CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.   The Background of the Study

In life communication is one of important aspects. Information is transmitted among the people of the world. For the purpose, language is needed. Language as a means of communication holds the greater role for exchanging information in the interaction with among people. For example, English has been placed as the international language in which the people use it as a Second Language (ESL) or as a Foreign Language (EFL). As the means of international communication, it deals with many fields such as technology, education, tourism, diplomacy, economy, and even scientific research.

Language mastery is divided into four skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading and listening are the receptive skills, in which people extract meaning from the discourse they see or hear. Then, writing and speaking are called as productive skills. These skills are needed in order to be successful in learning English.

Reading is one of the skills which is very important in learning English. Reading skill is an ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret the information appropriately. Reading also greatly contributes in forming the communicative and informative society. The overall goal of reading is not to remember the specific details but to have a good grasp of the main ideas and supporting ideas, and to relate those main ideas to the background knowledge as

appropriate. Then, reading is a cognitive process of interaction of the prior knowledge (schemata) to the printed page and an interpretation or understanding of the meaning by the interaction.

Reading comprehension is the most basic purpose for reading. As the purpose of reading is to comprehend the notions in the materials, it means that without comprehension, reading is useless and meaningless. To realize the consideration above, it is important to develop reading comprehension which is essential for the students' achievement.

At present, the problems of reading may also affect the quality of human resources since reading is to gain and exchange information in which the world has a great amount of knowledge to obtain. Based on UNESCO in 2011 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) it was shown that the reading achievement of Indonesian students was very low namely 0.001 (reading index). That means from one thousand people, there was only one who had the high level reading interest. Then, the survey of UNDP (United Nation Development Program) in 2010 mentioned that Indonesia has the low reading interest in which there is only one book or even no books that Indonesians read in a year. It was also reported by the UNDP in Human Development Report in 2003 that human development index based on the number of illiterate people placed Indonesia in the rank of 112 from 174 countries in the world. In addition, the data of Indonesia Statistics Body (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia: BPSI) in 2006 reported that Indonesian had low reading interest for gaining information. According to the data taken from www.bps.go.id (2013) people which gained the

information preferred watching television (85,9 %), and/or listening to the radio (40,3 %), and reading newspapers (23,5 %).

There are some problems that affected the students' achievement. Based on the observation of the writer in State Senior High School 3 Medan (Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri 3 Medan: SMA Negeri 3 Medan), the first difficulty in reading was students' ability to relate or to connect their experiences with the ideas presented in the text. However, they were actually able to read English words and sentences. The difficulties had made them unmotivated to read since they preconceived that the theme or the topic of reading was not interesting for them. The students also felt bored while reading as due to being unmotivated. Some of the students just read the text without trying to connect the presented ideas of text with their thinking patterns. The problem to contextualize the difficult words that they found also did lead them to achieve what actually they should have comprehended. These problems finally arose and they were unable to achieve the desired reading comprehension.

Besides, teaching reading without the methods or strategies that help students overcome their reading problems is a problem to the teacher. Since it was not effective while teacher just facilitated the reading and the questions related to the text, it seemed that the teacher could not control the process of students' reading.

Students also experienced difficulties in following the teaching-learning process as the class had no conducive situation to be able to relate or connect what they knew with what they did not know or how they learned. Thus, the

conventional teaching reading class did not solve the problems of students while they read the text.

Furthermore, in English curriculum of Educational Unit Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan: KTSP in 2006) reveals the objectives of English in competency standard of reading for senior high school was that the students are expected to be able to read various of genre, they are descriptive, narrative, procedure, report, exposition, and recount texts. To achieve the objective of teaching reading, precisely, teacher must be able to engage to the situation of students' need in learning reading so they finally can get the goal of developing their reading skills.

Considering those problems, metacognitive strategies that involve planning for learning, thinking about learning process as it is taking places, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed, are eligible to cover the problems of reading comprehension.

Then, as Backer and Brown in Hacker, Dunlosky, and Graesser (2009) write that since effective readers must have some awareness and control of the cognitive activities they engage in as they read, most characterizations of reading include skills and activities that involve metacognition. It has clearly helped the reading while using the metacognitive strategies. The problem of relating the text to knowledge of students could be solved as metacognitive strategies hold the action help the students, such as self-regulating, planning, evaluating and monitoring in order to achieve successful comprehension.

For this purpose, the metacognitive strategies are proposed in the research to find the effect of applying the metacognitive strategies on students' reading comprehension.

B.   The Problem of the Study

The problem of the study in this research is formulated as follow: "Is there any significant effect of applying metacognitive strategies on the students' reading comprehension?"

