

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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### 1.1 Background of the Study

English, nowadays, as an international language has been taught in almost all countries around the world. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language which nowadays becomes a compulsory subject that has been introduced in all levels of schools, starting from lower secondary to upper secondary schools, even in some elementary schools, English is offered as an elective subject.

When we learn a foreign or second language, in that case, we learn to communicate with other foreign people. It means we learn to understand them, talk to them, read what they have written and write to them. Broadly speaking, we need to learn to communicate either in spoken or written language or both.

There are 4 (four) skills which are taught when we learn English, and reading skill is one of them. Even though the majority of students who learn foreign language may less speak English or target language, most of them still have to read English since in the age of technology growth, productive and educated citizens require even stronger literacy abilities (including both reading and writing).

Widdowson (1979: 25) states that reading is a combination process of textual information and the information that the reader brings to the text. In this sense that reading process is not simply a matter of getting information from the text, but it activates the schemata in the reader's mind and that is refined and extended by the new information supplied by the text.

Learning reading for foreign language is not a simply task done by non-native students since foreign language is the language which is being learned and it is not widely spoken in the community in which this language is being learned Cohen (1998: 4). In Indonesia, the EFL learners may have little contact or no direct contact with the target language community, therefore, they less use the target language in their daily activities. For that reason, consciously or unconsciously they need learning strategies to help them.

There are many reading activities done at schools, especially at high schools. In reading activities, there are the activities which conveying meanings to and getting meanings from printed or written materials by the students as the readers. Since reading is complex cognitive activities which require a set of processes and strategies, accordingly, it demands on people's abilities of reading.

To have reading abilities, the students must have good reading comprehension since through reading comprehension, the students can understand, evaluate and utilize the information or ideas from the text. In the case of L2 students, this process takes a longer time because to achieve this level, the students should develop their reading skills and reading strategies.

Skills refer to information processing techniques that are automatic and skills are applied to a text unconsciously. But the emerging skill can become strategy when it is used intentionally (Alderson, 2002: 16).

Some teachers have observed that there are some students can do reading activities or even reading comprehension tests in more successful ways than the others. In line with it, Richards (1998: 16) states that the students with good and fluent understanding do not only have knowledge, but also abilities to process the

information and automatically recognize the vocabulary of the text. Good and fluent reader makes use of written text to take what he needs, and obtain the meaning (Goodman (1967) in Williams (1984: 30). Therefore, in order to have those abilities, the students should acquire strategies, that what we called Reading strategies.

Strategies are steps which are taken by students to enhance their own learning and they have powerful impact on the students learning outcome as well. According to Carrell (1991), Reading strategies are a deliberate cognitive action when elicited for a conscious report. It can be an interest for what they reveal about the way readers process written texts. In Indonesia, to learn to read, especially reading English text, the students must have their own reading strategies since their environment provides less support for them to practice their English. In this case, this condition seems to affect their reading strategies which are needed in order to facilitate their learning to read.

In foreign language learning, Stern (1980) proposed that being successful language learners, they are determined by several characteristics, for instance, having positive learning strategies, learning styles, or even having a willingness to practice or experiment and some of these successes can be attributed to particular sets of cognitive and metacognitive behaviors which learners engage in.

Readers, who are aware of the strategies they use, can also distinguish between strategies that are appropriate or inappropriate for specific reading situations, and they are able to monitor their reading (Paris, Lipson & Wixson, 1983) and strategies are very important as tools for active, self directed involvement, which is essential for developing the language skills (Cohen, 1998:

4). During reading process, good students tend to be aware of reading strategies they use rather than poor students. The students who have good reading comprehension can do reading tasks or tests in more successful ways while the poor students tend to be slow in understanding reading text since they have lack knowledge of vocabulary and schemata of language. As a result, the achievement of student' reading ability is influenced by reading strategies they used (Richard, 1998: 17).

Thus, the component of choosing reading strategies is very important because it gives the learners a chance to be aware of, even have full attention to the processes which are consciously selected by the learners themselves.

Based on this situation, the researcher is interested to find out and look at the reading strategies used by students when they are reading a text or doing reading comprehension tests and how they can build the information from those strategies to become fluent and more effective readers. Specifically, this study will focus on the reading subject at high school because the researcher assumes that firstly, reading is very important since the reading texts provide opportunities to study parts of language such as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, the way sentences are formed, and paragraphs. And then through analyzing their reading strategies and reading comprehension test, the researcher would like to find out whether good students can be categorized as fluent readers because by having fluent reading comprehension, it will support the students to read the variety of reading texts rapidly with minimum efforts and automatically recognize the vocabulary which is written in the text and finally they have the ability to interpret the text easily.

## **1.2 Statement of the problems**

Due to the aforementioned background, the study will be conducted to examine reading strategies of high school students with particular focus on the reading subject. Having realized the importance of reading strategies to facilitate the students to learn reading, the researcher would like to know how the students learn reading and in what way it works for the students and does not. Thus, in this study, the researcher intends to answer the following research questions:

1. What reading strategies do second grade high school students use to facilitate their learning to read at SMA Negeri 1 Surabaya?
2. What reading strategies are used by good students and poor students at SMA Negeri 1 Surabaya?
3. Can good students at SMA Negeri 1 Surabaya be categorized as fluent readers?
4. What reading strategies are used by fluent readers at SMA Negeri Surabaya?

