

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

In the field of education in Indonesia, English is considered as an important means of communication both in an oral or written way. In this context, having a communication skill means having the ability to understand and express information, thoughts, feelings, and develop the science, technology, and culture in the English language. Regulation of the Minister of Education No. 22 year 2006 about content standard for senior high school in the third attachment of Standards of Competence and Basic Competencies of English defines that communication skill is a discourse competence which refers to the ability to understand and or produce oral and or written texts which is implemented in the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing (p.77). In short, by studying and mastering the English language, someone will be able to access a lot of information, to foster interpersonal relationships with other nations, to exchange information, and to enjoy the aesthetics of language in English.

Because of the importance of mastering English for Indonesian society in general, and for high school graduates in particular, English is given a status as a compulsory subject taught in various levels of school, starting from grade four of elementary level to higher levels. For primary schools, English is taught as a local content subject, while for junior and senior high school level, English is taught as a compulsory subject, and even English belongs to one of the subjects tested in the national exam (UN).

In the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) 2006, it is stated that there are four English skills taught at senior high school, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among the four skills, reading is highlighted in the national examination (UN). Attachment of the Regulation of the Minister National Education number 46 year 2010 states that the grade of English in UN for senior high school consists of two skills. Listening skill and reading skill. It is mentioned that the UN of English for senior high school students is divided into sub-tests; the first sub-test consists of 15 listening items, both in conversation and monologue, and the second sub-test consists of 35 questions covering reading comprehension so the target of learning is that the students can improve their reading comprehension skill so that they are successful in doing the exam. Additionally, competence based curriculum also determines that by the end of the twelfth grade, which is particularly prepares the students for their study in university, the students are expected to recognize and understand about 2500 English words (Depdiknas, 2002) to help them comprehend the reading texts. Moreover, the government also encourages the citizens to develop their habits; reading comprehension and writing skills. Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards Article 21 Paragraph 2 stipulates that "the process planning of learning is done through the development of the habit of reading and writing". Therefore, reading is important for the students to be able to understand a lot of information when they are reading English academic texts and doing English reading task.

Reading, according to Burn (1992: 2), is a complex process that involves recognizing written symbolic representation of speech, coordinating the words into thoughts, matching the thoughts to the previous knowledge bank, and constructing meaning. It means that the process of comprehending a text involves schemata. When getting information, it is retained in the memory while matching the information to the background knowledge to recognize and create the meaning of information. Moreover, according to Carrell (1989), second language reading has the goal namely to turn "learning to read" into "reading to learn".

Reading to learn the text is not an easy skill for students in Indonesia. Some research results (Syatriana, 1998; Hamra, 1993 and 1996; Mardiana, 1993; Kweldju, 2001) indicated that the ability of Indonesian students to read English texts was very low. It is because reading to learn the text requires abilities (a) to remember main ideas as well as a number of details that elaborate the main and supporting ideas in the text, (b) to recognize and build rhetorical frames that organize the information in the text, and (c) to link the text to the reader's knowledge base (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:13). Moreover, according to Hoewitz (2008), reading is the route to academic success for second language learners (p.115). To reach the academic success, the students need to do some activities namely transferring and getting the meaning in the form of both printed and written materials. Therefore, students consciously and unconsciously need to learn reading strategies to help them to be more effective readers.

Reading strategies is defined by Gardner (1987) as an action or series of action employed in order to construct meaning in reading process. Hudson (2007)

described reading strategy as any interactive process that has the goal of obtaining meaning from connected text (p.107). Burns (1999: 159) defines reading strategies as those skills and thinking patterns that help the reader to solve the problems of constructing meaning. In the context of reading, Block (1986) as quoted by Li, (2010) states that reading strategies indicate how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand. In short, reading strategy is used when reading difficult texts (Nuttal, 2005:40).

The definitions of the reading strategy above imply that reading strategy helps learners comprehend a text they are reading. This is in line with several studies showing that reading strategy use is positively correlated with reading comprehension (Al-Nujaidi, 2003; Darabie, 2000; Song, 1999 as quoted by Lien, 2011). Richard (1998:17) as cited by Adanty (2006) concludes that reading strategy influences achievement of the students' reading ability they use. Therefore, the reading strategy is needed to make easy their learning to comprehend texts.

In application of reading strategy, metacognition as quoted by Hudson (2007:112) refers to knowledge or regulation of cognitive endeavors. As such, it is basically cognition about cognition. It involves knowledge about one's cognitive system and conscious attempts in regulating cognition. Metacognition is distinct from cognition in that cognitive skills help one to perform a task, whereas metacognitive skills help one understand and regulate the performance on the task (Schraw, 1998) such as "knowledge of strategies for processing text, the ability to

