

## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### Background of the Problem

The need to reflect personal experience and deduct what happens around in are essential in initiating a study, because personal position should not be equalized with the others who might have different point of view. In this study, the highlighted problem is motivation, something that according to Bahous, Bachani & Nabhani (2011, p. 33) is an “effective strategy that could help the learners develop their English language skills”. Yet, the real concern was not only about motivation in general, but it was actually about motivation in reading, especially since it was interesting to know why the student’s desire to read has decreased overtime.

Therefore, in order to understand the ‘motivation’ topic better, a further look into the phenomenon would be the starter of this study before it would be continued with scientific explanation formulation (Kramp, 2004, p.104), especially since there was a direct involvement in the situation that urges me, as the writer, to see everything from different perspective so that it would create a compelling context to the society (Villenas, 1996 as in Nones-Austria, 2011, p. 6).

**My Personal Stance.** Reading is definitely something that I am passionate about; it is all because my family taught me language and general knowledge primarily through reading. It all started with a simple habit where my parents would buy me a lot of children story books, ask me to read them by myself or occasionally story tell it for me, and urge me to ask the meaning of any new or confusing words. I later realized that my parents gave me the chance to become an autonomous learner where I could have charge of my own learning that eventually leads me to become an independent learner as well (Liu, 2015, p.1166).

Though I have mastered reading skill in my mother language, I did not start reading in English which was my second language; I never read any English texts until I was in junior

high school level since my elementary school years only taught me basic vocabularies and grammar. Knowing that the school's language standard was high, I practically pushed myself to start reading anything in English despite my limited proficiency. In addition, the fondness in reading was really helpful in encouraging myself to be a better English user and reader as I learned a lot about grammatical pattern, vocabulary, and more importantly, how to comprehend English text as an entirety. Since then, I have been used to read English through reading novels and texts either for entertainment or learning.

**What I Found on My Workplace.** As an avid reader and someone who benefits a lot from reading activity, I always think that people who do not love reading as weird, because reading is, for me, an enjoyable activity where everyone gets to imagine about the characters, the plot, the background, and a lot of things. We can also learn about how the author plays with the words and feelings to build the story. Simply said, reading is supposed to be something that everyone loves.

However, this naïve thought is not something that happens in my workplace. Working as English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in one of the private senior high schools, there must be a different expectation towards the student's linguistic ability – that their proficiency would be higher than the EFL students and they would love reading activity. On the contrary, the fact was that most of the students are not motivated in reading and find it boring and difficult

As their teacher, it is so overwhelming to encourage the students during the reading activity. There are times when positive reinforcement, such as: rewards (in form of additional points) and feedback, was necessary to encourage them in doing the exercise; otherwise they would simply copy their friend's answer or avoid the reading exercise by sleeping in the classroom. On the contrary, although the students have been given rewards or positive feedback, they are somehow, still unmotivated and waiting for the diligent classmate to finish the exercise and take a look at the answers.

This problem does not only appear in English language classroom; the Indonesian language teachers are also facing the same problem whereas the students become lazier to read, although it is in their mother tongue (L1). Ultimately, the school finally took a resolving step by running a compulsory reading program to support student's reading motivation, but alas, it has not been working very well as the students were doing it due to its compulsory condition.

After years of working and coming across the same problem again and again, the issue of student's reading motivation come to be both interesting and alarming, because the students are learning in ESL setting which means that the difficulty level would be higher than EFL level and one of the ways to achieve better performance and fluency in English as Second Language is to be motivated in reading (Guthrie et al., 2006) but since they are not motivated, how could they do the encouraged activity? Second, knowing that reading skill is important, especially for academic achievement, logically speaking, the students are supposed to be more motivated, especially because motivation is fundamental when the students try to master this skill (Houghton, 2015, p.04).

I later tried to compare my own encounter with my students' regarding English reading. Motivation is established because of individual and/or social factors (Ahât & Shinya, 2017, p.89) – I am a successful English learner and motivated to read anything in English because of what I had done or experienced as a kid whereas my parents endlessly motivated me to read books and become an independent learner and reader. My students, nonetheless, might not experience the same support or feel the same thing as I had, and this could be one of the early triggers of their low motivation towards reading.

As an ESL teacher who is responsible for student's learning outcome in both of academic and global environment, I wonder if the other ESL teacher, especially in Indonesia, undergo the same problem in understanding the reasons why students are less motivated when

it comes to reading. These thoughts, eventually, trigger my curiosity in finding more about student's reading motivation.

**What Literature Says.** With lots of study on motivation emerging throughout the years, it is important to know the basis of it first before doing any further discussion. The study on motivation itself was first started in 1950s where the researchers believed that motivation is strongly related to achievement and that learners were directed by either integrative or instrumental motivation. Then, the study was renewed by Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in 1970s which tries to see more on the nature and quality of the L2 learning motivation itself, resulting in two types of motivation that we know until today: external and internal motivation. The latter study will also be the framework of this whole research and will be explained further in the theoretical framework part.

