**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with background, research question, objective, significance, and scope of the research.

1. **Background**

Reading is one of the four necessary language skills for those learning English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL). Reading holds the important rule because reading is one of activities, which cannot be released in our life to search information or knowledge from textbooks, articles, or magazines written in English. Thus, the students should have good reading skills to help them in academic studies.

In the language learning process, reading skill is very important in the education field. It is such a condition stated by Cahyono&Widiati (2006) thatthe reading and learning skills of the text written in English as a foreign language (EFL reading) is an essential element in the establishment of a secondary and tertiary English language curriculum (both English and Non-English departments) in Indonesia.

Moreover, based on the education policy in our country, English is one of subject matters in UN (National Examination). Besides listening, reading comprehension becomes the important part in UN. It is because mostly the questions are based on the students’ comprehension toward the certain text.

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Most of the people think that reading is simple, just reading passage or text. But actually, reading is more than just reading passage or text. According to Hamra&Syatriana (2010), learning to read refers to reading for meaning or comprehension. Reading for meaning is essentially an attempt to comprehend texts. Generally, the teaching of reading to the EFL students in Indonesia aims at enabling students to read and comprehend texts and other materials written in English. More specifically, students are expected to master skills in the level of literal, inferential, and critical comprehension. Unfortunately, many students do not comprehend what they are reading.

Comprehension is a special kind of thinking process. The reader understands by actively building the meaning internally from interacting with the material being read (Anderson & Pearson,1984). Successful comprehension involves the reader’s discovering the meaning needed to achieve the particular piece of information, solving problem direction. It is important to know that these kinds of mental abilities are not those measured by standardized reading comprehension tests.

Therefore, the researcher believes that in reading text, comprehension is very important. It is the main goal that must be considered by the readers. But nowadays, many students read books or materials or literature without understanding what they have read. They can read the words in passage perfectly, but they are not able to answer even the simplest question, even though the answers are directly contained in the words they pronounced. Reading is not just saying the words. Reading always must be a meaning getting process.As Boder(2002) defines reading as a process of thinking, evaluation, assessment, making mental images and arguments. In addition, Pollaczek(1999)stated that reading skills are the ability to retrieve information from written text and understand the meaning of the text.

Throughout the world reading materials and textbooks are among the most common, reliable and authentic sources of input in the EFL class. Reading is essential for full participation in modern society. This presents a great challenge for everyday life. Reading requires the processing of visual information from pages and linguistic information that resides in the reader's mind. Consequently, how the information in the text presented to the student's vision, including the size and typeface, may have an effect on their scans in general and at their speed in particular.

Many studies have been dedicated to the effects of typography and font size on legibility and text readability in the adult population. The researcher will apply this bit of information, however, to empirical studies of this topic on students. It is important to examine students as a particular population because of the influence of developmental change and familiarity with the character of the text readability. Since most of the students' reading material (ie, textbooks, standardized tests, and literature) is found in print, it is important to check the readability of the printed text for students.

There are other studies in the literature that have issued font sizes and their effects on text reading when presented on screen (eg Bernard et al 2001, 2002 & 2003). Most of the research ended in various sizes as a favourable measure, not the best font size, following similar performances of all groups on some font sizes and explained the neutral effect of reading font size on speed and accuracy. Contrary to such research, there is also a claim that the font size affects screen readings. Dyson (2004) for instance, reported fonts on 10-point sizes read significantly slower than fonts on 12-point sizes, but there is a trade-off speed-accuracy that erases the difference between the sizes. Fonts that read faster generally read less accurately.

Furthermore, for some people the larger font size of a text the more difficult it is to read because it will make the concentration of the reader dispersed, consequently any information cannot be conveyed perfectly. Conversely, if the font size is too small, the greater the concentration required by the reader to read it, which generally makes the reader lazy to read the text. Indeed, the majority of Indonesian people assume that the larger font is more obvious.

Moreover, the selection of the font size must be paid attention to the age of its readers. This is because children are usually more interested in the form instead of meaning behind the text. In contrary, adults are more interested in the meaning than in the form.The researcher hopes that this research will be the first step in solving the problem of the font size that most appropriate for student’s reading materials.

Considering the statements above, the researcher conducted a research underthe title: “The Effects of Font Size on Students’ Reading Comprehension”.

1. **Research Question**

Connecting to the background of the research above, the researcher formulates the research question, namely “Does font sizeaffect the students’ reading comprehension?”

1. **Objective of the Research**

Based on the background and the research question above, the researcher states that the objective of this researchis to find out whether font sizeaffectsthe students’ reading comprehension.

1. **Significance of the Research**

It is expected that the findings of the research are great valuable information and contribution to the readers in general and especiallythis research is expected to be very useful information for the book publisher in considering the best font size for student’s text book material. Furthermore, the result of this research is expected to be an additional guide or reference for the next researchersto get ideas with the same topic.

1. **Scope of the Research**

This research limited its scope on the effect of font size on students’ reading comprehension. This research was conducted at SMKN 5 Makassar. The researcher gave reading text with different font size and font typeto investigatethe effect of font size on students’ reading comprehension.