monitor comprehension, and the ability to adjust strategies as needed” (Auerbach & Paxton, 1997, pp. 240-41). This concept has offered great insights as to how learners manage their cognitive activities to achieve comprehension before, during, and after reading (Wenden, 1998). For example, good readers go back and read more carefully, consider everything they know about the topic or root words, look at the pictures, get help from another source, or ask someone. While poor readers are not aware that the text is not making sense, and when they realize they have a problem, they are unsure of what action to take. Often, they just keep going (Burns 1999:176). During the reading process, a high achieving student tends to be aware of using reading strategy but a low achieving student tends not to be aware of using reading strategy. A high achieving student who has a good ability to comprehend reading comprehension will be able to do reading task or test more successfully while a low achieving student tends not to use their awareness to understand the reading task or test because of lacking knowledge of vocabulary and schemata language. The result of using reading strategies and perceiving high self-efficacy can be of great help to non-native readers because they may serve as effective ways of overcoming language deficiency and obtaining better reading achievement on language proficiency test (Wong, 2005; Zhang, 1992). Li (2010) also found that the reader’s metacognitive awareness of reading strategies is closely linked to their language proficiency.

Research has shown that by using SORS (Survey of Reading Strategy), most of the researchers showed that first, the type of frequency of reading strategy is problem solving strategies followed by global strategy and support strategy

(Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002; Monos, 2004; Li, 2010; Aziz et al., 2011). Abidin and Riswanto (2012) conclude that Global Reading Strategies (GRS) contributed the highest average score among Problem Solving Reading Strategies (PSRS), namely 3.49 and followed with Support Reading Strategies (SRS) 3.44, and Problem Solving Reading Strategies (PSRS) 3.43. Second, by using an independent t-test, a comparison was made of the reading strategy use between the high-proficiency students and the low-proficiency groups, revealing statistical differences for a number of individual reading strategies of those two groups. For example, the high-proficiency students group had higher means for 27 of the 30 strategies as well as for all the three strategy sub-categories. Statistically significant were observed for overall strategy use ( $p=0.00$ ), and for two of three sub-categories: Global Reading Strategy ( $p=0.000$ ), Problem Solving Reading Strategies ( $p=0.000$ ). There appears to be a strong relationship between reading strategy used by readers, metacognitive awareness, and reading proficiency (Li, 2010: 189). Third, L2 reading proficiency is generally tied to reading strategy use at high frequency level. Both reading strategies and learners' proficiency were significant. The high-, intermediate-, and low-proficiency students were different in strategy choice, and the effective use of global strategies was found to be correlated with the students' higher English achievements (Zhang & Wu, 2009:48).

The previous studies have demonstrated a close relationship between reading strategy and reading comprehension achievement. The studies attract the researcher since the researcher notices that reading strategy plays an important

role in reading comprehension. The correlations between reading strategy and reading comprehension achievement have been investigated in the previous studies.

Inspired by the previous studies, the researcher is interested to know whether her students at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat apply the reading strategies in understanding English texts. Moreover, from the results of reviewing document of national exam of English, which emphasizes more reading comprehension from the last-three-year, (firstly), in 2009/2010 the average score of English in the UN for the exact sciences program was 7.86 and for social sciences program was 7.58; the highest score for the exact sciences program was 9.40, and for social sciences program was 9.40 and the lowest score for the exact sciences program was 6.20 and for social sciences program was 5.80. (Secondly) In 2010/2011 the average of the English score in the UN for the exact sciences program was 8.10 and for social sciences program was 8.16. The highest score for sciences program was 9.40 and for social sciences program was 9.60. The lowest score for the exact sciences program was 6.40 and for social sciences program was 5.80. (Thirdly) In 2011/2012, the average score of English in the UN for the exact sciences department was 7.75 and for social sciences program was 7.79. The highest score for the exact sciences program was 9.80 and for social sciences program was 8.80. The lowest score for the exact sciences program was 5.40 and for social sciences program was 5.00.

The results in the UN indicated that some students scored high, some others did not. The difference in achieving such a score may be influenced by the

strategy use in reading. To know comprehensively reading strategy use and the reading comprehension achievement, the researcher is interested to find out the reading strategies used by high achieving students and low achieving students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat when reading academic texts and doing reading tasks. Through analyzing their reading strategies and reading comprehension test, the researcher would like to know whether or not there is a significant correlation between the reading strategies and the reading comprehension achievement of the students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat. Accordingly, the relevant title for this study is “The Strategy and Achievement in Reading Comprehension of the Second Graders of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat”.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In line with the title and the background of this study, three research questions are formulated as follow:

1. What reading strategies are used by high achieving students and the low achieving students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat?
2. Which reading strategy is the most frequently used by students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat?
3. Is there any significant correlation between the reading strategy and the reading comprehension achievement of the students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat?

## **1.3. The Objectives of the Study**

Derived directly from the above formulated research problems, this study are intended to:

1. To find out the reading strategies used by the high achieving students and the low achieving students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat;
2. To find out which reading strategy is the most frequently used by the students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat;
3. To find out whether there is any significant correlation between the reading strategy and the reading comprehension achievement of the students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat.

#### **1.4 Hypothesis**

In view of the fact that this study intends to investigate the correlation between reading strategy and reading comprehension achievement of senior high school students, the temporary answers to problem statements are formulated as follows:

##### **Alternative Hypothesis (Ha):**

There is a significant correlation between the reading strategy and the reading comprehension achievement of the students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat.

