

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

Reading means constructing meaning by the reader from the symbols in the text. The meaning is decoded from the language as the form of the writer's thought. In other words, the writer encodes the thought into language in a text. As said by Samuel that there is an essential interaction between language and thought in reading. The writer encodes thought as language and the reader decodes language to thought (Samuels and Kamil. 1988:23). A reader will be considered as a good reader when he or she is able to get the real message from the text efficiently and effectively. A reader should be effective in constructing a meaning that they can assimilate or accommodate to bear the original meaning encoded by the author and efficient in using the least amount of effort to achieve effectiveness. To accomplish the efficiency, a reader should maintain constant focus on constructing the meaning throughout the process and always seek the most direct path to the meaning. A reader should be able to minimize dependence on visual detail and uses the strategies in reading.

Reading requires language comprehension, some sorts of semantic processing and the ability to understand the meaning of the visual symbols, which provide the form of language to be comprehended i.e. reading must involve both a particular type of language behavior, and a special form of nonverbal thinking (Lynn.1980:2).

Reading is conducted by many purposes and by readers with different background. Among those purposes, reading is used in learning English. English is a foreign language in Indonesia, but it plays an important role in today's time. Therefore, it is a challenge for today's young generation to be able to master English.

Mastering English implies the ability in speaking, listening, writing and reading in English. However, many students feel hard to master them all. In other words, being active in English language is quite difficult for Indonesian students. Knowing the importance of English in the globalization era; at least the students are able to read English text with good comprehension, passive or rather active. Based on the GBPP 2004 for the fourth semester of Faculty of Literature, Islamic University of North Sumatra, the aim of reading comprehension subject is to enable the students to comprehend the text by comprehension skill. The students should be able to identify or recognize the synonym, the antonym of words in text. Besides, the students should be able to recognize word formation, coherence markers, linking devices and the function of sentences related to the structure. It means that the students are expected to be able to use their knowledge in word recognition, syntactic knowledge and semantic knowledge in understanding their reading. In other words, the students of the fourth semester in the Faculty of Literature, Islamic University of North Sumatra, should be a good reader after having reading comprehension subject or have good comprehension in reading English text as a foreign language.

Many Indonesian students find difficulties in comprehending English text in their reading. They do not find the real message from the text promptly. It is undeniable, that students are able to read and to comprehend texts written in Bahasa

Indonesian easier than texts written in English. A simple question might be raised from this phenomenon, "Why?". It can be caused by lacking of knowledge of the world. The students find no difficulties in reading Indonesian text because they have a good knowledge of world in Bahasa Indonesia, while they find difficulties in reading English texts because they do not have good knowledge of world in English.

Knowledge of the world is one aspect which determines reading model used by readers. There are three models of reading i.e. 1) Bottom – Up Model, 2) Top – Down Model and 3) Interactive Model. These three models will be elaborated in chapter two of this study.

It has been suggested that effective readers have to be able to understand the relationship between the parts of a text. If this is done, the readers will get the real message from the text. As found by Shahrin (1994:99) in his research that vocabulary mastery is the dominant factor which influences the students' ability in reading. The students are primarily dependent on the vocabulary mastery in understanding their reading. In other words, they have not been able to use their syntactic and semantic knowledge to comprehend the text they are reading. The students will find difficulties in comprehending the text if they do not know the meaning of the vocabularies in the text individually. Other researcher found that the semantic feature analysis can enhance reading and improve the level of the students' comprehension. It means that the students' semantic knowledge will help them in comprehending the text they are reading, but in fact, there are a few students able to use their knowledge in semantic during reading (Rahmah:2003:35).

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kinds of reading model; they are; 1) top-down model, 2) bottom-up model and 3) interactive model. Each model has its own characteristics. While reading strategy is procedures or tactics which effective readers use to interact with written text, and to

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understand the text on a literal, inferential, critical and appreciative level. There are four categories in reading strategy; they are: 1) text-based categories, 2) text structure-based strategies, 3) text and prior knowledge combined strategies and 4) self-corrective strategies Tan (2003:27). Each category has its own components or characteristics. The characteristics of each kind and category in reading model and reading strategy are almost the same, but they are categorized differently. In reading model, the characteristics are categorized based on the level of reading process, while in reading strategy they are categorized based on the components of each category.

There are a few researches on reading English as a foreign language. Researches dealing with model of reading are not found by the writer. Therefore, the writer chose some research findings which are related to the analysis of this study as the references. This is aimed to be the basic of comparison to the possibility in conducting this study.

1.2 Research problems

The problems of the study are presented as follows:

1. What model of reading is used by readers of English as a foreign language?
2. Why do the readers use that model of reading?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Related to the problems of this study, then the objectives of this study are to find the model of reading used by readers of English as a foreign language, in addition to answer why the readers use the model of reading in their reading.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of the study is the models of reading used by readers of English as a foreign language. The readers are those who are studying at English Department belong to the second year in Islamic University of North Sumatra.

The limitation of the study is concerned with the theory where the writer does not have adequate theories dealing with foreign language. It is caused by many theories related to second language are regarded as the same scope with foreign language. Therefore, theories of second language will be adopted more in this study than those of foreign language.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The finding of this study contributes to those, who are the readers of English as a foreign language, as an input to be a motivation for them in improving their performance in reading and for those, who are teaching reading comprehension to provide a proper instruction in reading to their students.