CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Reading is an interactive process between a reader and a text. During the reading process, a reader is engaged in a great deal of mental activity; automatic or conscious. In the process, the reader interacts dynamically with the text as s/he tries to elicit the meaning. It can be carried out through systemic knowledge (buttom-up processing) and schematic knowledge (top-down processing). In the buttom-up process, the reader begins with the printed words, recognizes graphic stimuli, decodes them to sound, recognizes words and decodes meaning. On the other hand, top-down process is based upon the schema theory. The reader activates her or his schemata to acquire knowledge or to interpret the text.

It seems that comprehending a text is not easy to do. Most students get difficulties when they are assigned to comprehend a text. National Assessment of Educational Progress reported in 2003 that the reading ability of America's fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders has not been improved in thirty years. Approximately one in four students is struggling to read and comprehend the textbooks and subject matter materials as they enter the middle or high schools. The students in Indonesia also get difficulties in reading comprehension. Balitbang Depdiknas (2013) reported that students in Indonesia only master 30% of reading materials and they get difficulty to answer the essay tests which requires comprehension. It is contrary to the Educational Unit-Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan

Pendidikan) that students are expected to be competent in comprehending short functional text, dialogue, and monologue text in form of description, narration, procedure, recount, news item, report, exposition, spoof, review and explanation (BSNP, 2006).

The problem faced by the students in reading comprehension is influenced by many factors. One of the factors is that the students have low motivation in learning, negative attitude in a certain subject, minimum reading activity at home, low vocabulary mastey, low critical thinking skill, gender differences and social economic background that affect their reading achievement. Another factor is that the teachers have low professional development and use inappropriate teaching strategies and media. They frequently used the handout book and gave reading exercise contained on it. Reading comprehension is also taught by the teachers through a traditional way which is known as teacher-centered learning. This traditional approach often represents an exercise in one way communication that places students in a passive role. It will ultimately minimize the students' ability to develop their skills in reading comprehension. Reading a passage will be difficult for students because they only get the knowledge from their teacher. Students are not actively involved in reading process. Reading activity only covers reading the text and answers the questions given that individually done by the students. Consequently, students feel bored and were not interested with the materials in reading comprehension tasks. Therefore, their reading comprehension achievement is unsatisfying.

Those are several causes of reading comprehension problem faced by students when they are trying to get the meaning of a text. Actually, this problem can be decreased by applying a certain strategy in teaching reading. Grabe (1991) in Alyousef reveals the importance of using reading strategies in order to read more efficiently. Reading comprehension strategies have several strengths for students. The strategies will motivate the students' thinking and develop their mental abilities; provide them with a good ability to deal with the daily and fast enlarging amounts of data; enable them to visualize the difference between what can be done and what must be done; and help them get rid of the doubts through choosing from a number of responses and possibilities available (Rose et al, 2000; Baron 1987 in Al-Khateeb and Idrees 2010).

Teachers can apply several reading comprehension strategies in order to help the students comprehend a text successfully. Some of them are Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) and Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI). Sousa (2005) describes that CSR is particularly effective in classrooms where students have many different reading abilities and learning capabilities. CSR uses direct teaching and collaborative power of cooperative learning groups to accomplish two phases designed to improve reading comprehension, they are teacher-led activities and cooperative learning groups (Klingner, Vaughn, and Schumm in Sousa, 2005). The first phase, teacher-led activities, consists of four activities – preview the reading, click and clunks, get the gist, and wrap-up. In the reading preview, the students preview the entire reading passage in order to get as much as they can about the passage. Then, click and clunks are devices to monitor the

students' understanding while they are reading. Clicks are parts of the reading that make sense for the students and clunks are parts or words that do not make sense for students. Students can clarify the parts or words that they do not understand by rereading the sentences while looking for keywords that can help extract meaning from the context, rereading previous and following sentences to get additional context clues, looking for prefixes or suffixes in the word that could help with meaning, and breaking the word apart to see if smaller words are present that provide meaning. The third activities in phase one is get the gist. In this activity, the students are asked to state in their own words the most important person, place or thing in the passage. Then, they should explain the important idea about that person, place or thing. The last activity in the first phase of CSR is wrap-up. It is a closure activity that allows students to review in their mind what has been learned to ensure that it makes sense and has meaning.

