Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of study, statement of the problem, the objective of the study, theoretical framework, hypotheses, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Finocchiaro (1974:77) says that reading is an activity of getting meanings out from printed or written material. It means that reading is an activity that finds out or understands the meaning of the printed or written material. Meanwhile, Destari (2010:11) says that reading is a process whereby one looks at and understands what a reader has read whereas Clapham (1993:11) says that reading is a skill to make sense of written and printed symbols. It means that reading is the skill to get the points of the written or printed symbols. Therefore, if someone cannot get the points of the written or printed symbols it means that he is not reading because he is not able to make sense of what the written or printed symbols means.

Reading is a significant activity because through reading people know everything in this world, what happened in the past, what is happening and what will happen in the future. Besides, it not only enlarges their schemata but also encourages them in learning something new. Therefore, reading should develop as a habit since childhood so that it can open children's insight of this world.

Unfortunately, reading becomes a boring and tiring activity for most students nowadays so that they are lazy to read because they have no interest in reading books. They can even get sleepy easily when reading a textbook. They may dislike the topic and passage or they may be more interested in other things such as computer games and blackberry because those things are very attractive, amusing, and audiovisual. Some students even hate reading. This is a serious problem because if they dislike reading, they will have limited knowledge. For instance, they may not know some important people and information. They may not know a certain place that is famous and frequently visited by visitors. They may not even know much about certain fruit, animal, or things around them. Therefore, teachers should develop the students' reading habit especially reading descriptive texts because this text genre gives people information about anything in detail.

Reading undeniably has significant roles. However, students sometimes have difficulties in comprehending what they are reading. Nuttal (2005: 6) states some main sources that make a text difficult to understand. First, readers are not familiar with the language (Nuttal, 2005). Second, it depends on the amount of previous knowledge the reader brings to the text (Nuttal, 2005). For instance, when people read news in the newspaper, their comprehension level depends on what they have known about the particular news. Third, it is the complexity of the concepts expressed (Nuttal, 2005). For instance, a student reads a theory about principles of human knowledge. The vocabulary used may not be difficult but he finds that its message eludes him. Moreover, he has a vague idea what it is about, he may not be able to explain

clearly, what the text talks about unless he has read a good deal more and thinks the arguments of the text carefully.

The last factor is vocabulary (Nuttal, 2005). When students lack vocabulary in what they are reading, it will be hard for them to understand the text. Moreover, they cannot understand what the text means. It is caused by missing the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence so they cannot understand the whole sentence, paragraph, and text so the students cannot catch what the text means.

In teaching reading at junior high school, the researcher used to apply the Grammar Translation Method. The teacher asked a student to read one sentence aloud and translate it. If the student could not do it, the teacher would ask another student to do it. If no student could translate it, the researcher would do it. There were some weaknesses in this activity. The students' concern when reading aloud was to struggle with the script to decode it, little attention to meaning. Meanwhile, some of them did not pay attention to the whole text but they just focused on the sentence they were reading. They do not pay attention to the rest of the text so they do not understand the content of it. Besides not knowing the content of the text, it spent much time to do this activity. It needed time to ask students to read and translate every sentence as well as correct the students' pronunciation.

Realizing that the method did not work very well in his class, the researcher then tried to find the strategy that can get the students' enthusiasm as well as help the students in comprehending texts. Considering that most

teenagers nowadays use the internet a lot for various activities such as playing games, communicating in social networks, and also doing school assignments, the researcher switched to online reading activity named Hot Potatoes to teach reading. The essence of Hot Potatoes is the students read online texts in the internet. It consists of various activities such as filling in the gaps, completing the crossword puzzle, matching items, arranging jumbled words to form a sentence, and answering questions based on the text.

However, even with the internet-based activities, the students' reading comprehension ability was not satisfying. In the effort of improving the students' reading comprehension competence, the researcher is interested in applying another strategy in teaching reading with the expectation that the students' reading comprehension achievement will increase. The strategy that the researcher would like to apply is collaborative strategic reading.

He is interested in using collaborative strategic reading because the essence of applying the strategy is the comprehension strategy that combines the modification of reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning strategy. In this case, there is cooperation among students to comprehend what they are reading.

The reading material for both collaborative strategic reading and online will be descriptive texts. Descriptive text is chosen because based on the content standard (National education department, 2004), there are two genres that should be taught to the eighth graders in semester 1, namely descriptive and recount text. Specifically, the researcher is going to choose descriptive

text as the reading material because it tells a lot of information about certain people, places, and things so the students can enlarge their schemata about their knowledge of the world.

In the present study, the researcher is going to investigate the effect of collaborative strategic reading on the eighth graders. He focuses on the effect of collaborative strategic reading on the students reading comprehension achievement in reading descriptive text. He is going to compare between students' reading comprehension achievement taught using collaborative strategic reading and that taught using Hot Potatoes especially in reading descriptive texts. While most of previous studies focus on narrative text, digital story, social studies text as well as persuasive writing.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the researcher would like to find out the answer to the following problem:

"Do the eighth graders who are taught using Collaborative Strategic Reading obtain a higher reading comprehension achievement than those who are taught using Hot Potatoes?"

1.3 The Objective of the Study

In line with the research problem which is formulated above, the research objective is to find out whether the eighth graders who are taught using collaborative strategic reading obtain higher reading comprehension achievement that those who are taught using Hot Potatoes.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Bernhardt (1991) and Vaughn et al., (2001) state that collaborative strategic reading is a comprehension strategy that combines the modification of reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning strategy. This strategy realizes on the socio-cognitive theory of reading that stresses the important role of social context in the cognitive development of reading comprehension.

1.5 The Hypotheses

Based on the statement of the problem, there are two hypotheses as follows:

1. Research Hypotheses (Ha)

   There is a significant difference between the reading comprehension achievement of the 8th graders who are taught by using collaborative strategic reading and those taught by Hot Potatoes.

2. Null Hypotheses (Ho)

There is no significant difference between the reading comprehension achievement of the 8th graders who are taught by using collaborative strategic reading and those taught by Hot Potatoes.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that the study will give benefits to students and teachers well. For students, the researcher expects that it can stimulate and enable them to read descriptive texts more easily. Furthermore, if it is easier for them to read English descriptive text, they will like reading this genre of English text. The researcher also expects that it can help teachers to enlarge the mindset of teaching literacy in the classroom as well as give alternative teaching reading strategy if they face the same problem in the classrooms so that the goal of school literacy program can be achieved. Moreover, it is expected to give the understanding that teaching reading activity can be done in a fun way.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

This study will be conducted on 8th graders. The samples are two classes of one of private school in Surabaya, located on Jl. Dharmahusada Indah Barat VI/1, of the academic year 2013-2014,. Each class consists of 28 students. This research is also limited to study the effect of collaborative strategic reading and the Hot Potatoes on junior high school students' reading

comprehension achievement. In this study, the treatment is going to be given twelve times with the time allotment of 40 minutes for each meeting.

Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, it is necessary to define the key terms used in the study. The researcher defines the key terms as follows:

reading	: an activity of getting meanings out from printed or written material (Finocchiaro, 1974)
Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR)	: a technique for teaching students reading comprehension, building vocabulary and working together cooperatively (Klingner and Vaugh, 1998)
Hot Potatoes	: a set of five authoring tools which can be used to create interactive Web-based exercises (Arena, 2007)
reading comprehension achievement	: something a learner has succeeded in developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies (Brown, 2001)