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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Teaching and learning English today abounds of challenge. Various model strategies of learning are applied to achieve good acceptance of materials delivered to the students. But how can we know about students' progress after the material is delivered? How well can we measure the extent of the effectiveness of teacher's performance in transferring that material? The dilemma is how to evaluate students' progress in terms of their functional ability in English as a foreign language. Of course, it leads us to the question of the purposes of classroom language testing.

Language testing is a fundamental part of teaching and learning in school today. As stated by Gonzalez (1996), teaching and learning process would not be complete without a test. It is as a controller that will check the overall process of teaching learning. Also, L. F. Bachman (1990:55) cited by Gonzalez (1996) declares that testing gives an essential information for effective formal education. Its feedback contains positive change that will improve teaching and learning process. Thus, language testing and teaching learning are linked to each other. Teaching and learning cannot be separated with the test because they have a very strong linkage. If it is done then teaching and learning process work deficiently.

As pointed above, a test occupies an important role in learning process. Mikhaylova (2009) mentions that language testing and assessment are held in order to assess and measure the efficacy of teachers instruction and students' skill development. Furthermore, the test also influences classroom practice. If the test

is well-composed, it will help identifying the learning needs, informing the planning and delivering the teaching learnings' materials, and supporting effective learning (Schellekens, 2011). Test brings feedback of teachers teaching which often shows what is and what is not clearly delivered to the students.

Parallel to the test position which is vital in language learning, reading is also one of the fundamental part in mastering language. Mikulecky (2008) agrees that reading is the vital of instruction in all facet of language learning. Related to that statement, reading skill is the most important acquired skill for everyone that automatically impacts to all other achievement. Reading skill is essential to the academic achievement (Halloway,1999 cited by Kirsch et al, 2002). It is also strengthened by a study of Gupta & Ahuja (2015) that students academic success has a strong correlation with reading skill. Hence, a strong relationship between reading skills and students academic achievement should be considered.

Reading comprehension is the most concerned part in reading skill. Mikulecky (2008) defines it as a process of thinking, understanding, and learning in making a sense of text. Actually, reading is such a language skill of constructing the meaning of the text. As noted by Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011), reading is a process in which readers construct a clear representation of text by mixing their own background knowledge with the information in a text to apprehend that text.

In Indonesian education, we use English language as a foreign language. Particularly, in a foreign language situation, a good reading competency is a must. Therefore curricula expends a large number for reading lesson in order to achieve that goal. Also, reading has a big portion in the national exam graduation

question. Widiasih (2013) adds that in the national exam graduation, reading gets a portion of 75% of the overall question. It shows how important the mastery of reading comprehension skills in determining student's graduation. Considering the needs of reading mastery, reading competence should obtain more serious handling.

Reading test is a test used to measure someone's reading skill. It certainly has a variety of types that depends on what kind of skill which will be measure. Reading test is commonly held to measure students' comprehension, fluency, accuracy, speed and etc. Reading comprehension test is interpreted as a set exercises in the form of reading material and items of question designed to determine the extent of students' understanding. Reading test may provide scores that measure students' true ability. In general, students are expected to answer the question about the meaning, the idea which based on passages that they read, the specific information that contained in reading passages, and the specific vocabulary which related to reading text. Test of students' reading ability through reading test is important due to the high correlation between the ability of reading and academic success. Thus, to get the most outstanding mastery of reading competence, evaluation must be done continuously.

SMPN 1 Cerme is one of a school located in Gresik. The researcher chooses SMPN 1 Cerme because the location of the school is adjacent to the researcher. Such considerations are taken to facilitate researchers in conducting this research.

Previous research on developing reading test has been conducted by Hanafi. In 2007, Hanafi conducted a study of developing reading test with the title

“Developing Reading Comprehension Test for The First Semester Students of English Program of Muhammadiyah University”. This study focuses on developing reading test for reading comprehension I course in semester 1.

Based on what has been discussed above, researcher attempts to develop a reading test for seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Cerme at second semester which is based on the curriculum, syllabus and classroom teaching as possible. By doing this test, hopefully it can train and measure students reading growth. However, of course, a test cannot stand alone. Beside the test itself, it is also necessary to improve the teaching in reading comprehension that is developed according to the feedback gotten from the continuous test so that the students' mastery of reading can be increased.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

In relation to the background mentioned above, the statement of the problem of this study is formulated as follows: the reading test which designed for 7th grade students of junior high school on second semester is a product in the form of reading test that can be used for students to practice their reading ability. As the issue has been stated above that in the English national exam, 75% of the questions that tested to the students are a reading test based. Thus, to pass the exam, students must be able to master reading. Also, as the nature of language itself, to master a language skills, students need to do a lot of practice. One way is by doing the reading test.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Based on the problem statement mentioned above, the objective of this study is to produce a product in the form of a test reading for 7th grade students of junior high school for the second semester, which can be used to train students' reading ability. Hopefully, the more students practice reading exercises, it will increase their reading ability.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

There are two significances of this study named theoretical and practical significance.

#### 1.4.1. Theoretical Significance

Researcher hopes that the theories according to reading comprehension test development for 7th grade students here could be used for supporting other related research.

#### 1.4.2. Practical Significance

For practical significance, researcher hopes that this study gives contribution for EFL teaching in training students reading performance and comprehension by applying that test into the daily EFL teaching of 7th grade junior high school. Also, hopefully it can be used for developing further research.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

The scope of this study is developing reading comprehension test. The way of developing this test is as close to curricula, syllabus and classroom teaching. There will be some multiple choice questions and essay questions.

The limitation of this study is the researcher only focuses on developing reading comprehension test for 7th grade Junior High School students on second semester. This test is developed based on the syllabus of 2013 curriculum. Also, in analysing the item of test, the researcher only focuses on reliability, validity, item facility, and item discrimination.

### **1.6 Key terms**

There are some key terms which are discussed in this study. Those are: developing, reading test, and reading comprehension. To avoid misinterpretation of key terms, researcher will give the definition of each key term as below:

Developing is a process of compiling a reading tests starting from the process of planning the test, developing items of the test, reviewing the test, pre-testing the test, analyzing the result of the test, investigating the reliability and validity until creating a reading test that meets the standards.

Reading Test is a series of exercise in the form of reading material and items of question designed to find out the extent of students' understanding development.

Reading Comprehension is one of skill in reading to construct the meaning about text that they read including the ability to answer the question about the meaning, find the idea based on passages that they read, find the specific information contained in reading passages, and find the specific vocabulary related to the reading text.