

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Reading is one of the basic skills needed to master a language. Through reading activities, the readers are able to gain information that can help improve their knowledge. According to Brown (2007), reading is the most important academic skill since it may be used to gauge a student's general language proficiency. Moreover, Siahaan (2008) argued that reading is the capacity to deduce knowledge from printed words and apply it appropriately. To strengthen this argument, Sari (2017) stated that reading can also be defined as one of the language skills that can help the reader absorb and interpret information. So, based on the definition above, the writer can conclude that reading is a skill that must be mastered by someone who is interested in developing and improving language skills through reading activities and can also be divided into two stages or levels.

There are two levels of reading (Tompkins, 2011), namely reading at the lower level and reading at the higher level. Firstly, reading at a lower level refers to a direct understanding of the meaning of each text, such as what vocabulary is used, the setting of the place, the setting of time, and the setting of the location in a text. The information is stated clearly in each text. So, it can be concluded that, at a lower level of reading, someone only needs to read the entire text to get the information. Secondly, reading at a higher level, which is related to the level of

information in a text, is presented implicitly. The reader may find it difficult because the information is not presented directly, so to find information in a text, it requires literal knowledge of the content of the text, an understanding of the content, and also intuition towards the contents of the text. Other than that, in order to know the level of reading of someone, it needs something called reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand, differentiate, and reconstruct the meaning of text read by using the appropriate knowledge, strategies, and reading skills (Oakhill, Cain & Elbro, 2015). Moreover, Tarci, (2017) stated that reading comprehension can build understanding; someone with poor reading comprehension would have difficulties understanding the text, so their understanding becomes less. From the two statements above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is the ability to understand what is read, and with a good level of reading comprehension, the reader can conclude what the reader read, so when the reader has good reading comprehension, the reader can create and give a good conclusion about the thing that has already been read. One way to improve reading comprehension is to use strategies, and in this case, peer-assisted learning strategies can be one of the strategies that can help people, especially students, improve their reading comprehension.

Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy is a methodology intended to raise pupils' academic achievement through group work and engaged student engagement (Santo, 2017). Besides that, Daulay (2017) said that peer-assisted learning is a strategy that includes some activities such as reviewing information read, sequencing information, summarizing paragraphs and pages, stating the main idea

in as few words as possible, and predicting and checking the outcome. Last, Oakhil, et al (1996) argued that peer-assisted learning is learning that involves interaction between students who are more able to help students who are having difficulty understanding concepts or solving problems. So, based on the explanation above, the writer can say that peer-assisted learning is a strategy that can help students gain knowledge and comprehension about something through peer-assisted learning or work.

Based on all the definitions and explanations above, the writer is interested in doing research about the use of peer-assisted strategies. In conducting this research, the writer will do the research at SMP Negeri 10 Kota Kupang because, when the writer did the Praktek Pengalaman Lapangan (PPL) in this school, the writer found that students still had low ability in reading comprehension. The students also felt it difficult to understand a text and to know the main idea in a paragraph, and they felt bored with their reading session. So, it is a problem in the teaching process. The problem is not only the material that makes some students feel bored but also the strategy of teaching. The teaching process will not produce a good result if the way of teaching is not suitable for the student's conditions. To solve the problem, peer-assisted learning strategy can be alternative way to improve student reading comprehension. At last, the thoughts above led the writer to do research entitled "*The Effect of Using Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy on Students' Reading Comprehension at SMP Negeri 10 Kota Kupang*".

1.2 Research Problem

Does the use peer-assisted learning strategy effect on students reading comprehension at SMP Negeri 10 Kota Kupang?

1.3 Aim of Study

The purpose of this study to find out whether peer-assisted learning strategy effect on students reading comprehension at SMP Negeri 10 Kota Kupang.

1.4 Significance of Study

The benefits obtained in this study are as follows:

1.4.1 Implication

The result of this study expected to support and enrich the theory about peer-assisted learning that proposed by Topping & Ehly (1998) .

1.4.2 Application

The result of this research can help teachers get additional peer-assisted learning strategy. For students, this can be used to increase knowledge and understanding through peer-assisted learning. And finally, for future researchers, this research can be used as a resource to help them carry out the same research or possibly related research with peer-assisted learning.