

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Background of The Study**

Reading comprehension is one of the most crucial components of language learning, serving as the foundation for students' overall academic development. It enables students to extract meaning from written texts, engage with complex ideas, and apply knowledge across various subjects. In language learning, particularly, reading comprehension skills help students navigate different genres of texts, understand literary devices, and interpret the nuances of language.

Despite its importance, many students in class X.C of Assalam Islamic Boarding School exhibit difficulties in this area, particularly when dealing with narrative texts. Narrative texts, often dense with literary elements, can be challenging for students to decode, impacting not only their language learning but also their performance in other academic subjects that require strong reading comprehension skills.

Recent observations and discussions with students from class X.C have highlighted two key issues that need to be addressed. First, students demonstrate a generally low level of comprehension when reading texts, particularly narrative materials. This results in difficulties understanding key points, plotlines, and character development, which are fundamental aspects of narrative reading. Second, their learning interest is notably low. Many students seem disengaged during reading lessons, showing little enthusiasm or motivation to improve their reading skills. This lack of interest in learning negatively

influences their ability to focus on reading tasks and impedes their overall academic progress.

Observations indicate that many tenth-grade students at Assalam IBS have difficulty comprehending narrative texts. They struggle to identify major elements such as setting, characters, conflict, goals, and resolution. Moreover, they often miss the main idea and supporting details, leading them to view reading comprehension as a challenging activity. This reluctance is evident when students prefer to answer questions hastily without deeply engaging with the text. This issue is exacerbated by the conventional, monotonous teaching methods that fail to make the learning process engaging, resulting in poor reading comprehension performance and low academic achievement. The previous result of learning activities related to reading comprehension achievement showed that there were many students of X.C out of 30 students got very low score around 30 until 50. The lowest score of the student is 30 and the highest score is 80. The minimum competency criterion (Henceforth *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal / KKM*) for English subject in that level is 70, but there were only about 36,67% of students who have passed of the standard. It means that there were about 63,33% students did not pass of the standard.

Upon further investigation, two primary causes for these challenges have been identified, they are Monotonous Teaching Methods; The current teaching strategies employed in reading lessons lack variety and interactivity. Lessons often consist of traditional, lecture-based methods where the teacher explains the material while students passively receive information. This repetitive approach fails to capture students' attention and limits their active participation. Without opportunities for discussion, collaboration, or engagement with the material,

students tend to become disengaged, reducing the effectiveness of the lessons. The lack of stimulating activities further reinforces their passive attitude toward reading, which is critical for building comprehension skills.

Difficulty of narrative materials is also another significant issue contributing to students' low comprehension is the complexity of the narrative texts used in the classroom. Many students find the language, themes, and literary devices in these texts too difficult to grasp. When faced with reading materials that exceed their current skill level, students often feel overwhelmed and frustrated, which leads to a decline in motivation. Struggling to understand key concepts in the texts makes students less confident in their reading abilities, reinforcing a negative cycle where they lose interest in reading altogether. This also creates a gap between students' current comprehension levels and the expectations of the curriculum, further exacerbating the problem.

In addressing the issue above, it is essential to explore more effective and engaging teaching strategies that can enhance students' reading comprehension while also boosting their interest in learning. One such approach is the Snowball Throwing Method, a cooperative learning strategy that has shown promising results in previous studies. The Snowball Throwing method involves active participation, where students are divided into small groups and tasked with creating questions related to the reading material. These questions are then "thrown" to other groups to answer, promoting interaction, collaboration, and critical thinking. The method is highly interactive, allowing students to engage more deeply with the text while working with their peers to understand complex ideas.

Research has demonstrated that the Snowball Throwing method can significantly improve students' reading comprehension. By actively involving students in the learning process, it shifts the focus from teacher-centered instruction to a more student-centered approach. This not only makes learning more enjoyable but also encourages students to take responsibility for their learning. Moreover, by working in groups, students can break down difficult materials into manageable parts, enhancing their understanding of challenging narrative texts. The collaborative nature of the Snowball Throwing method also fosters a positive learning environment, where students feel more motivated to participate and share their ideas, which can ultimately lead to increased learning interest.

Given the effectiveness of the Snowball Throwing method in previous studies, this research aims to implement it in class X.C with the goal of improving both students' reading comprehension and their learning interest. By applying this interactive and engaging approach, the study seeks to address the identified issues and enhance the overall learning experience for students. So, this research will focus on increasing students' reading comprehension and learning interest by using snowball throwing students at the tenth grade of Assalam IBS.

## **1.2 Identification of The Problem**

Based on the description of the research background above, there are some problems that can be identified as follow:

- 1) The students' reading comprehension is still low.
- 2) The students feel difficult to comprehend narrative text.
- 3) The students' learning interest is still low.

- 4) The students have less motivation to study.
- 5) The teaching method applied by the teacher is monotonous.

### **1.3 Limitation of The Problem**

Based on the problem identification, the researcher narrows the focus of the study. The research aims to improve students' reading comprehension and learning interest. The method used to achieve this is the snowball throwing technique. The study focuses specifically on narrative text as the learning material. The research is conducted with students from class X.C at Assalam IBS. By limiting the scope, the researcher ensures a more targeted investigation. This approach helps to address the specific needs of the selected group effectively.

### **1.4 Problem Formulation**

Based on the problem identification above, the formulation of the problem is: "How could snowball throwing method increase students' reading comprehension and learning interest at the tenth-grade students of Assalam IBS?"

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

Based on the problem formulation, the research objective is to find out and to describe how snowball throwing method could increase the students' reading comprehension and learning interest at the tenth-grade students of Assalam IBS.

### **1.6 Research Benefits**

The result of this research is expected to contribute as follow:

- a) Theoretically

The result of this research is expected to be beneficial for education especially in learning English. They are presented bellow:

- 1) Giving input to English teachers at school that by applying snowball throwing method can improve students' participation in the learning activities.
- 2) Recommending to English teacher that by implementing snowball throwing method can improve students' interest in learning English.
- 3) Contributing researches in the field of education that has to do with the problem of efforts to improve the learning process.

b) Practically

The results of the research can also be useful in practical term, they are:

- 1) Providing information of descriptions for prospective teachers and English teachers in determining alternative English learning method that is suitable to be applied in teaching reading, especially with snowball throwing method.
- 2) Providing English teachers with input on the various advantages and disadvantages of learning by using snowball throwing method.
- 3) Providing teachers with a dynamic and adaptable approach to teaching, enabling them to address diverse learning needs and maintain students' enthusiasm for reading.