The second phase of CSR is cooperative learning groups. This phase puts the students into cooperative learning groups to practice CSR in an interactive environment. True cooperative learning groups are usually made up of about five students of mixed ability levels who learn and perform certain roles in the group to ensure completion of the learning task (Johnson and Johnson, 1989 in Sousa, 2005). The roles rotate among group members so that every student gets the opportunity to be the leader and use the various skills needed to perform each task.

Another strategy that is applicable in teaching reading is Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI). In TSI, the teacher provides support and guidance to

students as they apply strategies while interacting with text and learning content. Through teacher explanation, modeling, and supported practice, students learn to use repertoires of comprehension strategies. A central goal of instruction is the self-regulated use of the strategies. The term *transactional* itself is used to emphasize that (1) meaning is determined through the interaction of prior knowledge and information conveyed through print; (2) one person's reaction is influenced by what other group members do, think, and say; and (3) the meaning that emerges is the product of the group's interactions.

The implementation of TSI consists of three phases – *explanation and modeling, practice and coaching, and transfer of responsibility* (Casteel, Isom, & Jordan, 2000). In the explanation and modeling phase, the teacher will make posters or displays for each of the strategies such as predicting, questioning and answering, visualizing, seeking clarification, responding to text based on prior knowledge, and summarizing. Then the teacher posts them on the wall where students can easily see them. The teacher selects a strategy to teach. Then, the teacher defines and explains the selected strategy to students and models its usage. After that, he or she emphasizes why the strategy is helpful and explains when it might be most appropriate to use it.

The second phase is practice and coaching. In this phase, the teacher provides students with opportunities for guided practice and feedback. The teacher coaches as necessary, possibly asking questions such as *What do you do next? How is the strategy helpful?* During this phase the teacher provides students with

practice in implementing the strategies as well as in selecting which strategy to use at different times.

The last phase in TSI is transferring of responsibility. Once students have become proficient strategy users, then they can use various strategies while reading, monitoring their understanding, and discussing the meaning of text in small reading groups. They assume responsibility for selecting and implementing strategies. The teacher continues to coach students as they use various strategies as they work in their groups.

As stated in the explanation above, there are many variables that influence reading comprehension. Another variable that influences reading comprehension is critical thinking. Reading is more than just saying what is on the page; it is thinking. Students need to have a critical thinking during reading. Critical thinking requires them to identify, analyze, assess, and evaluate information in an attempt to understand and construct meaning of a text. It is concluded that critical thinking is the process which is used by the students or readers to comprehend and to construct a meaning of a certain text.

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to see the effect of teaching strategies and critical thinking on students' achievement in reading comprehension.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The research problems are formulated as follows:

1. Is the students' achievement in reading comprehension taught by using Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) higher than that taught by using Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI)?

2. Is the reading comprehension achievement of students with high critical thinking higher than that of students with low critical thinking?

3. Is there any interaction between teaching strategies and critical thinking to students' achievement in reading comprehension?

1.3 The Scope of the Study

There are many applicable strategies in teaching reading comprehension. In this study, the researcher will focus on the using of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) and Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI).

Besides using the appropriate strategy, the success of students' in comprehending a text is also influenced by several variables, one of them is critical thinking. This study is limited on the effect of teaching strategies and critical thinking on students' achievement in reading comprehension.

1.4 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to find out whether:

1. The students' achievement in reading comprehension taught by using Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is higher than that taught by using Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI).

2. The reading comprehension achievement of students with high critical thinking is higher than that of students with low critical thinking.

3. There is an interaction between teaching strategies and critical thinking to students' achievement in reading comprehension.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be useful theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings of this study can give additional information to theories related to Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) and Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) in teaching reading. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to be useful the researchers who want to do a research on the implementation of reading strategies in teaching reading comprehension

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to be useful for English teachers at schools and at universities in teaching reading comprehension. The English teachers can use the findings of this study as a reference in implementing the appropriate reading strategies to their students