

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading comprehension skill is a fundamental skill to obtain further academic learning success. To get further knowledge, college students are required to have critical and analytical competence in comprehending academic texts, in searching more academic information through various types of reading materials such as textbooks, journals, reports, or electronic messages; however, not all students are good at comprehending the text being read. Most of them understand the informational of the text; in other words, they are good in decoding the text but struggling to comprehend what the underlying meaning and purpose beyond the text are. In this condition Perfetti (1985) asserts that the reason why some students struggle is due to the lack of reading comprehension strategies used as parts of background knowledge.

A number of studies (Brown & El-Dinary, 1996; Fisher, Frey, & Williams, 2002; Wold, 1996) have maintained that reading strategy instruction contributes positive effects on students' reading comprehension skill. Readers with reading comprehension strategy awareness organize, monitor, and evaluate their own comprehension by constantly questioning and reacting to the texts they read to construct meaning before, during and after reading process. Some researchers (Dole, Duffy, Pearson, & Roehler, 1991) state that having students generate their own questions accelerates text comprehension while (Pinnel, 2000) asserts that questioning information in the reading text is one of reading strategies in which the readers can monitor their thinking process during interaction with the text to enhance comprehension. According to Massey, the readers are aware of their text comprehension content because they are mentally active while going through the process of questioning the text (Massey, 2003). Questioning the text during reading assists independent students to think critically about the purpose of reading, to conduct prediction, selection, connection, evaluation, review, and to acquire future benefits from the text being read (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995).

Several previous studies about self-questioning strategy were conducted by some researchers. The one who sought the correlation between self-questioning strategy and prose comprehension at EFL learners in Manila was Miciano (2002). Her findings stated that there was no significant difference between self-questioning strategy and prose comprehension. Other researchers Hui-Fang Shang and I-Ju Chang-Chien (2010) inquired Miciano's study and replicated it to verify the effect of self-questioning and reading comprehension at EFL learners in Taiwan. Their findings concluded that self-questioning affected students' reading comprehension. Then Janssen (2009) conducted a comparison study at secondary students in Holland to explore which self-questioning strategy was more effective: with or without guidance. The research result notified that self-questioning without guidance proved to be better in assisting students interpret and appreciate short story. Another researcher who executed a research of self-questioning strategy in Indonesia was Hartati who studied the effect of self-questioning strategy before reading for ESP undergraduate students in Widya Mandala University. Her findings emphasized that generating self-questioning before reading improved the students' reading comprehension achievement.

The four previous studies discovered that self-questioning strategies conceived some significant benefits to enhance reading comprehension. First, self-questioning strategy stimulated students to actively engage with the text in order to generate questions that caused them comprehend the text content better. Second, generating questions to the text had guided struggling readers to comprehend the reading text content step by step and recovered reading comprehension skill. At last, unguided self-questioning caused students to excavate deep curiosity to infer the text more profoundly in order to answer their self-questions rather than the teachers' questions.

According to Marzano (2007), beliefs, attitudes and feeling as students' self system is the root of learning which set goals executed by metacognitive system and cognitive system to retain knowledge. In other words, students' beliefs can affect the functioning of metacognitive, cognitive and knowledge domain. Emphasizing this notion, Baker (2009) also declares that students are ready to apply knowledge acquired in particular context if they have more awareness of themselves as learners. Moore and Rudd (2002) in their further study notify that students who actively engage with the reading text will accelerate their cognitive

ability in administering appropriate types of questions to communicate with the text. Ruddell (2008) asserts that students activate three categorical level of thinking skills to actively engage with the text: (1) literal level or read the lines which belongs to low order thinking and classified as remembering and understanding cognitive process, (2) interpretative level or read between the lines which belongs to high order thinking determined as applying and analyzing cognitive process and (3) applied level or read beyond the lines considered as high order thinking as synthesizing and evaluating cognitive process. Toboada and Guthrie (2006) ascertain that the level of questions student generates correlate to the level of comprehension achievement. It means that if the type of generated questions is mostly in the form of literal questions or low order thinking questions in which answers are written on the text, the comprehension level will be only explicit and superficial information extracted from the text (Ball & Washburn, 2001). However, if the type of generated questions is high thinking order questions such as analysis, or evaluated questions then the level of comprehension will belong to interpretative or applied (Toboada & Guthrie, 2006).

In comply with the significant role of self-questioning strategy in reading comprehension achievement and the previous linguists' statements concerning the importance of self-questioning strategy, the writer is curious to explore more profoundly the relationship between the students' beliefs in the importance of self-questioning strategy in reader-text transaction and their cognitive ability in generating high order thinking question type. An in-depth study of EFL undergraduate students whose studies require autonomous academic reading to escalate critical and analytical comprehension of textbooks, journals, or reports during their learning will assist this research to describe their beliefs in the importance of self-questioning strategy and its relationship with their cognitive abilities in producing high order thinking questions before, during and after reading process to enhance text comprehension.

1.2 Research Questions

1.2.1 The major research question of this study is noted as the following.

Was there any relationship between students' beliefs in the importance of self-questioning strategy and high order thinking question productivity in reader-text transaction ?

