I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with introduction of the research which including background of the research, research question, objective of the research, uses of the research, scope of the research, and definition of terms.

1.1. Background of The Research

Language is one of the most important parts in communication by which it is used as a tool of communication among the nations all over the world. As an international language, English is very important and has many interrelationships with various aspects of life owned by human being. In Indonesia, English is considered as the first foreign language and taught formally from elementary school up to the university level.

There are four major skills that should be mastered by students, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students will have good communication skills if they can use the four skills. As one of the language skills, reading is an essential skill for students, it is the most important skill to master in order to succeed in learning English. It can support the development of the knowledge and it provides the proficiency to get information. In addition, through reading the learners get a lot of information, ideas, and also useful knowledge.
Reading dominates the teaching material in almost English textbooks where there are several types of reading text that should be mastered by the students of Senior High School. Based on the Curriculum 2013, the types of text that are learned by the second grade students of Senior High School are personal letter, invitation, procedure text, report, analytical exposition text, and biography text. To gather the knowledge from the text, it is important for the students to have a good reading comprehension and without reading there would be empty and meaningless. Comprehension is intended not only to know what the letters stand for, but to fully understand the text.

In addition, Caldwell (2008: 4) states that reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Reading comprehension depends on the accuracy and speed of graphemis perception, that is perception of written symbols, control of language relationship and structure, knowledge of vocabulary items and lexical combination, awareness of redundancy, the ability to use contextual clues and recognition allusion. It involves constructing meaning from what is being read. Reading without comprehension does not have specific purpose because comprehension is important in reading process. In order to comprehend the text, a reader must actively and intentionally think about and analyze meaning while reading. Students must consider many bits of information while reading to comprehend the text such as genre, text structure, the author’s purpose, and familiar and unfamiliar words. Strong comprehension encourages self-directed learning and lifelong reading.
According to experience obtained from PPL, it was found that most students had difficulties in reading comprehension. The difficulties of the students covered finding main idea, finding supporting details, determining reference, determining inferences, and vocabulary. Moreover, the students also had different difficulties. It was because every student had different characteristic.

Every student has his/her own technique to comprehend the reading text. It is because he/she has different characteristics. For example some students like to have a discussion with friends when they are reading a passage. Other students tend to be individual when they want to read a text. There are students who like to socialize with their environments and there are some others, who prefer to be alone within their surrounding. In addition, within the learning activities, there are students who prefer working on tasks in groups, namely field dependent and the other prefer working individually, namely field independent.

There are many characteristics of the students, such as several students like to have discussion with their friends when they have to read something. Some tend to be individual when they want to read the passage. Others have quick response to the reading text on slow in understanding the materials, while the others are interested in specific or general things when they are reading.

In this research, the researcher focused on field-dependent and field-independent as one of cognitive style in styles of learning. This is important for the teachers to know the cognitive style especially field dependent and field independent of their
students so they can easily find the suitable approaches for the students. When the teacher knows the characteristics of their students and she/he will make teaching learning process more effective.

By knowing the characteristics of field dependent and field independent, it is expected that the teacher can help the students create suitable atmosphere in the class activities in order to make minimum differences on reading comprehension achievement. Field dependent and field independent have advantages and disadvantages in teaching learning process. Field dependent students are much influenced by environment and they have wider social relationship. On the other hand, field independent students can concentrate on something without being influenced by the situation.

The previous research was done by Mulyani (2011) shows that field independent students are more successful in reading comprehension achievement than field dependent students. This may be caused by the fact that field independent students are hard workers even if they cannot find the answers they try to get the answers of the questions. It indicates that students’ achievement in learning language especially English are influenced by cognitive style here focuses on field dependent and field independent characteristic.

The teacher should recognise the students’ characteristics during the teaching learning process based on those problem. The teacher can give more attention to field dependent students since they are much more difficult in choosing their
major field. Field dependent students have low analytical ability in solving problem. Therefore, they need much time to solve the problem. Furthermore, they tend to come in a group of discussion than self study since they have no self-reflection. On the other hand, field independent students are less influenced by the circumstances. Related to these problem, the teacher can use pair work or discussion technique in teaching and learning process. It is good for field dependent since it helps them in the problem solving they face in teaching learning process and it is also good for field independent because it helps them to socialize with the others.

Based on the statement above, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the title “The Comparison between Field Dependent Students and Field Independent Students in Reading Comprehension Achievement at the Second Grade of SMAN 1 Kotaagung.”

1.2. Research Question

Based on the previous background, the research question in this research is:

Is there any significant difference between field dependent students and field independent students in reading comprehension achievement at the second grade of SMAN 1 Kotaagung?
1.3. Objective of the Research

Based on the research question above, the researcher formulates the objective of this research as follows:

To find out whether there is a significant difference between field dependent students and field independent students in reading comprehension achievement at the second grade of SMAN 1 Kotaagung.

1.4. Uses

The uses of this research are as follows:

1. Theoretically
   This research is intended to find out whether there is difference between field dependent students and field independent students in reading comprehension achievement. The findings of research are expected to provide a support to the development of teaching, especially in reading comprehension.

2. Practically
   The findings of the research are expected to be beneficial as the information for the English teachers that field dependent and field independent characteristic is more influential on increasing students’ reading comprehension.

1.5. Scope of the Research

The scope of this research was focused on the comparison between field dependent students and field independent students in reading comprehension
achievement. The researcher used questionnaire to categorize the students into field dependent and field independent. The questionnaire was developed from the field dependent/independent checklist by Wyss (2002).

Based on Curriculum 2013, the researcher used several texts in this research. It was because the students had learned the texts. The texts were personal letter, invitation, procedure text, report, analytical exposition text, and biography text. The population of this research was the second grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Kotaagung.

1.6. Definition of Terms

There are some terms used by the researcher and to make clear and to avoid misunderstanding, they are classified as follows:

1. *Field dependent style* is the tendency to be “dependent” on the total field. That the parts embedded within the field are not easily perceived, although the total field is perceived more apparently as a unified whole.

2. *Field independent style* is ability to perceive a particular relevant item or factor in a “field” of distracting items. In psychological terms, the “field” may comprise different things: it may be perceptual; it may be more abstract which may refer to a set of thoughts, ideas, or feelings from which task is to perceive specific relevant sub items.

3. *Reading comprehension* is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.