

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This study is concerned with investigating the teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension at a junior high school in one of regencies in Riau. This chapter will elaborate about backgrounds of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, definitions of key terms and organizations of the thesis.

1.2. Background of the study

Strategy is very essential for a teacher in teaching English as a foreign language in the classroom. The term of strategy is defined as a detailed plan for achieving success in situations (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Then Herrell and Jordan (2004: 05) also define strategy as a way that can be used across curricular areas to support the learning of students. It means that it is important for teachers to apply planned teaching strategies to maintain effective teaching.

One of the strategies which should be managed and applied by teachers in the classroom is teaching reading strategies. Wallace (1992: 57) states that a reading strategy is a unitary process which cannot be subdivided into part skills. This means as a process, a reading strategy involves ways of processing text which will vary with the nature of the text, the reader's purpose, and the context of situation.

The essence of reading strategy is indicated in the objective of teaching reading, as one of the four major skills, in learning English as foreign language in junior high school is to develop the students' ability to read and to get the message comprehensively from particular reading texts (BSNP, 2006). Relating to the essence of this competence, Nuttal (1996: 4) states that one of very important reading purposes is to get meaning from a text. This means about the process how the reader decodes the message from the text. In a similar vein, Nunan (1999: 249) exposes that an enormous amount of time, money and effort is spent for teaching reading in elementary and secondary school around the world.

In getting the meaning from the text, the reader needs a comprehension strategy. It is supported by Hillerich (1983: 125) that states the major goal for any reading activities is comprehension. It means that it has to do with strategy to understand a written text. Many strategies of teaching reading comprehension have been developed by experts such as Logsdon (2007), Brown (2001), Anderson (1999), Tierney (1990), and Hillerich (1983). They develop comprehension strategies as the core of reading, the process of readers interacting and constructing meaning. Furthermore, Barnet (1988), Wallace (1992) and NCLRC (2007) consider that teaching strategies in reading comprehension can be done by using three techniques; pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities.

These strategies indicate an important role of a teacher to reach the objectives of teaching reading comprehension. Relating to this case, Wallace (1992: 58) argues that the teachers with good strategy will observe readers in the

course of reading as to assess outcomes in the form of answers to the comprehension questions which generally follow a reading task.

As one of the previous research that relates to this study, Li and Wilhelm (2008) explored to compare the reading strategy instruction used by two teachers in teaching reading in senior middle school classrooms on China's mainland. This is a part of a three-year research project which is aimed to investigate the professional development of English teachers in secondary schools. This study revealed that the two teachers used brainstorming; skimming and predicting in the pre-reading phase, used checking students' comprehension, identifying the text type, predicting and scanning in during reading phase, and used evaluating comprehension in particular task, translating, reviewing, and follow-up activity in after-reading phase. The less-experience teacher was more aware of integrating theory into actual practice while taking a more learner-centered approach. Meanwhile the more-experienced teacher was more concerned with testing outcomes and appeared to be more comfortable with a teacher-direct approach. Unfortunately, Li and Wilhelm only got the information from the teachers' activities and perspectives. They did not see from the students' response. Therefore, we do not know how the students perceived their teachers' strategies in teaching reading.

Although many previous research reports have given a comprehensive portrait on teaching reading comprehension strategies, the researcher think that it is important to explore more about the teachers' strategies used and the students' responses toward their teachers' strategy on teaching reading comprehension. In

this case, this study focused to examine the three English teachers and their students who were learning reading comprehension in appropriate texts at one junior high school.

1.3. Research Questions

In line with the background of the study, the problem of this study is formulated as follows:

1. What strategies do the teachers use in teaching reading comprehension?
2. What are the students' responses toward their teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension?

1.4. Purpose of the Study

As it is indicated in the problem, the purpose of this study is to explore:

1. the teachers' strategies used in teaching reading comprehension; and
2. the students' responses toward their teacher's strategies in teaching reading comprehension.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study is proposed to describe the process of EFL teaching and investigate the teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension in one of Junior High schools in Kuantan Singingi Regency in Riau. The school is SMPN 1 Gunung Toar.

This qualitative study is limited in the findings which are only true to the respondents involved in this study. So, that is why, it cannot be generalized. Because of that, there are many interpretations which are raised as other issues.

1.6. Significance of the study

The results of the study are expected to contribute and give some informative ideas. This study can be used minimally as a source of consideration for theory's enrichment, the teachers, the decision makers and other researchers.

For the theory's enrichment, the results of this study are expected to enrich the theories of teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension. It can be as an additional input although many theories have conducted by the experts in the area of teaching reading comprehension.

For the teachers, they can find the certain strategies that they believe as good strategies and know how to implement them in teaching reading comprehension. With another said, the results of this study can be used as the instructions for the teachers in selecting, designing, and using appropriate strategies in presenting reading materials.

For the headmaster, as the decision maker, it can be used as a consideration in preparing the general instructions of teaching English as Foreign Language especially on teaching reading comprehension. It is based on the information which is gained from the actual condition of teaching and learning process in reading comprehension.

For other researchers, the findings of this study can be informed to them who want to carry out other research in the same field. It means that the findings in this study can be used as the input in conducting another investigation.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

In spite of avoiding of the misinterpretation, misunderstanding, or ambiguity, there are several term of definitions which relate to the variables of this study. The definitions of this study are given as follows:

1. *Reading* is a dynamic process in which a reader works actively to construct meaning from the material or text. It is one of skills in learning English as a foreign language at junior high school level.
2. *Reading comprehension* is the ability to construct the meaning from the text, using both print information and prior knowledge. In this study, the term of reading comprehension is the students' ability to construct the meaning from the text which is given by their teacher.
3. *Reading strategy* is defined as a set of abilities of the reader under conscious control on how to approach the reading passage. It means that the students' strategy to comprehend the reading text given.
4. *Teachers' strategy* is a particular plan that is used by the EFL teachers in SMPN 1 Gunung Toar for the success of teaching reading comprehension in the classroom that available in pre-reading, while reading, and post reading.
5. *Teaching Reading Comprehension* refers to teaching students of SMPN 1 Gunung Toar how to understand reading text by using both print information and prior knowledge that involves the organization of the situations in the classroom, and the design of tasks and the strategies of teaching to promote learning.

1.8. The Organization of the Thesis

The organization of the forward chapters is conducted as the following. Chapter 2 delivers the perspectives of the research on relevant literature comprising the theories which are related with the values of teaching reading comprehension strategies. Chapter 3 explains the research methodology that elaborate about the description of the research, the research design, the setting and participants of the research, data collection techniques and the data analysis. Chapter 4 includes the findings and its discussions which concerning the teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension, the procedures taken in the process of data collection. Chapter 5 is the last part of thesis which contains the concluding that taken from chapter 4. In this chapter delivers conclusions and the recommendations.