

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

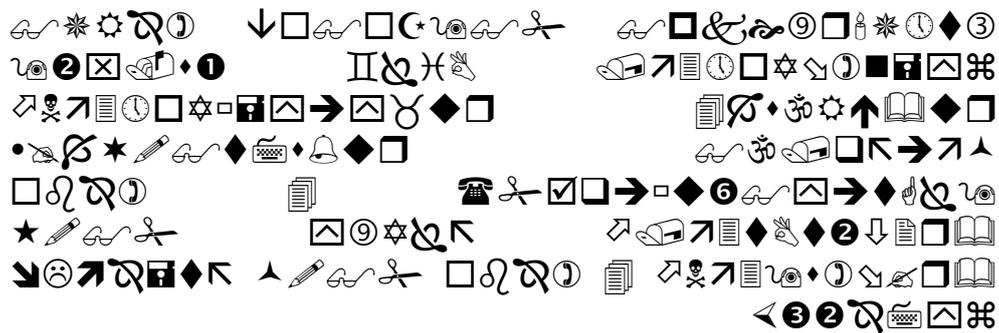
Language is an important need for human being in this world. Language as a communication instrument is used by human being for their interaction in their daily activities. Human being can fulfill their needs with using language to communicate and make relationship with other people. By using language people can express their wills, views, and perceptions, can transfer messages or information to other people, not only between one to another people but also between one to another countries.

It is in a row with H. Douglas Brown statement: “Language is a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written, or gestural symbols that enable members of a given community to communicate intelligibly with one another”.

Language holds an important role, particularly in communication. Actually, besides the linguist, other experts who work on science and technology broaden their knowledge on the theory or practice of the language. In addition, everybody realizes that interaction in many kinds of activities is going to be lower without language

Language has many useful aspects for human. By language, people can be able to extend any of expression such as idea, experience, feeling, thought, and any others by written and oral. In this regard, Pinocchio stated that “Language is the means by which results of human thought and action are passed on.” It is one reason why language to be important for us.

As a communication devise in human life and also in line with the world civilization, a language becomes an important thing and people around the world need to use it in their life. Language is needed to recognize and to know each other with other people in the world, as it is stated in the Holy Qur'an verse, on Surah Al-Hujurat 13 as follows:



The verse states that the human beings of the world are created by God with many races and tribes which have various culture, behavior, religion or beliefs, and languages. Those various show what a good creation of God. The most important thing that the writer wants to show here is about language, because to recognize and know other people we need language for communication. Language is very urgent and effective to get respond from other people when we have business with others. But, to interact with people out from our community we need to know other language. So, it is necessary to know and learn other language besides mother tongue. Therefore, it is important to learn another language, in other to make the same reading comprehension about when we communicate to each other and also to make easier when we interact with people out from our community.

Teaching English means teach four skills, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four skills should be taught consolidated. The language components like structure, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling are taught to support the mastery of four language skills.

All of those skills have their own way to be mastered. L. G. Alexander also states the same statement, that is, “The students must be trained adequately in all four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. If the teacher trains his students in all four skills, he must make efficient of the time at his disposal”.

When we learn our native language, we usually learn to listen then to speak, then, to read and finally to write. These are called the four language skill. All of those skills have their own way to master them.

Reading is the third skill. It is one important skill when teaching or leaning a foreign language. It enhances acquisition, develops student’s autonomy in the language learning process. It also vitally important for student’s further education since in some higher education establishments the students are required to have a definite score in reading skill. Allah in His Holy Qur’an, Surah al-Alaq:1 commanded people to read:



The first verse in Holy Qur’an and commands of Allah to human to read because of reading are one of ways to get information. We can get information from any sources. For example we can get news from newspaper, advertisement,

banner, brochure, etc with read them. So, reading is important skill for people to learn something new.

Reading can be divided into extensive and intensive reading. To develop extensive reading students should be encouraged to read such authentic literature, as books, periodically, advertising leaflets, manual, etc. Intensive reading, both skimming and scanning is usually trained during the lesson and there are a lot of exercises that can be performed while reading.

Nowadays many kind of those texts were taught by teacher for junior or senior high school. For junior high school lesson usually use short functional text. It has some type such as letter, notice, greeting card, short message, inviting card, label, announcement, and advertisement. Whereas for senior high school usually use text longer such as narrative, recount, news item, etc. These texts give us some information about something that we don't know previous.

The observation is located in MTsN 2 Gambut. Based on the writer's prior observation and consultation with the English teachers of MTsN 2 Gambut, they said that letter text is difficult for the student. Because, the students cannot understand and identify the content or part of the letter well, based on KTSP curriculum the stress of teaching English are four skill, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. So, the teacher does not have much time to teach it maximally. While, if students want to write letter well, they must know structure and parts of a letter.

The writer focuses on usage personal letters; they are letter for friend, thank you letter, letter for teacher, and invitation letter. The reason for choose

personal letters because it is type of letter that most simple and often used by people.

Based on the explanations above, the writer is interested in getting a research entitled: **“THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS’ ABILITY IN READING PERSONAL LETTERS AT MTsN 2 GAMBUT IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2013/2014.”**

B. Research Questions

Based on the rationale above, the problem of this research can be formulated as follows:

1. How is the ability of eighth grade students at MTsN 2 Gambut in academic year 2013/2014 in reading personal letter?
2. Where are the difficulties of eighth grade students at MTsN 2 Gambut in academic year 2013/2014 in reading personal letters?

C. Limitation of the Problem

This research is limited only about the ability of the eighth grade students at MTsN 2 Gambut in academic year 2013/2014 in reading personal letters and their difficulties in reading personal letters.

D. Research purpose

Based on the research questions above, the purposes of this research are:

1. To know the eighth grade students' ability in reading personal letters at MTsN 2 Gambut in academic year 2013/2014.
2. To know students' difficulties in reading personal letters at MTsN 2 Gambut in academic year 2013/2014.

E. Significance of Research

The result of this research is expected to give significance as follows:

1. Give information for teachers to take appropriate strategies to improve the success of teaching and learning process, especially in teaching personal letter.
2. Enrich the writer's knowledge and experience in the scientific research especially about the personal letters.
3. Give more information or additional references, especially for the same kind of research.
4. Enrich the literary source of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Ability is natural or acquired skill or talent. It means how the skill of someone to do something.
2. Reading is an activity to look at and understand the meaning of written or printed word or symbol. Reading is an interaction between the reader and the text in order to understand the text.

3. Personal letter. It is a type of letter which provides communication between a small numbers of people, usually two. Personal letters are letter written by someone to other people that they know.

G. Writing Organization

This study is divided into five chapters as follow:

The first chapter contains of introduction which consist of background of study, research questions, limitation of problem, research purpose, significance of research, definition of key terms, and organization of writing.

The second chapter contains of theoretical review, divided into sub chapters namely definition of reading, definition of reading comprehension, definition of letter, definition of personal letters, part of personal letters, and kind of personal letters.

The third chapter contains of research method that includes type and research method, population and sample of the research, data and source of data, techniques of data collection, design measurement, techniques of data processing and data analysis and research procedure.

The fourth chapter contains finding and discussion that includes finding and discussion.

The fifth chapter contains closure that includes conclusion and suggestion that is based on finding.