## **1.3 The Objective of the study**

Based on the above - formulated questions, this study will be intended to realize the following research objectives that are:

1. to identify what reading strategies second grade high school students use to facilitate their learning to read at SMA Negeri 1 Surabaya.
2. to identify the numbers of reading strategies used by good students and poor students of high schools at SMA Negeri 1 Surabaya.
3. to identify whether the good students of SMA Negeri 1 Surabaya can be categorized as fluent readers.

4. to find out reading strategies used by fluent reader at SMA Negeri 1 Surabaya.

#### **1.4 Hypothesis**

Related to the research questions, the study hypothesizes that:

1. The students consciously or unconsciously use their reading strategies to facilitate them to learn reading.
2. Good students use more frequently reading strategies than poor students.
3. The product of good reading comprehension can determine whether a reader has become a fluent reader.
4. Fluent readers have particular reading strategies which facilitate them to understand reading texts.

#### **1.5 The Scope and Limitation of the study**

This study is limited on an analysis of the reading strategies used by high school students. This study will be conducted to second grade high school students at SMA Negeri 1 Surabaya who are taking English language as a compulsory subject. The researcher chooses second grade high school students as the population of this study because those students are considered as advanced students who have acquired enough vocabulary in English.

#### **1.6 The Significance of the study**

It is essential for the researcher to know the importance of reading strategies used by students, particularly high school students while they are

learning reading. In relation to language teaching and learning, the data obtained from this study firstly is aimed at sensitifying herself as a teacher to students' needs so that in this case, she might be able to make overt suggestions that would help them in their language learning, especially in learning to read.

Secondly to give teachers and students the information about reading strategies used by good learners, and then give a great input for the students, and to help them to become more effective students.

This research is expected to help the students realize their own reading strategies, understand their characteristics in learning to read and enable them to choose the best reading strategies.

This research also shares the information to the students of the English Department of English Teacher Training Faculty in Widya Mandala Catholic University, so that in real practice, as teachers, they will be able to encourage students to develop their own language strategies and train language strategies especially reading strategies which would help the students when they learn reading.

## **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The theory of this research study will be based on firstly, the theory of learning strategies as stated by Nisbet (1986) who describes learning strategies as the process of thought and behaviors that are used by students, involving Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Socio- affective strategies.

Secondly, the theory of reading strategies which describes reading strategies as the ways readers manage their interaction with written text and how

these strategies are related to text comprehension. (Robinson, 1978: 12)

Thirdly, the theory of fluent readers as explained by Matthews, D (1989) who describes a fluent reader is a reader who reads and understands what he or she is reading quickly and with a minimum of effort.

## **1.8 The Assumptions**

Learning from many theories of reading strategies used in reading activities, there are some assumptions which can be drawn for this study. The assumption which says that there are several reading strategies employed by high school students to facilitate them in learning to read is stated by some authors as found in chapter two.

The second assumption is that the types of reading strategies used by good students and poor students can determine their reading achievement and the product of reading comprehension can determine whether a reader has become a fluent reader or not and there must be any reading strategies used by fluent reader.

However, to have scientific and reliable proof on these assumptions, therefore the researcher needs to conduct the study.

## **1.9 The Definition of the Key Terms**

1. **Strategy** is a plan designed for a particular purpose or the process of planning something or carrying out a plan in a skillful way. (Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary)
2. **Learning Strategy** refers to the behaviors and thought processes used by learners, including memory and metacognitive process. (Wallace, 2001)

3. **Reading** is a process of combining textual information with the information the reader brings to a text. In this view, the reading process activates a range of knowledge in the reader's mind that he or she uses. (Widdowson, 1979)
4. **Reading Skill** can be defined as different types of interaction between reader and text. Reading skill is as a part from styles and strategies, result from an attempt to break down the monolith 'reading comprehension'.(Johnson, 2000)
5. **Reading Strategies** refer to the way readers manage their interaction with written text and how these strategies are related to text comprehension. (Robinson, 1978)
6. **Cognitive Strategies** are defined as strategies which are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. (O'Malley, 1990)
7. **Metacognitive Strategies** are strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. (O'Malley, 1990)
8. **Compensation Strategies** are the actions used by students to overcome their limitation of vocabulary knowledge in the target language. (Stern, 1992)
9. **Memory Strategies** are the strategies that are used to help the learner to remember vocabulary and retrieve its information.(Stern, 1992)
10. **Social Strategies** are strategies related to social-mediating activity and transacting with others. (O'Malley, 1990)
11. **Affective Strategies** are actions used by students to face up their emotional difficulties and put positive feelings toward language learning.(Stern, 1992)

12. **Reading Comprehension** is the ability to translate or receive new information. This is the process of how readers conceive of a task, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they don't understand. There is a process of understanding the new information connecting to the pre-established concepts in minds for making inferences, evaluation, and judgment of the idea of the text. (Robinson, 1980)
13. **Reading Competence** is the ability to comprehend and make certain judgments on one's reading after experiencing the learning process in which indicates his or her reading achievement. (Fries, 1998)
14. **Good Students** are students who with a task goal orientations focus on their own progress in mastering skills and knowledge, and they define success in those terms. (Anderman & Maehr, 1994)
15. **Poor Students** are students who attribute their poor performance to a lack of important skills or to poor study habits.(Anderman & Maehr, 1994)
16. **Fluent reader** is a reader who reads, understands quickly what he or she is reading and automatically recognizes the vocabulary with a minimum of effort. (Matthews, 1989)

### **1.10 Organization of the Study**

The report of this study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter gives the background of the study. The second chapter provides the related literature that explains and supports this study. Chapter three discusses the methodology of the study. The findings and discussion of the study, however, will be presented in chapter four. Finally, chapter five gives the summary of the study and some suggestions and recommendation for further study.