# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to investigate approaches used by a teacher in teaching reading in a junior high school in Bandung. This chapter covers background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, key term, and organization of writing.

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is an important skill that language learners should master. It is necessary to develop learners' ability in understanding information from different sources, cultures, and countries. It helps them extend their knowledge of world and particular subjects. As stated by Nuttall (1996: 3), people read because they want to get meaning from text they read. Further, Nunan (1999: 251) and Nation (2009: 49) also inform that people read because they want to get information, get instruction on how to do something, act in play, communicate with friends, know the condition and location of particular thing, know what is happening or has happened, and for getting enjoyment or excitement. So, it can be said that reading brings many advantages to the students.

Reading is defined as a fluent process that involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning (Anderson, 1999: 1). It is also said as the ability to understand information in the text and interpret it appropriately (Grabe & Stoller, 2002: 9). Hence, the students need to have ability to comprehend the text so they can build the meaning, understand the message that the writer conveys through the text and answer the questions related to the text. Furthermore, reading is also a part of language skills that is taught in EFL teaching in the school (Depdiknas, 2006; Kemendikbud, 2013). In the regulation of 2013 National Curriculum of Indonesia, teaching reading in the junior high school aims to make students able to read and to understand meanings of various

texts. The students learn some skills and strategies to comprehend the text like scanning, skimming, previewing and predicting, finding main ideas and details and identifying text structures and genres. Additionally, as informed by Susanti (2009), reading takes the biggest part in national examination in Indonesia which is up to 70 percents of the questions related to reading comprehension.

In Indonesia, English has been taught since the early ages. As reported by Sunggiwati and Nguyen (2013: 80), it is a compulsory subject for three years in grades 7-9 and three years in grade 10-12. Since students have learned English for many years in the school, it is presumed that they would already have good reading ability. However, Nur (2004, in Sunggiwati and Nguyen, 2013: 81) found that most of the students can hardly understand English effectively. This fact is supported by Nunan (1999: 249-250) that states the students still do not have good reading ability although the more time has been spent to teaching reading. This condition might occur because reading in a foreign language is more challenging as the students do not speak English and have the classroom only as the place to learn English. Based on the researcher's previous research in a college, it was also found that reading was a skill that is hard to do for the students. There were some problems that students faced in reading like lack of skills and lack of vocabulary (Rahmi, 2012).

Moreover, teachers have a significant role in order to make students have good reading skills and abilities like applying teaching approaches that are suitable for students' needs and conditions and conducting appropriate activities in the teaching process. This means that producing a good language learner who has good reading ability is a challenge for the EFL teachers. They must understand the activities to use in teaching process. As indicated by Wallace (1992), the teachers can help students in reading by applying some activities such as brainstorming, previewing and questioning. Therefore, Wallace (1992), Brown (2001), and NCLRC (2003) suggest three phases of teaching reading process in

the classroom; pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. Teacher can apply various activities in each stage. In addition, Hudson (2007) classifies the teaching activities under some approaches like bottom-up approaches, top-down approaches, interactive approaches and new literacy approaches which cover whole language approaches, phonics approaches, behaviorist approaches, cognitive approaches and psycholinguistics approaches.

Since English is widely used now and reading is one of the important skills that should be mastered, teacher is expected to teach reading by applying theories proposed by experts. Conversely, based on observation and interview to some teachers, it was found that some teachers still applied the traditional approach to teaching reading. They still focused on developing the students' vocabulary and preparing the students to face examination. This fact reflects the teachers' view in teaching reading. As stated by Vacca, et al., (2006: 35), the way teachers teach in the classroom reflects their belief or view on teaching reading. This means that teachers' view on teaching reading is very important to find out.

Therefore, based on the explanation above, it can be said that reading is an important skill that the students need to master. The students need to have good reading skills in order to have good reading ability and the teachers have significant role to make the students achieve that ability. The teachers might apply various teaching activities in teaching reading as her application of approaches that she believed in. For these reasons, this research investigated approaches used by the teacher in teaching reading in a junior high school in Bandung that were reflected in the application of reading activities from some approaches; bottom-up, top-down, interactive and new literacy approaches. Further, the teacher's problems and the students' opinions on the activities were also analyzed and the effects of the activities to the students' reading skills were also investigated through document analysis of the students' tests.

**1.2 Research Questions**

This research was conducted to answer the questions below:

1. What approaches were used by the teacher in teaching reading?

2. What were the teacher's problems in teaching reading?

3. What were the students' opinions on reading activities applied by the teacher?

4. How did reading activities applied by the teacher affect students' reading skills?

**1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This research was set to find out:

1. The approaches used by the teacher in teaching reading.

2. The teacher's problems in teaching reading.

3. The students' opinions on reading activities applied by the teacher.

4. The effect of reading activities applied by the teacher to students' reading skills.

**1.4 Scope of the Study**

The focus of the study was on analyzing the teacher's approaches and problems in teaching reading in junior high school, the students' opinions on reading activities applied by the teacher and the influence of the activities to the students' reading skills. Reading activities conducted by the teacher were observed in order to know what approaches that she applied in the teaching process. The approaches were seen through the application of reading activities that were adopted from theories proposed by some experts like Wallace (1992),

Anderson (1999), Nunan (1999), Brown (2001), Grabe & Stoller (2002), NCLRC (2003) and Hudson (2007). The students' opinions were also investigated in order to find how the students viewed reading activities applied by the teacher. Therefore, the influence of the activities to the students' reading skills was viewed by analyzing the students' progress tests called "*Ujian Harian*" qualitatively. Since the role of researcher was as a non-participant observer, the students' reading skills analyzed were genuinely based on tests provided by the teacher. The setting was a junior high school in Bandung. The subjects were one EFL teacher and a group of students from her class.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, it is very important to find out the teacher's approaches and problems in teaching process, the students' opinions on reading activities and the influence of the activities to the students' reading skills. By investigating those problems, this research is expected to show and socialize the better ways and activities applied by the teacher in teaching reading. This research can also be reference for further research about the same research problem. Professionally, this research is expected to give contribution to teaching reading in school level and university level as well. Hopefully, the result of this research will show the activities commonly used and the problems frequently faced by the teacher in teaching reading. Practically, besides giving contribution to the researcher, the students, and the teacher, the result of this research is assumed to contribute to the improvement of teaching reading in the school because it revealed the approaches that the teacher mostly used and the problems that she often faced.

## 1.6 Key Terms

There are some key terms in this research:

1. Reading: a source of knowledge and enjoyment which needs complex process and interactive process between the writer and readers in order to get comprehension of the text.

2. Approach: a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning and teaching (Anthony as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Brown, 2001)

3. Teaching activities: the activities used by teachers in teaching.

4. Opinions: evaluative belief and view that involve a person's judgment about the likelihood of events or relationships regarding some object and involve evaluations of an event or object on specific dimensions.

**1.7 Organization of Writing**

The background of the problems has been already explained. The next chapter discusses literature related to reading, approaches to teaching reading, problems in teaching reading, opinions and reading skills. The third chapter is about research methodology that elaborates research design, the participant and setting of the research, research instrumentation, and data collection and analysis. The fourth chapter talks about findings and discussions of the research. Finally, the last chapter or chapter five is about the conclusions of the research and the suggestions for the further research.