Motivation basically regulates most of the activity that we do as an organism, from physical activity or sport activity (Ryan, *et al.*, 2009) to language learning activity. The importance of motivation in learning has been one of the extensively researched problems in Second Language Acquisition field because it is believed that students who are eager to learn language with high motivation are more likely to successfully master a second language.

Several researchers have also tried to emphasize on the relationship between motivation and language learning, for instance Dörnyei and Csizer (1986) who stated that motivation is highly responsible for the learner's success in SLA along with the cognitive ability of the learner (cited in Al-Ghamdi, 2014, p.3), Oxford and Shearin (1996) in Liu (2015) that maintained the argument that "motivation is a crucial determinant of the extent to which learners are actively involved in learning a second or foreign language.", (p.1165), or MacIntyre, et al. (2001) with their statement "motivation represents one of the most appealing, yet complex variables used to explain individual differences in language learning."(p. 462)

Why is it really crucial for the educators, especially those who teach in second language field, to know about motivation? It is because motivation really complements the second language learner with the stimulus to start an exhausting process in learning L2 (Oxford & Shearin, 1994, p.12). Not only do the learners need motivation to master English as a Second Language, but they also need to find a way to gain ESL mastery, one of the most convenient and cheapest ways to do it is through reading (Salikin et al., 2017, p.81).

Reading, in both of EFL and ESL context, is one of the most important aspects for the learners to actually foster their foreign language understanding, because reading could provide lots of new insights, such as: vocabulary enrichment, grammatical and phonological awareness, discourse structure, and the proficiency to comprehend a text as a wholesome unit (Salikin, *et al.* 2017, p.81). Though it provides lots of advantages – useful, economical, and favorable – ESL learners must also be aware on how complicated learning reading can be as it involves orthographic, phonological, micro and macro reading skill (bottom up and top down process) for the complete mastery (Adams and Collins, 1985, Wagner, Schatschneider, and Phythian-Sence, 2009 as quoted in AlKialbi, 20145, p.14). Realizing that reading is complex, the question is, will the students still be motivated? How can school reinforce student's reading motivation?

To answer the question above, more and more studies on reading motivation have actually been done until today, despite Gambrell and Codling's statement (2000, p.17) that the study on motivation in learning languages, especially in reading development was still very limited as most of the studies in relation to reading skill were discussing more on the cognitive and classroom approach, while it was actually important to keep a balance on the motivation and cognitive aspects (Gambrell, 1996, p.15).

One of the studies is conducted by Abdullah (2014, pp. 343 – 350). With a purpose to describe various aspects of reading motivation of Malaysian undergraduate students, in the context of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, through Motivation Reading Questionnaire

(MRQ), her study proved that the motivation rate, specifically intrinsic motivation, plummeted when the readers found the language challenging while at the same time, there were learners whose personal interest was ignited although the materials was difficult.

Another study of reading motivation was from Salikin *et al.*, (2017, p. 81 – 90). In their study, they would like to know further about L2 learner's motivation by adopting intrinsic and extrinsic motivation theory from Deci and Ryan (2000) and as the result, Salikin *et al.* believed that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is very crucial in encouraging the ESL learners to read. In addition, to increase their motivation, the reading topic should be interesting and teacher should create a good classroom atmosphere and give assignments frequently.

These two previous studies might be effective when we are asking about what approach would be effective to stimulate student's reading motivation or what factors are influencing the motivation itself, nevertheless both of them have not explained the motivation by its very nature – how can one establishes reading motivation and how an approach can encourage student's reading motivation – this missing piece on reading motivation research was once mentioned as well by Mori (2002) “Research on the motivation of English Language Learners seems to focus more on motivation or investment in learning English as second or foreign language, and not on reading motivation per se” (cited in Kirchner & Mostert, 2017, p.3).

In light of the discussion towards motivation above and the obstacle that I have in my ESL reading class, I believed that it is necessary to dig deeper on reading motivation.

### **The Research Questions**

Based on the background of the problem, the issue that I found on my workplace and all the state-of-the-art studies that predisposed my study, these were the research questions that I proposed:

1. What are the general trends of reading motivation among students of Blue Star Senior High School?
2. How do focal participants' experiences establish reading motivation?

### **The Purposes of the Study**

Looking upon the research questions mentioned above, there were two levels of benefits expected from this study. The first level was more theoretical, but the second was more practical. While the studies of reading motivation were quite enormous, studies which focus on the "small story" (Benson, 2015) of ESL students's struggle to increase their reading motivation was very limited. Different from "grand story" in applied linguistics which focuses on the ideologies in a particular context of learning, "small story" which takes the data from mundane daily interaction of common people. Taken in a context in Indonesia, which is also an area of under researched, this study challenged any simplification of the phenomenon of ESL students' motivation of reading.