C.   The Objective of the Study

Related to the problem formulated, the objective of the study is to find out the significant effect in reading comprehension which is teaching reading by the application of metacognitive strategies or teaching reading without applying metacognitive strategies.
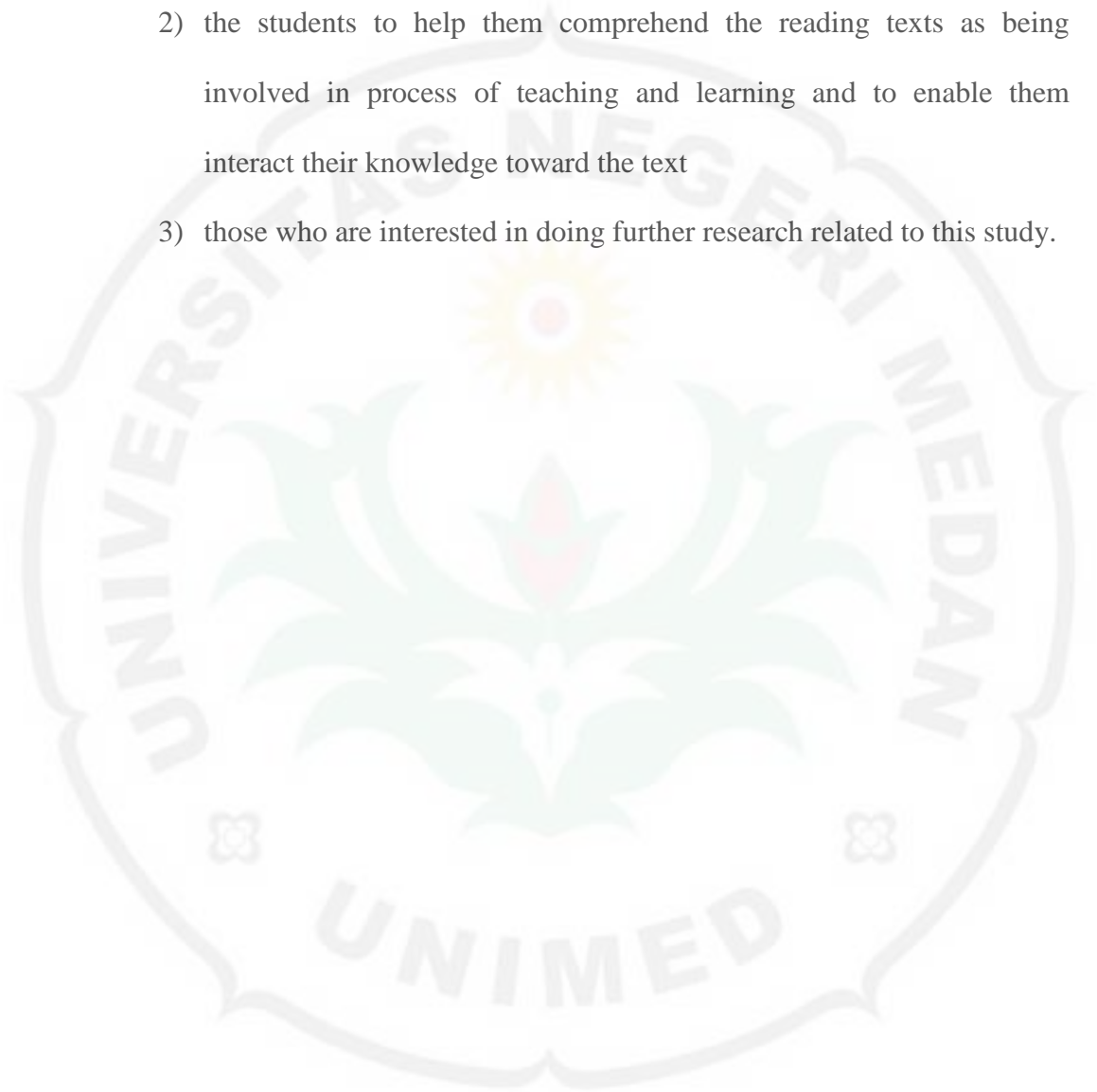
D.   The Scope of the Study

This study is limited to the use of metacognitive strategies in improving students' reading comprehension by finding the effect of metacognitive strategies on students' reading comprehension on SMA Negeri 3 Medan.

E.   The Significance of the Study

These research findings are expected to be useful for:

1) the teachers to improve their ability in teaching reading

2) the students to help them comprehend the reading texts as being involved in process of teaching and learning and to enable them interact their knowledge toward the text

3) those who are interested in doing further research related to this study.