1.2.2 The following minor research questions support the above main research questions.

- a. Was there any relationship between students' positive beliefs in the importance of self-questioning strategy and high order thinking question productivity in reader-text transaction ?
- b. Was there any relationship between students' negative beliefs in the importance of self-questioning strategy and high order thinking question productivity in reader-text transaction ?

1.3 Hypothesis

1.3.1 The hypotheses of the study are noted as the following.

- a. There was a positive relationship between students' positive beliefs in the importance of self-questioning strategy and high order thinking question productivity in reader-text transaction.
- b. There was a positive relationship between students' negative beliefs in the importance of self-questioning strategy and high order thinking question productivity in reader-text transaction.

1.3.2 The null hypotheses of the study are noted as the following.

- a. There was no relationship between students' positive beliefs in the importance of self-questioning strategy and high order thinking question productivity in reader-text transaction.
- b. There was a positive relationship between students' negative beliefs in the importance of self-questioning strategy and high order thinking question productivity in reader-text transaction.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study is aimed to reveal a relationship between students' beliefs in the importance of self-questioning strategy and high order thinking question productivity in reader-text transaction.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This research reviews reading as an active process. In order to get text meaning, a reader always communicates his mind with the printed information, creates own thinking about what he is reading, what it means to him and relates to other things he knows (Liu, 2010).

In the process of decoding text information, a reader is not only required to understand the words meaning but he is also demanded to share his prior information or schemata. For that reason, this research will describe schema theory, which is combined with the interactive coordination of top-down and bottom up approach as the basic theory of reading comprehension.

Besides, this research also clarifies the significant role of beliefs as the control of human thought and action, its relations to metacognitive theory of learning in managing the reader's cognitive activities in comprehension process. Metacognition determines which cognitive process best suits the goal and which concise strategies will be applied.

At last, this research clarifies the importance of questioning the text. According to Tovani (2004), questioning the text evokes thinking process and formulates the reader to engage more to the reading text and build a personal connection with the text when he seeks answers of questions generated.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is aimed to share valuable insight for undergraduate students of English Department Faculty of Teaching Training and Education in Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya with regard to their efforts to enhance autonomous, strategic and critical comprehension for academic reading of textbooks, journals, or reports for learning. By being aware and believing in the importance of self-questioning strategy to enhance reading comprehension achievement, they can activate their metacognition skill to regulate, monitor and criticize the reading text with high order thinking questions to attain beyond reading. Theoretically, the findings are intended to support the theory of high order thinking and metacognitive awareness, which stimulates students to be more strategic thinkers and critical learners.

1.7 Scope and Limitation

In terms of broad governing rule and convention coverage of reading text, this study is limited to discuss the extensive academic reading text associated with reading to learn to retrieve global comprehension of scientific articles, journals, reports, or textbooks being read. Consequently, the study emphasizes more on the macroskills rather than microskills of reading which the writer assumes that the

skills such vocabulary, phonology, morphology, phonics knowledge and reading fluency in decoding and comprehension have been already mastered by the students.

The reading comprehension investigated in this study is the reading comprehension process focusing on the transaction between a reader and the text being read which relates to students' cognitive ability in generating self-questions for text comprehension before, during and after reading.

The reading strategy discussed is restricted to self-questioning reading strategy to engage with the text before, during and after reading process. The types of reading text discussed are EFL academic reading materials which support the students' learning in English undergraduate department.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

1.8.1 Beliefs in Reading Strategy

Beliefs in reading strategy refer to the reader's opinion concerning plans, tactics, techniques to manage interaction with the reading text to enhance text comprehension.

1.8.2 Self-questioning Strategy

Self-questioning strategy is defined as reading strategy where the readers generate questions from the clue in the text before, during and after reading process in order to predict, think about, analyze or evaluate the reading text for better comprehension.

1.8.3 High Order Thinking Question

High order thinking question is a type of question which requires cognitive process of applying, analyzing concept, evaluating the value of ideas and creating new concept.

1.8.4 Productivity

Productivity is defined as the number of questions generated by the students before, during and after reading process to satisfy curiosity about what is being read.

1.8.5 Reader-text Transaction

Reader-text transaction is defined as a transaction process between the reader's thought and the author's message in the form of written text. During the transaction process, the reader's thought is assisted with

background knowledge or schemata and particular reading strategy to obtain reading comprehension.

1.8.6 Reading Comprehension Achievement

Reading comprehension achievement relates to the level of students' cognitive skills in understanding a reading text. There are three reading comprehension level; the first level is literal comprehension or reading the lines which are associated with students' knowledge and comprehension abilities to measure basic understanding of the text such as facts, vocabulary, dates, time or location. The second level is interpretive comprehension or reading between the lines which relates to students' interpretation skill to perceive and apply the information from the reading text such as understanding the author's message and its relationship with the text implicitly. The highest level is applied comprehension or reading beyond the line. It involves students' cognitive skills of synthesizing and evaluating information to create new knowledge as the exploitation of critical thinking.