CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study was intended to investigate the students' reading strategies in comprehending reading materials at one Senior High School in Ternate. This chapter describes the background of the study, the research problems/questions and the purpose of the study. It also includes the clarifications terms, the scope of the study and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background

One of the main objectives of teaching English in Senior High School is to enable the students to read and comprehend reading materials. This objective is also supported by the Regulation of National Education Ministry No. 23/2006 about Graduate Competence Standard (SKL) which emphasizes that students should understand the meaning of interpersonal and transactional written discourse, formal and non-formal, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review texts in daily life context.

In this case, students need some kinds of reading strategies to develop their reading ability. Reading strategies are deliberate, goal directed attempts to control and modify the readers' efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text *(International Reading Association,* 2007, in Ad-Heisat, 2009:311), reveal how the readers interact with the text, thus the task attend to textual information and make sense of what they read and the actions

they take when comprehension fails (Noor et al., 2009:139). Reading strategy is also defined as the way of accessing the meanings of texts which are employed flexibly and selectively in the course of reading (Richard & Schmidt, 2002:444). Wallace (1993) states that the successful readers tend to select from a range of strategies. For example, they skipped inessential words, guessed from context, read in broad phrases, and continued reading the text where they were unsuccessful in decoding a word or phrase (Wallace, 1993:8).

The use of reading strategy is useful to enable the students to comprehend reading materials because reading is a purposeful process of identifying, interpreting and evaluating ideas in terms of the mental content or total awareness of the reader (Wallace, 1993:4, McGinnis & Smith 1982). In a further explanation, Wallace explains that reading is a complex process that is dependent upon the individual's language development, cognitive ability, and attitude toward reading while reading ability is the results from the application of these factors as the individual attempts to identify, interpret, and evaluate ideas from written materials (Wallace, 1993:14).

Based on those explanations above, the three aspects that must be put into consideration in reading process are: (1) identifying the meaning of text, (2) interpreting and (3) evaluating ideas from a text. Anderson (2003) explains that reading is an essential skill for English learners and in a reading process, actually a dialog takes place between readers and writers. The writer wants to share certain information and the reader tries to understand the message from text (Grabe, 1988, in Debate, 2006; Finochiora and Bonomo, 1973, in Tarigan, 1979: 8)

The study of Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) shows that Indonesian students' ability in reading is still in the lower level. From 45 countries that have been observed, Indonesia is on the level of 40 (http://edukasi.kompas.com). It indicates that in Indonesia, students' strategies in comprehending reading materials are still a problem and it could be affected by the students' reading ability. The other facts of students' reading ability in English language learning can be seen from the result of national examination 2010. The result of national examination 2010 shows that: (1) 30. 94% students from MA did not pass the national examination because they did not pass English subject (www.viruscerdas.com), and (2) there are 1,496 students from 1,525 students (Junior High School) in Makassar did not pass English subject in the national examination 2010 (www.makassarterkini.com).

From those problems, this study investigated reading strategies employed by the three categories of senior high school students, namely: high achiever students, middle achiever students, and low achiever students at one Senior High School in Ternate.

1.2 Research Questions

(1) What strategies are employed by high achiever, middle achiever, and low achiever students in comprehending reading materials?

(2) What are the similarities and differences of reading strategies employed by high achiever students, middle achiever students and low achiever students in comprehending reading materials?

(3) Why do high achiever students, middle achiever students and low achiever students employ those strategies in comprehending reading materials?

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

(1) To investigate the reading strategies which were employed by high achiever students, middle achiever students and low achiever students in comprehending reading materials.

(2) To investigate the similarities and differences of reading strategies which were employed by high achiever students, middle achiever students and low achiever students in comprehending reading materials.

(3) To investigate the students' reasons in employing those reading strategies to comprehend reading materials.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study was conducted to investigate reading strategies which were employed by high achiever students, middle achiever students and low achiever students in comprehending reading materials, the similarities and differences of reading strategies which were employed by high achiever students, middle achiever students and low achiever students and the students' reasons in employing those strategies to comprehend reading materials. The study was focused on direct strategy and indirect strategy. Direct strategy includes (1) memory strategy, (2) cognitive strategy and (3) compensation strategy while indirect strategy includes (1) metacognitive strategy, (2) affective strategy and (3) social strategy (Oxford, 1990:16-21; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008; Nunan, 2003; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Mikulecky & Jeffries, 1996:132; Silberstein, 1994:11).

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Hopefully, the result of this study will give significant information to English teachers, students, and the further study. The information about the differences reading strategies which were used by high achiever students, middle achiever students, and low achiever students in comprehending reading materials will help English teachers to apply the appropriate treatment/method in teaching English. For middle and low achiever students, the results of this study enable them to improve their reading abilities by using reading strategies most frequently employed by high achiever students. The result of this study also helps the further researcher to study more deeply about students' reading strategies.

1.6 Clarification Terms

a) Reading strategy is the way to comprehend reading materials which are related to the goal of reading, how to construct meanings of text and how to understand the vocabulary from the text.

b) Reading materials/English texts in this study are the materials which are used in teaching and learning process among others: procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative, analytical and hortatory exposition, and review text.

c) Students' achievement is categorized based on the result of their final grade. High achiever students are the students who get the final grade (80-100), middle achiever students are the students who get the final grade (70-80), and low achiever are the students who have the final grade under (≤70).

d) The similarities of reading strategies are the strategies which were used by all levels of students, namely: high achiever students, middle achiever students and low achiever students.

e) The differences of reading strategies are the strategies which were not employed by the all level of students namely high achiever students, middle achiever students and low achiever students.