

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Reading is one of the skills of language that has an essential role for students. Students can obtain knowledge by reading from various sources. A student's success at school and throughout life depends largely on the ability to read and understanding of texts. Reading is an essential skill for students, as the development of good reading abilities will greatly help them progress in the development of their academic areas.

Reading is essential to success in the complex world of today and tomorrow. Nowadays is the global era. The ability to read is highly valued and it is important for personal, social, and economic well-being. By reading, students expose themselves with new things, new information, new ways to solve a problem, and new ways to achieve one thing because exploration begins with reading and understanding. Through reading, students also begin to have a greater understanding on a topic that interest them; for example, how to build self confidence, how to make plan better before taking action, how to memorize things better and more. All of these self improvements start from the reading.

Reading also increases the understanding of the rules of life, in order for students to adapt, adopt and accommodate into the society better. When students are reading, they are actually gaining the knowledge and experience of someone. It can hasten their success towards a goal. Through reading, students also build a more solid foundation for communication. It is one of the most important tools

that human beings use every day to connect with each other. Whereas if they don't read; they can't even connect with the world and what people are talking about out there. Reading connects students with the world.

Reading skills are not innate capacities of human being. Therefore to read effectively students must learn how to read using appropriate strategies. Reading is not only the process of decoding the words. Reading requires comprehension or understanding of the text. Comprehension is a part of the communication process of getting the thoughts that are in the author's mind into the readers' mind. Without comprehension, reading is simply following words on a page from left to right while sounding them out. Therefore, reading comprehension has involved understanding what is being read, since the main objective of reading comprehension is to gain some understanding of what the writer is trying to convey and utilize that information.

Although reading comprehension is very important to be mastered, there are many students who have difficulty in comprehending the texts. This is known from the persistent underachievement of Indonesian students in the area of reading comprehension that has been documented in numerous high profile reports such as PIRL (Progress in international reading literacy) and PISA (Program for International Assessment). The data that have been observed and showed in International Student Achievement in Reading shows that the reading score of Indonesian students as reported by PIRL (Progress in international reading literacy, 2006) was very low. Indonesia got the fourth lowest rank from 45 countries. Furthermore, the worse result is also shown in the research which

was done by PISA (Program for International Assessment, 2013); the reading score of Indonesian students was the second lowest rank. Indonesia was ranked at 64 from 65 countries. The average scores for Indonesian students for reading were 396.

Considering the condition above, we have to take a look at the many factors that influence the students' achievement in reading comprehension. One of the crucial factors that influence the achievement of the students is the role of the teachers. Teachers play a very important role in determining the successful of students in reading comprehension. This also emphasizes by the report of the International Reading Association (2000) that states that it is the teacher's knowledge that makes a difference in students' achievement. The persistent underachievement of Indonesian students in the area of reading comprehension is influenced by the teachers. The way teachers teach reading comprehension is based on the knowledge of the teachers of reading comprehension itself. Therefore, the writer is interested in investigating the knowledge of teachers about teaching reading comprehension as implemented during the reading comprehension classroom implementation.

B. The Problem of the Study

In line with the background of the study research problems were formulated as follows:

1. What knowledge do teachers have about teaching reading comprehension?

2. What reading comprehension strategies do teachers implement during the reading comprehension classroom implementation?

C. The Scope of the Study

This study was limited to the investigation of the types of the teacher's knowledge of teaching reading comprehension during the reading comprehension classroom implementation. The teachers were three English teachers of two schools in Tanjung Morawa and Galang who taught 10th and 12th grade students.

D. The Objective of the Study

Parallel with the research problem, the objective of the study was to investigate the knowledge of teachers in the area of teaching reading comprehension.

E. The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be useful for English teachers as the teachers can improve their understanding of teaching reading comprehension. This study will also expose to the teachers that the knowledge of teaching reading comprehension influences the teaching of reading comprehension as well as development of the reading competences and comprehension among students. Thus, this study will increase the awareness of teachers of how important it is to have a good understanding of teaching reading comprehension.