

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Language is a tool of communication. Language is a communication of thoughts and feelings through a system of arbitrary signals such as sounds, gestures or written symbols. English is an international language. In Indonesia, English as a foreign language is taught to the students at schools and university. English is not only as a medium of communication, but also as medium of transforming the knowledge and technology.

Learning is a complex experience process to get the knowledge. When learning, people use the language to exchange information. It can be ideas, feelings, and thought. Exchanging the information are not only using their language but also sometimes using another language. People must study another language to reach their goal. English has been studied by many people in the world. English print in everywhere. Everybody can see the pamphlets, magazines, bills, school materials, advertisements, work instruction, and mails are printed in English that come to their way. That is show how important English nowadays.

In learning English, there are four domains of language skills that must be simultaneously achieved by the students namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Brown (2001: 232) states that speaking and writing are referred to the productive skills while reading and listening have many parallels and are referred to receptive skills. In this case, the sounds and the messages are produce when

speaking and writing are being done. It is different from reading and listening. Through reading and listening, the one gets some information or messages from certain source. Lems et al (2010: 3) assume that reading and writing are not inevitable processes even in a first language. It stands to reason that considerable energy and effort are needed to learn to do them in a new language. Reading is one of the most important tools to gain knowledge. Reading is the window of knowledge. By reading everyone will know everything in the world. Reading can increase our knowledge so we will not be out of date because we will know the actual news which happens in this world. Reading also will open our sights so that we can do the best in our life. To comprehending the reading text, students have their own strategies. The strategies helped them to understand the reading text easily.

Reading comprehension strategy is a cognitive or behavioral action that is enacted under particular contextual conditions, with the goal of improving some aspect of comprehension (McNamara, 2007: 6). Students' cognitive action will affect their comprehension in comprehending the reading text.

Based on the researcher's experience during her teaching Field Practice (PPL program), she found the various of students' strategies in comprehending the reading text. Each student has their own strategies. Some students used make inference strategy, some used re-read, some used determine importance and so on. Basically, students have the reasons why they use the strategy they do. The reason why they use such inference strategy is because the content of the text is familiar to their daily activity. Some of them said that they need to re-read the text because

they could not understand when they read at once. Some also used determine importance strategy because they did not need to translate each word because it could waste their time, so they decided to determine the importance of the text.

This condition is affected by some factors. It can be seen from the students itself and/or from the reading text that they read. Factors which come from the students side is called reader factors and factors which come from the text or out of students side is called text factors. In learning English, the reader factors can be seen from the age, motivation and attitude, personality and intelligence. Meanwhile, text factor can see from the reading text such as the lexical reading, etc. Based on the explanation above, the researcher conducts the research that entitled 'the reading comprehension strategies used by students of SMAN 3 Pematangsiantar.'

## **1.2 The Problem of the Study**

In line with the background of the study presented above, the research problems are formulated as follows:

1. What strategies are used by the students in comprehending reading texts?
2. Why do the students use the strategies as they do?

## **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

In relation to the problems, the objectives of this research are:

1. to describe the students' strategies in comprehending reading texts,
2. to explain the reasons why they use the strategies as they do.

#### **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on analyzing the strategies used by the students in comprehending the reading texts and the reasons why they do the strategies as they do.

#### **1.5 The significance of the Study**

The study is expected to have both theoretical and practical perspectives, they are:

1. Theoretical perspective
  - a. The result of the research will be useful to identify the reading comprehension strategies of students.
  - b. The result of the research can be used as reference for those who want to conduct a research about reading comprehension strategies.

2. Practical perspective

- a. For teacher

The writer hopes that this research will be inspiring English teacher to know which reading comprehension strategies are needed by students.

- b. For students

This study also expected to encourage the students to know their reading comprehension strategies.