To test the alternative hypotheses, the null hypotheses are formulated as follows:

##### **Null Hypothesis (Ho):**

There is no significant correlation between the reading strategy and the reading comprehension achievement of the students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat.

## **1.5 The Assumption**

This study is based on the following assumptions:

1. Reading strategy used by high achieving students and low achieving students can be comparable.
2. Reading strategy may be idolized by the students.

## **1.6 The Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study is of a correlational study within a delimited scope of population use including the second graders of the exact sciences program of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat who attended English lesson as a compulsory subject. The researcher chose the second graders as the population of this study because the second graders were considered to have enough knowledge and exposure of English, particularly reading comprehension skill development, after one year English learning in the previous grades.

The study itself is delimited to focusing on first is reading strategy which is developed by Mochtari & Sheorey (2002) consisting of three categories; global strategy, problem solving strategy, and support strategy. Second is reading comprehension achievement; the reading comprehension test measuring the students' reading ability based on school curriculum which is implemented to syllabus and lesson unit plan. Therefore, the current study is delimited to studying the correlation between reading strategy and reading achievement of students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat and to find out which type of reading strategy gives more contribution to the students' reading.

## **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

This research is conducted on the basis of the theory of reading comprehension which claims reading comprehension as the comprehension processes that readers use in order to make sense of what they read (Brantmeier, 2002:1). This process needs metacognitive awareness. Baker and Brown (1984) define metacognitive awareness as the knowledge about ourselves, the tasks we face, and the strategies we employ. Comprehension or reading strategies are techniques or conscious actions taken to improve understanding and solve difficulties encountered in reading (Huang, Chern & Lin, 2009) when readers face some tasks of reading comprehension. They both good readers and poor readers are forced to use these reading strategies to enhance reading comprehension and conquer comprehension failures. Skilled readers automatically use conceptual knowledge (content schemata), text-structure knowledge (formal schemata), and knowledge about text-processing strategies to successfully construct meaning (Shih, 1992).

There are several types of reading strategy as described by several researchers. Janzen (2003) as quoted by Zare & Noordin (2011) states that reading strategies range from bottom-up strategies to more comprehensive strategies like top-down strategies. Bottom-up is defined as making use of information, which is already present in the data, such as understanding a text by analyzing the words and sentences in the text itself, or looking up an unfamiliar word in the dictionary. Top-down strategies make use of previous knowledge. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) divide strategies into cognitive and metacognitive. Anderson (1991),

Carrell (1989), Block (1986), Cohen (1990), Pressley (2002), Zhang et al. (2008) in Zhang (2009) state that L1 and L2 reading researchers have profiled a wide array of reading strategies from more traditionally well-known ones like skimming, scanning, and inferring to the more recently recognized ones such as activating schemata, recognizing text structure, using mental imagery, visualizing, generating questions, monitoring comprehensions, and evaluating strategy use, etc.

However, this study will be based on Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002) reading strategy that covers three types of reading strategy model: global reading strategy, problem solving reading strategy, and support reading strategy. There are some reasons underlying the use of these strategies in this study. First the strategies are used to measure metacognitive reading strategies of adolescent and adult L2 readers engaged in reading school- related material such as genre text since the first Sheorey & Mokhtari study conducted the reading strategy between English nature & non native. Second, it is suitable for the purpose of this study; finding out students reading strategies in school-related material. Besides the reliability and validity have been field tested by many studies as stated in the next chapter.

Therefore, this study focuses on examining these three reading strategies and their use by both the high achieving students and the low achieving students.

## **1.8 The Significance of the Study**

It is important for the researcher to know about the importance of reading strategies used by students, specifically the senior high school students when comprehending texts and doing reading comprehension tasks. Related to the

teaching and learning process, the result of the study will be meaningful feedback for some related sides.

First, for the English teachers, the results of this study will be a reflection about the students' reading strategies in order that the teachers can improve their teaching and help their students develop their reading comprehension skill and achievement. Second, the results of this study will be also a meaningful feedback for the English teachers to understand the students' reading strategy they use in doing reading comprehension tasks. Third, for the students, the results of this study will be a meaningful feedback for the students; it gives them information about the effective reading strategies used by the high achieving students in doing reading comprehension tasks. Fourth, for the other researchers, the results of this study will be an inspiration to conduct a further study on related topics.

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

To avoid misunderstanding, some key-words used in this study are defined as follows.

- a. *Reading strategies* are intentional, carefully planned techniques by which readers monitor or manage, actions and procedures that the readers use while working directly with a text, and basic support mechanisms intended to aid the readers in comprehending the text (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002)
- b. *Reading Comprehension Achievement* is reading comprehension ability which is measured by using reading comprehension test and score as the indicator.

c. *High achieving students* refer to the students whose score is formulated with the average score (M) plus one standard deviation (M+1SD) (Sudijono, 2010) as a high standard achievement.

d. *Low achieving students* refer to the students whose score is formulated with the average score (M) minus one standard deviation (M-1SD) (Sudijono, 2010) as a low standard achievement.