Secondly this study falls on practical level. The purpose of this study was mainly to make us, the practitioners, ESL teachers, parents, and maybe English language learners, came to a full understanding towards the reason why some pupils can be unmotivated when it comes to reading classes. We all might have different views, experiences, and reflection on this topic, but trying to explore how each and every individual's reading motivation is actually developed would be a great help when we as the teachers or parents try to find various reading approach that is effective for our classes or children.

### **Scope and Limitation**

**Scope of the Study.** This was a qualitative study which focuses on student's reading motivation. The research participants were four 11<sup>th</sup> grade students from Blue Star Senior High School. The primary data gathering was done through questionnaire, self-made reflective story, and interview. These data have aided the researcher in determining the how motivation can be uniquely established inside ourselves and the determining factors behind it.

This study also focused more on the reading for general comprehension – in both L1 and L2 – because this type of reading actually plays a central role in the development of academic reading and takes a lot of time until the reader can do it without a hitch, although many people mistaken it as “easy/relaxing reading” only (Grabe, 2009, p.10).

**Limitation of the Study.** There were several limitations found in this study. The first one was the personal involvement as the teacher and the researcher of the study might involve my personal opinion on the participants, so I had to be very careful in order to avoid any bias during the data collection procedures. The next thing was how to approach and build a trust with the participants so that they would open up during the interview. The process when the interview results had to be made into a narrative was also one of the drawbacks since I must be very careful in re-telling the interview results in a more organized way without overstating or understating it.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study of motivation usually derives from two major theoretical frameworks. The first theory is self-efficacy theory from Bandura (1986). Self-efficacy theory is defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of actions required to attain designed types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p.391). It could merely be explained that every individual has different level of self-efficacy that can hinder motivational development in learning and vice versa; which is why the teacher has a responsibility to find a ‘trigger’ to enhance students’ self-efficacy – especially those with low level of self-efficacy (Houghton, 2015, p. 24). This self-efficacy theory is, however, mainly applied in integrative and instrumental motivation.

Another emerging theory, and the one that was taken as the framework in this research, is Self-determination theory (SDT) by Deci & Ryan (1991) which later resulted in two types of motivation that we know today: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Self-determination theory believes that human has a potential and willingness to develop

themselves; hence, those who are more determined and intrinsically motivated had better / higher result than those who do not (Gambrell & Codling, 2000, p.21).

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Reading for general comprehension:

A type of reading that takes place when the reader finds an interesting story. This type of reading needs to be done for extended period of time before the reader becomes accustomed to it (Grabe, 2009, p. 10)

Motivation:

Deriving from Latin word ‘movere’ which means to move, motivation, according to Guay et al.,(2010, p.712) can be defined as “the reasons underlying behavior”. It engages with someone’s beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and actions. (Lai, 2011, p.05)

Narrative Inquiry:

Referring to a type of study in which the readers will be given a finding about the participant’s life history that support reader’s awareness about the participant’s beliefs and assumptions, and it also facilitates the writer to access the participant’s identity, so that the readers will eventually comprehend the dynamic condition of lives and the significance it brings to the individual’s life aspects (Heigham & Croker, 2009, p. 46-48).

### **Significance of the Study**

In line with the purposes of the study, there were two levels of significance of the study. In term of theory of applied linguistics, this research had a hope to enrich the literature of increasing ESL students’ motivation in reading. The so far study which was dominated by survey research in which researchers distributed questionnaires followed by interviewing focal participants was challenged by this research which intends to explore the phenomenon narratively.

In more practical level, I expected that this study would help mein understanding the factors that influence my students' motivation in reading class, so that I would be able to enhance their motivation and also in assisting the school's literacy program and policy.

### **Assumption**

This study was conducted under the assumptions that the literacy skill has been incited again in some of the schools, particularly in Indonesia in response to the government's effort to increase the level of literacy competence. The next assumption was that the participants' answers to the interview process and the data analysis have been credible as I have made sure of the anonymity of the four participants and also done the triangulation method to avoid any prejudice in analyzing the provided data.

### **Thesis Organization**

Chapter 1 of this study deals with the background of this research, the research questions, the purpose of why this study is conducted, the limitation and scope of the study, the definition of the key term, the significance of the study, assumption, and organization of the research itself. While chapter 2 consists of the review of related literature and previous studies, and chapter 3 discusses more about the research design, the participants, the instruments used in the study, the procedure of data collection, and the technique of data analysis. Chapter 4 talks about the findings and the further discussion that would explain the research questions, while chapter 5 gives the overall conclusion and suggestions for the future related study.