CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

English is one of the foreign languages in Indonesia which is considered important to transfer and gain knowledge and to establish international relationship. It is the language of many books used by students at almost all levels. It is also a language for international communication particularly in business and tourism. Therefore, the Indonesian government decided that English becomes one of the compulsory subjects in formal education.

In learning English, language skills are usually grouped into receptive skills i.e. reading and listening, and productive skills i.e. speaking and writing. Those skills should be learnt by the students. Based on the observation did by the writer in SMAN 2 Sidoarjo, as one of the skill taught in class, reading is the skill which is presumed to be difficult to most students. Reading is important for everybody in order cope with new knowledge in the changing world of technological age (Smahillah, 2012).

Teaching reading for adult learners or senior high school students must be differed from that for children in elementary school because children and adult are different both in characteristics and background. Harmer (as cited in Smahillah, 2012) also states that students must be encouraged to respond to the text and situation with their own thoughts and experience, rather than just answering question and doing abstract activities.

Based on the English curriculum for class XI, especially for the reading skill, comprehending a text becomes the important thing which has to be taught to the students. Experiencing herself as a student learning English at senior high school, the writer found that comprehending English reading text was not that easy. In addition, she also found that most of her classmates faced similar difficulties. This could be caused by many things, and it was the teacher's teaching technique that was believed to be the major cause. From this personal experience, the writer would like to find out whether or not the students at senior high school level nowadays are still facing the similar problems. For this purpose, the writer plan to do some observations to some English classes at SMAN 2 Sidoarjo.

From the observations, the writer found that almost in every meeting the teacher uses the conventional way to teach reading to the students. For example, in reading class the teacher asks the pupils to take turns reading a passage and after that the teacher explains or translates some difficult words in that passage. Then, after the teacher finishes his explanation, the teacher asks the students to answer the question as a post-test activity. Those conventional ways make the student feel less interested in the subject. Yet according to Harmer (2006), one of the principles in the teaching reading is that the students need to be engaged with what they are reading. As with everything else in lessons, students who are not engaged with the reading text-not actively interested in what they are doing-are less likely to benefit from it. When they are really fired up by the topic or the task, they get much more from what is in front of them. It means that without reading

comprehension skills, the students -most of the time- tend to forget or misuse new words while learning foreign language. One of the way to maintain students' interest is by giving various activities and sometimes using games.

The definition of game is an activity that you do to have some fun (Hornby cited in Daryanti, 2008). According to Hansen cited in Bahri (2008), games can make the students more focused on learning, because they do not feel that they are forced to learn. They are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinion and feelings. Teaching aid is any piece of equipment that can be used to help the students learn. According to Froese cited in Asokhia (2009), instructional materials or teaching aids are those, materials used in the classroom or workshops for instruction or demonstration purposes by students and teachers. In English language such instructional materials include word cards, pictures, objects, puzzles and so on. These materials can be grouped into three sections. First is Audio which is dealing with what is heard; music, drums, radio, tape recorder, projectors, DVD, and any sound effect that can be heard. Second is Visuals which is dealing with things that can be seen; comprising of posters, charts, chalkboard, flannel graph, flashcards, puzzles, objects-(real), projectors, cartoons, television, computer CD, internet and so on. Third is Multi-sensory where pupils learn through the five-senses- see, hear, smell, taste and touch. This can take the form of role-play, demonstration, models, simulation, experiments, excursion, visits and so on.

A crossword puzzle can also be a useful teaching aid.According to Jones (2007), crossword puzzle is a puzzle consisting of a grid of squares and blanks

into which words crossing vertically and horizontally is written according to clues. Crossword puzzle offers a challenge that will motivate the students to try to fill in the puzzle. It gives much opportunity for the students to practice and repeat the sentence pattern and vocabulary. Besides, the crossword puzzle is a kind of games that will make the teaching-learning process more attractive. Puzzles are usually fun and engaging and can be used in a variety of ways. It can be used before a lesson as a preview to vocabulary,as a listening guide during the lesson (whereby students fill in the answers as they hear the word and the definition), as a reading guide which students use to fill in while they are reading (using glossaries, dictionaries, context clues and other strategies for key vocabulary words), as a review of the key terms at the end of the lesson, for homework to practice and learn new vocabulary.

There are two studies that are related to this study. First is teaching using English crossword puzzle as an alternative medium to improve students' vocabulary investigated by Daryanti (2008). She used crossword puzzle as teaching aids in the classroom activity to teach English vocabulary to the elementary school students. At the result of the research, she found that crossword puzzle media can help students to comprehend a text easier than regular method. Then she claims that crossword puzzle is more useful and can play an important role in teaching reading items to the students.

The same research was also done by Wahyuningsih (2009). She also used crossword puzzle as teaching technique to teach mechanical engineering department students to find out whether crossword puzzle can influence the

development of students' speaking proficiency. From the research that she has done, she found that crossword puzzle influence on students' speaking proficiency.

The similarity of those researches is the writers use crossword puzzle as a device for teaching English for the students. In this research, the writer use crossword puzzle as a pre-reading activity for teaching English to senior high school students in order to know whether crossword puzzle can help the students' reading comprehension or not.For that purpose, the writer chose SMAN 2 Sidoarjo because the majority of the students in this school still gain low score in English subject.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The writer states the problem as follow:

1) Does teaching using crossword puzzle as a pre-reading activity help the students of grade XI at SMAN 2 Sidoarjo comprehend a reading text?

2) Is there a difference between teaching reading with crossword puzzle as pre-reading activity in XI IPA 1 and without crossword puzzle as pre-reading activity in XI IPA 2 at SMAN 2 Sidoarjo?

1.3 Objective of the study

Based on the statement of the problem above, the objectives of this study are:

1) To know whether teaching using crossword puzzle as a pre-reading activity help the students of grade XI at SMAN 2 Sidoarjo comprehend a reading text or not.

2) To find the different between teaching reading with crossword puzzle as pre-reading activity in XI IPA 1 and without crossword puzzle as pre-reading activity in XI IPA 2 at SMAN 2 Sidoarjo.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is expected to give meaningful contribution to the teachers in teaching reading comprehension for senior high school students. So that teachers will know the way or the technique to teach English reading comprehension that is easier for the students. This study is also expected to provide new technique in particular in teaching reading comprehension. Therefore, the students will be able to learn faster and the teacher can teach with the better technique.

1.5 Definition of key terms

Crossword puzzle   :According to Jones (2007), crossword puzzle is a puzzle consisting of a grid of squares and blanks into which words crossing vertically and horizontally is written according to clues.(http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/compre.htm)

Pre-reading activity : The process of *skimming* a text to locate key ideas before readinga text (or a chapter of a text) from start to finish. Pre-reading (or *surveying*) provides an overview that can increase

reading speed and efficiency. Pre-reading typically involves looking at (and thinking about) titles, chapter introductions, summaries, headings, subheadings, study questions, and conclusions.(http://adelaide.academia.edu/alyousefh/Papers/500324/Teaching_reading_comprehension_to_ESL_EFL_learners)

Reading comprehension: Understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible (Grellet, 1986).