

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter involves background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, terms of clarification, and organization of the thesis.

### 1.2 Background of the Study

There are four language skills to achieve in the teaching and learning process to give impression of English, namely: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (English GBPP; Depdikbud 2004). Reading is an essential skill for learners of English. For most of learners it is the most important skill to master in order to ensure success in learning. With strengthened reading skills, learners of English tend to make greater progress in other areas of language learning. Reading should be an active, fluent process that involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning (Anderson, 2003).

As a medium of communication, language is very useful in one's social life. Without using language, people in the world could not communicate each other in their community, many things could be socialized such as; politics, economics, culture. Through language we build a nice and strong nation by implicating a good information system.

Among other, reading is one of basic communicative skills, which involves a very complex process. Reading is not only the process of eye

movement on printed materials, but also the process of understanding the text to obtain the information or the process of comprehending the text (Nunan, 1991; Brown, 1994). Furthermore, Anderson (1999:1) defines reading as an active, fluent process which involves the reader and the reading materials in building meaning. Anderson (1999 in Nunan, 2003:68) also defines reading as a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning. It means that meaning does not only depend on the reader or the text, but depends on the interaction of both.

Teaching is absolutely necessary for learning program in education system. Teaching itself offers a general meaning as “Giving instruction to somebody to know to be able to do something: give somebody knowledge or skills, etc, give lesson” (Oxford Advance learner’s Dictionary of current English, 1989:886). From these definitions, the writer assumes that teaching means the activity to give someone knowledge or skill or giving a lesson.

Regarding the objective of teaching of English at senior high school, the National Curriculum Board of Education (BSNP, 2006) targets the students at the informational level to understand various types of English written texts to access knowledge. This means that teaching reading will not be successful if the students can only read words without understanding the message being read. In other words, whatever we read should be well understood since, according to Smith and Robinson (1980), reading comprehension is a process of thought where the readers understand the writer’s ideas and interpret them with his or her own needs.

Central to this issue, English teachers have many problems how to improve the student's ability in reading. Based on the researcher's experience as an English teacher, many EFL students of one Madrasah Aliyah in Medan may approach reading passively, relying on the use of a bilingual dictionary, thereby direct sentence-by-sentence translations. Despite all the efforts had been made, reading comprehension remains poor. Moreover, the students think that joining reading instruction is very tiring and boring since it obliges students to deal with the meaning of each word. Dymoch (1998, cited in Suharti, 2008) states that difficulty in comprehending a text results from the lack of understanding of the language text. It means that poor language understanding can lead to failure in understanding of comprehension activities and questions. To enhance reading comprehension ability in English, Alfassi (2004:171) states that students should "understand the meaning of text, critically evaluate the message, remember the content, and apply the new-found knowledge flexibly".

Poor comprehension may also be due to ineffective teaching technique used to address this skill (Yuill & Oakhill, 1991 in Aarnoutse, 1999). Responding to this, Pressly (2000 in Duke, 2004) proposes teaching comprehension strategy to better improve students' understanding in reading, and that teaching multiple comprehension strategies can have an even more profound impact. Therefore, providing students with various strategies may help them determine the meaning of what is being read.

Referring to those phenomena, this research attempts to investigate the application of reciprocal strategy proposed by Palincsar & Brown, 1986 as one of

many reading strategies. This strategy intends to help students to improve their understanding of the texts. Reciprocal strategy provides personalized attentions to students who are drifting along, dreaming, or becoming disinterested in reading. Not only do they interact with the teacher but also they get to turn a classroom tradition around and interrogate the teacher for change.

### **1.3 Statements of the problem**

Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive task for many students and it is usually considered as a difficult skill for students. As a result, students' achievement in reading comprehension is still far from being expected. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the effects of the application of the reciprocal reading strategy to develop student's comprehension in reading. Besides, reading also involves the students' affective aspect which demonstrates their attitude towards it. Hence, this study focuses on investigating the students' attitude towards the use of reciprocal strategies in reading comprehension activities.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study attempt to address the following questions:

1. Can Reciprocal strategies improve the students' reading ability in comprehending English Narrative texts?
2. What are the students' attitudes toward the use of Reciprocal strategies as reading instruction?

### **1.5 Purposes of the study**

The purpose of this study is of the first grade students at one MAN in Medan by providing them treatment focusing on improving the students' reading comprehension. The specific objectives are:

1. To investigate whether the Reciprocal strategies can improve student's reading comprehension ability
2. To identify the students' attitudes to the application of Reciprocal strategies in reading instruction.

### **1.6 Scope of the study**

This study focuses on investigating the effectiveness of using reciprocal strategies to enhance students' reading ability in comprehending narrative texts. The reason behind this choice of narrative texts is due to emphasis of the demand of English curriculum (2006) that narrative text get greater time allotment to be taught to the first years of the Islamic Senior High School (MAN) in Medan.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

This study is expected to contribute to the development of EFL reading instruction especially for the English teachers of Senior High School. Further, this study is hoped to enrich English teachers with varying teaching reading strategies. After finishing the application of Reciprocal strategies, this study is expected to improve students' achievement in English, especially in the reading

comprehension themselves. Finally, the result of this study may inspire other researchers to conduct research on other issues in teaching reading.

### 1.8 Terms of Clarification

In this study, there are several terms that need to be clearly defined in order to avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity. The definitions of the terms in this study are as follows:

- a. **Reciprocal strategies** are defined as instructional activity that takes place in the form of a dialogue between teachers and students regarding segments of text. The dialogue is structured by the use of four strategies: question generating, clarifying, prediction, and summarizing. Teacher and students take turns assuming the role of teacher in leading this dialogue (Palincsar & Brown, 1986; Manzo, 1968).
- b. **Reading comprehension** is defined as a complex information processing skill in which the students interacts with the text in order to (re) create meaningful discourse (Silberstein, 1994; see also Brumfit, 1980 in Ozek, 2006).
- c. **Narrative** is defined a type text which functions to entertain, i.e. to gain and hold the reader's interest in a story. It may also seek to teach or inform, to embody the writer's reflections on experience (Derewianka, 2004).

### **1.9 Organization of Thesis**

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter one presents general description of the introduction to the topic of the study. Chapter two discusses the theories to support the study. Chapter three elaborates the methodology of the study. Chapter four presents the data, the data analysis result and discussion of the finding. The last present the conclusions and recommendations.



