

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Reading arguably stands as the most essential skill for success in all educational contexts (Brown, 2004:185). It is considered as the most important skill that most students need to employ if they want to succeed during their academic years in school or throughout their life. However, in English foreign language setting, teaching reading still remains a topic of intense debate. This mainly occurs as many students constantly encounter difficulties to comprehend a text and teachers still can not help them to overcome those difficulties.

Based on the observation conducted in MTs Al-Jami'yatul Washliyah Tembung, it was found that in many reading classes, the teachers put the students into passive learning. The teachers believe that reading is a vacuum activity which only requires the interaction between the students and the text. Common procedure occurring in passive reading classes sets the teachers to give the students time to read and comprehend the text, afterwards they enable the students to answer the questions regarding the text. During the process of comprehending, only students who interact with the text, the teachers just help by facilitating the students to use the dictionaries, in case the students find unfamiliar vocabularies.

As the result, when students find difficulties to comprehend the text, only themselves who struggle to solve the difficulties. The teachers are not aware of students' problems to comprehend the text as they do not participatively engage or monitor the comprehension process. They do not provide any opportunity for

students to discuss their problems with. Finally, this leads to their failure to identify their students' comprehension difficulties and it results their failure to teach the students how to break the difficulties as well.

In general, the difficulties students commonly may encounter while comprehending a text are: 1) appropriate use of background knowledge, 2) vocabulary, 3) fluency, and 4) Strategy (Wong, 2004:253). Lems et al., (2009:170) state that reading is an involving interaction between the text and the background knowledge of the readers. The background knowledge students have of certain text may help them to easily access the information as they are familiar with the text, so they have already had the concept of the text in their mind. On the other hand, when students are not familiar with the topic of the text, they are likely to find concepts in it difficult and confusing.

Vocabulary knowledge is one of the strongest predictors that may influence students' comprehension. Students can not understand what they read without understanding what most of the words mean (Moore, 2012). Vocabularies enable the readers to assemble and integrate proposition from text and make sense of what is read. In conclusion, knowing the meanings of many words provides students access to countless worlds of ideas and information to comprehend a text. Whereas, lack of vocabularies may block students' attempt to integrate the information to understand the text.

Barr (2006:13) claims that fluency requires efficient word recognition so the reader can gain meaning from the text with little conscious effort. Fluency affects reading comprehension because the students do not have to consciously

interpret every word. Students who are lack of reading fluency fail to extract meaning from previous reading materials (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Lastly, comprehension problem students frequently encounter is lack of strategies. This is due to the fact that while reading a text, students who do not apply any reading strategies, can not use or even integrate a number of ways of thinking to understand what they are reading. Many students are lack of reading strategies because they are not familiar with reading strategies. Teachers who become instructors in reading class, should introduce the students about reading strategies, explain how each strategy works, and how to model them. Strategies are very crucial for reading comprehension, applying reading strategies can help students to breaks any difficulties particularly aforementioned difficulties. For instance, while students have some problems of appropriate background knowledge, teachers may teach them questioning, predicting, and activating background knowledge strategies. Or when the students face problem of fluency, teachers may teach them scanning strategy. And to overcome such problem like lack of vocabularies, teachers may teach them coding text strategy.

In conclusion, teachers should teach students comprehension strategies. They need to be taught early on so that students can grow into effective readers. McNamara (2009:34) argues that teaching reading strategies is one of the most effective means of helping students to overcome number of roadblocks in the path to comprehension. Strategies provide the means to tackle complex problems in more efficient ways and, with practice, the strategies lead to skills that become automatic and quick over time. Comprehension strategies are thinking tools,

mental actions, or routines that are used before, during, or after reading a text. As mentioned by Wong (2003:253), comprehension strategies can explicitly teach students how to draw inferences from text, summarize information, predict what will happen next in a narrative, formulate and answer question about text, and visualize what they read in order to improve comprehension. Strategies are the tools for active, self-directed involvement that is necessary for developing communicative ability (Nunan, 2003:76). They are not a single event, but rather a creative sequence of events that learners actively use to comprehend a text.

However, many teachers are not aware of the use of comprehension strategies. They mostly assume that students can grow their comprehension strategies naturally, so that they do not have to teach them explicitly in teaching reading. Some of them, even do not have much knowledge regarding kinds of comprehension strategies and how comprehension strategies purposely can be taught. It was also revealed from the English teachers of MTs Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tembung. They did not concern with applying reading comprehension strategies in teaching reading. Some of the teachers basically have applied reading comprehension strategies, but they did not realize that they have already done. Some of them even did not how to apply reading comprehension strategies in teaching reading. As the result, the students did not know what comprehension strategies are, what functions they stand for, and when to apply reading comprehension strategies.

Considering this phenomenon, the researcher would like to carry out a descriptive study on investigating teachers' strategies in teaching reading

comprehension to the ninth grade students of MTs Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tembung.

B. The Problem of the Study

Based on the explanation above, the problems of this study can be formulated as follows: "What are the teacher's strategies in teaching reading comprehension to ninth grade students of MTs Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tembung?"

C. The Scope of the Study

This study will focus on seeking out teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension particularly in teaching reading of procedure text. The study will deal with the ninth grade students of MTs Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tembung which will involve both the students and the teacher. The study will describe what kinds of teaching strategies are used by the teacher.

D. The Objective of the Study

In relation to the problems, the objectives of this study is to find out what kinds of reading strategy are used by the teacher in teaching procedure text to the students.

E. The Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to give some theoretical as well as practical contributions.

1. Theoretically

The result of this study will provide and expand theoretical explanations of reading comprehension strategies used by teachers in teaching reading.

2. Practically

- a. The English teachers, to be more aware of using and teaching reading comprehension strategies in reading class.
- b. The Students, to be more aware of understanding and applying reading comprehension strategies while approaching texts.
- c. Other researchers, to use this study as reference to conduct similar research regarding the topic of reading comprehension strategies.