

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter present the background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, theoretical framework, scope and limitations of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the thesis.

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Nowadays, students are required to read and understand reading materials. The requirement is highly demanded and supported by the new policy of the Minister of Education who is concerned with literacy development (<https://bali.tribunnews.com/2019/12/03>). Therefore, it can be said that literacy development has to walk hand in hand with students' reading comprehension. Since English has become the most important international language, a skill in reading comprehension is also highly demanded in this industrial revolution 4.0.

Reading is one of the four language skills learned by non-native English speakers, in addition to listening, speaking, and writing. Among all levels, reading is the most important part of English skill. The ability to read is highly valued and important for social and educational advancement, a position underlined by McNamara (2007; p.3).

Reading requires an effort from readers to understand what they are reading. While reading, readers are looking at a series of written symbols and getting

meaning from them. Thus, when readers read, they use their eyes to receive written symbols (letters, punctuation marks and spaces) and they use their brain to convert the symbol into words, sentences, and paragraphs. The activities mentioned are called reading comprehension.

According to Therrien (2004; p.253), reading comprehension is understanding, using, and reflecting on written texts to achieve one's objectives, develop one's knowledge and potential, and participate in society. Brown (2003; p.54) believed that reading comprehension is the construction of the meaning of written thought of a reciprocal interchange of ideas between the reader and the message in a particular text. Readers must be able to understand, interpret and select actual information from the text. In line with Therrien (2004) and Brown (2003), Grellet (1994, p.3) said that reading comprehension is understanding of a written text and extracting the required information from the written text as efficiently as possible, including locating the relevant advertisement on the board and understanding the new information contained in the article. It demonstrates that the reading purpose in each case has been successfully fulfilled. Similarly, Oakhill, Kate, and Elbro (1998) stated,

“Reading comprehension is important, not just understanding text, but for broader learning success in education, and employment. Reading comprehension is the meaning and goal of all reading, which understanding gained from the text.” (p.1)

Reading comprehension can be defined as the level of understanding a text. There are several levels in reading. In general, the reading levels vary from independent level to frustration level. Independent reading happens when students

choose passages on their own (Cullinan, 2000). They have their own choice of text, topic, time, and place to read. They read the materials for information or pleasure. As the highest level of reading, independent reading requires readers to have adequate background knowledge for the topic and linguistics. Independent readers have relatively no problems in comprehending texts. Students at instructional reading level have adequate background knowledge for a topic and can access text quickly and with no or few errors. While students at frustration level do not have adequate background level for a topic and/or cannot meet criteria for instructional levels of accuracy and rate.

In real experiences and classroom situations, reading comprehension is challenging for middle and high school students because many of them get difficulties in answering reading comprehension questions (determining main idea, locating reference, making inference, etc.) and some of them are easily losing their concentration and interest during the reading process. The problems found can be distinguished into two types: linguistics and non-linguistic problems. According to Kennedy (1981; p.195-197), non-linguistics problems include inadequate instruction, lack of interest, unsuitable material, knowledge of the world, and reading concepts. On the other hand, Davoudi and Yousefi (2015) stated that linguistic problems consist of lacking vocabulary knowledge, grammar matter, and poor reading strategy. Moreover, Nuttal (1983) argued that other linguistic problems in reading are code or alphabetic symbols, sentence structure, cohesive devices, and discourse markers.

In this case, Brown (2017) found out that reading strategies can help students comprehend passages better. Some strategies that can be taught to the students are skimming, scanning, analyzing vocabulary, identifying purpose, etc. More detailed principles of reading strategies mentioned by Brown (2004) are identifying the purpose of reading, applying spelling rules and conversations for bottom up decoding, using lexical analysis (prefixes, roots, suffixes, etc.) to determine or guess the meaning (of words, idioms, etc.), skimming the text for the gist and main ideas, scanning the text for specific information, using silent reading techniques for rapid processing, using margin notes, outlines, charts, or semantic map for understanding and retaining information, distinguishing between literal and implied meaning, and capitalizing on discourse markers. Those strategies help students to control their own reading habits to comprehend the whole meaning of a text.

Grover (1999) and Kullberg & Stawser (1999) found out that there was a positive relationship between reading comprehension and the application of reading strategies in reading classes. Furthermore, they stated that the application of various reading strategies increased the learner's reading comprehension proficiency. In conclusion, a high achiever in reading is someone who uses reading strategies to improve their English ability.

Even though there have been several studies of reading strategies in English conducted in Indonesia (Fitriana, M. 2018; Prayogo, 2019; Sati, 2017; Syahputera, I., 2016), there has been limited literature of the studies in middle schools. That is why the writer was interested in investigating reading strategies employed by 9 graders in a private school in Surabaya.

## **1.2. Statements of the Problem**

In the line of the title of the thesis and the background of the study, the research question is formulated as follows:

What the reading strategies are employed by students of grade 9 of St. Vincentius Junior High School?

## **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

Referring to the statements of the problem above, this study is intended to find the reading strategies employed by students of grade 9 of St. Vincentius Junior High School.

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

Practically, the results of this study are expected to give a somewhat clear depiction about reading strategies used in real situations or classroom practices. This depiction is then expected to be a basis for selecting the proper reading strategies for doing reading comprehension in every different level.

Theoretically, the findings are expected to support the theory of reading comprehension strategies, which are measured by using the hierarchical level of reading comprehension taxonomy (Barret Taxonomy), determining the students' reading level as either low or high reading achievers.

### **1.5. Assumptions of the Study**

All students of grade 9 applied reading strategies when comprehending passages.

### **1.6. Theoretical Framework**

This thesis mainly uses Sukhorey's (2002) reading strategies. He stated that there are 3 types of reading strategies. There are global reading strategies, problem-solving reading strategies, and support reading strategies. Global reading strategy focuses on the readers' common thought before reading the passage. It means that readers have already understood some general information before finishing the passage. Problem-solving strategy is dealing with alternative readers' techniques to solve problems in the passage. Supporting reading strategy requires some tools like dictionary or note to browse more detailed information as well as enriching vocabulary.

### **1.7. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study focused on reading strategies used by 9 graders in one of the Catholic Junior High Schools in Surabaya. The students have already been exposed to more various and different reading strategies, such as scanning, skimming, and making inferences.

### **1.8. Definition of Key Terms**

The following key terms are defined for the sake of clarity, accuracy, and to avoid misinterpretation. The definition of each key term is laid down as follows:

#### **1. Reading**

Reading is a set of mental processes that readers use when engaging with printed discourse meaningfully (Fisher and Peters, 1981, p.40).

#### **2. Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension is defined as the ability to derive meaning from text (Gibson and Levin, 1975)

#### **3. Reading Strategies**

The conscious, internally variable psychological techniques aimed at improving the effectiveness of or compensating for the breakdowns in reading comprehension, on specific reading tasks and in specific contexts. (Karami, 2008)

### **1.9. Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I consists of Background of the Study, Statements of Problem, Objective the Study, Significance of the Study, Assumptions of the Study, Theoretical Framework, Scope and Limitations of the Study, Definition of Key Terms, and Organization of the Study. Chapter II is concerned with the Review of Related Literature. Chapter III is concerned with Research Design, The Subjects, Instruments, Procedure of Collecting Data, and

Analyzing Data Technique. Chapter IV is about Data Analysis and Findings.

Chapter V presents Conclusion and Recommendation.