a local subject, it has an important role in preparing the students to continue their study to the next stages of education. Junior high school is the right place to make the students familiar with English. In line with the previous idea, some experts describe Theme-based Teaching as an approach to language teaching in which the whole course is structured around certain themes or topic (Brinton in Yang, 2009, p. 162).

Based on interview with the English teacher on eighth grade, the researcher concludes that 1) the students get difficulties in recognizing words; 2) the students get difficulties in remembering words; 3) the students get difficulties

in grasping the meaning of English words; 4) the students get difficulties in pronouncing words correctly; 5) the students get difficulties in writing and reading words correctly.

Because the standard score of the school is 75 and there were only 51.6% of the students scored ≥ 75 in the reading comprehension test held by the English teacher. Theme-based Teaching can help students read, if interesting reading material is provided with a theme or topic that makes it easier for students to understand the reading of the text. So that, arouses the interest of students to read texts or books.

The literature related to the implementation of Theme-based Teaching is regarded as an approach that is suitable to be applied in teaching young learners since “the use of this approach offers exciting possibilities for young learners and their teacher” (Cameron, 2001, p. 197). As an example, there is a study conducted by Yang (2009, p. 161) in an English course for primary English as second language (ESL) students in a non-school setting in Hong Kong. The study was aimed to investigate the learners’ perceptions and the impact of Theme-based Teaching on their levels of interests in an English course. As the result, it was found that most of the participants involved in the study agreed that teaching activities and tasks were more integrated and organized with the adoption of theme-based teaching (Yang, 2009, p. 170).

Regarding to the positive achievement of the use of Theme-based Teaching as described above, this research investigates the implementation of Theme-based Teaching in teaching English young learners. Despite the fact that learning new language will be easier through listening and speaking than from written text, especially for young learners in improving their reading skill. In this

case, the young learners are the eighth grade students of junior high school students as the respondents of this research is that they are already how to read and write in their First Language (L1). Consequently, they are considered to be ready to learn another language, in this case is English.

Therefore, this research is intended to find out how the teacher teaches reading skill to young learners by implementing theme-based teaching in the reading comprehension achievement presented in the classroom according to the theory of theme-based teaching from Cameron (2001, p. 180-198) and its principles from Brown in Sundayana (1994, p. 222) by synthesized it with the theory related to reading activities.

1.2 Problem of the Research

Based on the background of the research, the problem is formulated as follows:

1. How can Theme-based Teaching improve students' reading comprehension on eighth grade at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul in the 2019/2020 academic year?
2. How can Theme-based Teaching improve students' active participation on eighth grade at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul in the 2019/2020 academic year?

1.3 Objective of the Research

The objective of the research is to know :

1. Theme-Based Teaching can improve students' reading comprehension on eighth grade at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul in the 2019/2020 academic year.

2. Theme-Based Teaching can improve students' active participation on eighth grade at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul in the 2019/2020 academic year.

1.4 Operational Definition of the Research

It will provide a guideline to understand the variable of the research in operational form. In this research the variables are Reading Comprehension and Theme-based Teaching.

1.4.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the reader's process in understanding the contents of text, such as words, paragraphs, and sentences. This is needed to improve students' reading comprehension.

1.4.2 Theme-based Teaching

Theme-based teaching is one approach that is determined from the theme or topic in the context for students in teaching. Teaching on a theme or topic will make students easier to understand the context.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The result of this research is expected to be useful for the English teacher, the students' and the future researchers.

1. For the English teacher.

The result of the research is expected to be useful as an input for English teacher to apply Theme-Based Teaching approach in teaching reading in order to enable the students to find the information or messages from the reading text easily and to improve the students' reading comprehension.

2. For the students.

The result of this research is expected to give the students learning experiences in order to improve their reading comprehension.

3. For the future researcher.

The result of this research is expected to give information for future researchers to conduct a further research dealing with the application of Theme-Based Teaching approach to develop the students' reading comprehension by using a different research design.

1.6 Scope of the Research

The scope of this research is the implementation of theme-based teaching to increase students' reading and students' active participation. This research will be conducted on eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul in the 2019/2020 academic year.