

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This section discusses some aspects including background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, operational definition of important terms, and thesis organization.

1.2 Background of the study

Reading is very important not only for the students but also for teachers. Reading is believed as a required activity in learning most of all subjects since reading has been proved in increasing students' knowledge. Reading has functions as a means to access information in the global era. It means that reading is a process of combining information from a text and reader's background knowledge to building meaning (Nunan, 2003). Reading serves the wider role of extending our general knowledge of the world (Wallace, 1992 p. 7), and also it can use to access written worlds of ideas (Hood et al. 1996 p.33). Reading is not only for getting information but also facilities us for language learning. Reading can improve other general language skills and help to think in the target language, enlarge English vocabulary, improve writing skill and a good way to find out about new ideas, facts and experiences (Mikulecky and Jeffries, 1996 p. 1).

Concerning the importance of reading, students of junior high school are expected to have reading skills. Students are demanded to understand the content of various types of texts i.e. procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative and report (English curriculum, 2003). This study concerned how the students could gain the meaning from narrative text. The researcher chose narrative text because based on the researcher's observation in the

research site, it was found that most students have difficulties in understanding and recalling details of narrative text. They have difficulties when asked to retell the events or response to the questions about the story to demonstrate their comprehension.

The phenomenon above describes that the strategy of teaching reading mostly doesn't provide opportunities for students to be aware of the thinking process and it doesn't motivate them to be interested in reading. There are many factors influencing the failure of teaching reading in class room. One of them is the lack of the teacher's understanding of teaching reading comprehension strategies. Furthermore, Pressley (2000) states that teacher's effective strategies will engage students and encourage them to become active participants in reading process.

Therefore, in order to achieve the objective of teaching reading of narrative text, the teachers need to use an appropriate approach. For this reason, story grammar is used as one strategy in teaching reading comprehension of narrative text. Story grammars are "an attempt to construct a set of rules that can generate a structure for any story" (Rayner & Pollatsek, 1989. p.307).

Based on the previous studies it was found that teaching students about story grammars and how stories are structured will help them to comprehend better of narrative text, story grammar moves the teacher away from general explanations of story structure to the more specific story structure (e.g., that stories have characters, a theme, and a plot (Dymock, 2007 p. 162). Using story map in teaching story grammar can improve students' comprehension of narrative text (Baumann and Bergeron, 1993; Idol 1987; Calfee and Patrick, 1995; Dymock & Nicholson, 1999) and

asking questions that focus on story line leads to improve student's comprehension of the story (Beck, 1984 cited in Amer, 1992. p. 713). The research conducted by Stetter and Hughes (2010) continued to study about story grammar that there is a need and important for educators to teach story grammar in the classroom along with other comprehension strategies, to improve reading comprehension of students with and without learning disabilities.

It is noteworthy that the previous research on story grammar has been conducted in English as a first language context in grade 3 to 5 students of primary school (Boulineau, et al., 2004). Research on story grammar conducted in EFL context has not been elaborated. Therefore, this study attempts to identify how story grammar can improve students' reading comprehension of narrative text in ninth grade students at one junior high school by using case study to provide a detailed description of teaching and learning process. The study also to identify students' response toward the use of story grammar.

1.3 Research Questions

This study addresses to answer the following research questions:

1. How can the use of story grammar develop students' reading comprehension of narrative texts?
2. What are the students' responses towards the use of story grammar in teaching reading narrative texts?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

In line with the above mentioned research questions, the study aims:

1. To investigate whether the use of story grammar can develop students' comprehension in reading narrative texts.
2. To find out the students' responses toward the use of story grammar in teaching reading narrative texts.

1.5 Significance of the study

There are some contributions that the study can offer for researchers, practitioners and policy makers (Creswell, 2003 p. 149). At least, the result of this study is significant for three perspectives:

- (1) Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the existing theories and literature on the practice of teaching story grammar.
- (2) Practically, this study can provide information for the teachers on the use of story grammar in teaching reading comprehension, especially teaching reading narrative text for junior high school students.
- (3) Professionally, this study may support the teachers in the research site to apply story grammar in their teaching reading in the classroom, and provide policy maker to promote this kind of reading instruction to apply in the schools of the regency.

1.7 Operational Definition of Important terms

In reporting the study, several terms are required to be clearly defined in order to avoid misunderstanding. The definitions of the terms in this study are as follows:

1. Story Grammar is defined as the system of rules used for describing the consistent features found in narrative text. These rules describe the story parts, arrangement of the parts, and how the parts are related, i.e. the internal structure of the story (Mandler, 1984 cited in Amer, 1992)

2. Reading Comprehension is defined as “a process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (Snow, 2002 p.11)
3. Narrative is defined a text type which functions to provide entertainment by posing a problem that need to be resolved. In process of entertaining, they might pass on cultural tradition and values or they might provide insights into the human condition. (Derewianka & Jones, 2012 p. 63)

1.8 Organization of Thesis

This paper consists of six chapters. Chapter one presents general description of the introduction to the topic of the study. Chapter two elaborates the theories to support the study. Chapter three outlines the methodology of the study, including: research site and participants, data collection technique and data analysis. Chapter four presents the teaching program. Chapter five presents findings and discussion of data from questionnaire and interview. The last chapter presents the conclusions, limitations of study and recommendations.

