

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In a global context, literacy has become one of the measurement subjects on human resources by various international surveys. A study conducted by Central Connecticut State University found that Indonesia is the second-least literate nation in the world in a list of 61 measurable countries, besting only Botswana (Gunawan, 2016). A report of OECD program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) stated that less than 1% of adults in Jakarta, Indonesia, attain the highest levels of proficiency (Level 4 or 5) in literacy, at this level, adults can integrate, interpret and synthesize information from complex or lengthy texts that contain conditional and/or competing information (www.oecd.org, 2016). And the latest result from PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) published at 6th December 2016, Indonesia is ranked 64th out of 72 countries surveyed (Antoro, 2017). All these studies showed Indonesian poor position in literacy level and English Proficiency Index.

In 2015, World Economic Forum (WEF) released a report on the skills that must be mastered to face the 21st century. The skills are literacy, competence and character. This WEF document then encourages literacy to become a national issue in Indonesia (Antoro, 2017). The government of Indonesia through the education and culture ministry, started to change the literacy focus. The literacy is not just about the ability to read (in term of decoding

words), ability to write and to count anymore but literacy in 21st century is about ability to comprehend the content of the reading materials, to write a logical argument, to think critically and to use high order thinking skills to solve problem (Wardi, 2016). This goal is in line with the definition of literacy on international surveys such as PISA and PIAAC.

On July 2015, Peraturan menteri pendidikan dan kebudayaan (permendikbud) number 23 of 2015 is published. This regulation concerns about character building. One of the mandatory activities listed on the regulation is reading for 15 minutes of non-textbooks every day in school, in other words, the government want to improve literacy with schools as the starting point. The implementation of literacy activities in school is divided into three stages, namely: habituation, development, and learning process. The principles of reading activity in the literacy movement are described as the following: The teacher sets a 15-minute reading time every day. School may put 15 minutes reading time at the beginning, middle or the end of school hour, depending on the schedule and condition of each school (Kemendikbud, 2017).

This 'free reading' time should be done every day because regular reading activity in short time is more effective than rarely reading activity in a longer period of time (Gambrell, 2013). The students may read any kind of book of his/her preference, fiction or non-fiction, biography, etc. They may bring their own book from home or choose her/ his book from the school library or reading corner at the classroom. This is reading for pleasure which means it is not followed by graded assignment, but it can be followed by informal discussions

about the books have been read by the students, however, the learner's response is optional and not graded.

Literacy and reading, although these two terms closely related, are not a synonym. Reading is a verb; it suggests decoding the script, facial expressions, signs etc. Whereas "literacy" implies a person who can read, write, speak, listen, and calculate well to solve problem (Arwood, 2011). Ability to reason through reading is a literacy activity; it is also a complex process. To read critically, means a learner need to ask "How does it come to have a particular meaning (and not some other)?" (Wardi, 2016). It is important to acknowledge that different texts and social contexts (reading for whom, with what purpose) require different reading skills (Alvermann, 2015).

Two years after School Literacy Movement initiation, the reading culture is still not visible yet in most school. Although the government provides the funds to buy books and organize many literary events to promote literacy, the expected result still far beyond the horizon (Antoro, 2017). A literate high School student is expected to have the ability to comprehend the content or ideas from a written text, they should be able to think and express their opinion whether they agree or disagree to the idea or concept conveyed by the writer of the text. But to have this ability, the students need to learn how to assess the underlying concept attached to the text (Arwood, 2011).

Unfortunately, so many high school students struggle with learning the concept of content; they do not understand what they read in text (Tovani, 2015).

When the teacher gives them a reading comprehension assignment, they will not read the text but directly go to the questions at the end of that text, then answer the

question by matching the questions with sentences within text. When the teacher asks them to write a book review assignment, they will ask for examples on the assignments so they can imitate or copy what they see. This is why plagiarism is quite widespread in education world because so many students have learned to copy what they read or to write down exactly what they hear and receive praise and rewards for imitating the pattern (Alvermann, 2015).

Arwood (2011) stated that in foreign language teaching, the emphasis should not in language structures but on language function or thinking process that affects social and cognitive development. She also defined language structures such as words, phrases, sentences, syntax, morphemes and so on, are only the surface forms of a language, while language function is the deep part of language which represents thinking, problem solving and planning according to cultural and social norms. How a person use language in communication is always a mirror of how a person learns concepts.

Tovani (2015) argued that increase in language function increase literacy; so if becoming literate is the goal of an educated society, then learning to think is paramount. It would be counterintuitive to teach a person the product of literacy in a way that is different than a way a person thinks.

In Indonesia, particularly in Medan, the most available reading material in English for the high school students is surely the text in the reading section of their English Course book. This is the sample of reading text taken from an English Course Book titled *Pathway to English for Senior High School Grade IX; General Program*, (2014) published by Erlangga.

Read this text carefully.

A mobile phone, known as a cell phone in North America, is a portable telephone that can make and receive calls over a radio frequency link while the user is moving within a telephone service area. The radio frequency link establishes a connection to the switching systems of a mobile phone operator, which provides access to the public switched telephone network (PSTN). Modern mobile telephone services use a cellular network architecture, and, therefore, mobile telephones are called cellular telephones or cell phones, in North America. In addition to telephony, 2000s-era mobile phones support a variety of other services, such as text messaging, MMS, email, Internet access, short-range wireless communications (infrared, Bluetooth), business applications, video games, and digital photography. Mobile phones offering only those capabilities are known as feature phones; mobile phones which offer greatly advanced computing capabilities are referred to as smartphones.

The common components found on all phones are:

1. A battery, providing the power source for the phone functions.
2. An input mechanism to allow the user to interact with the phone. These are a keypad for feature phones and touch screens for most smartphones.
3. A screen which echoes the user's typing displays text messages, contacts, and more.
4. Basic mobile phone services to allow users to make calls and send text messages.
5. All GSM phones use a SIM card to allow an account to be swapped among devices. Some CDMA devices also have a similar card called an R-UIM.
6. Individual GSM, WCDMA, iDEN and some satellite phone devices are uniquely identified by an International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number.

Check your understanding, answer the following question:

1. In what paragraph can you find the following idea?

- * The common components on all phones.
- * The definition of hand phone
- * Variety of hand phones
- * Features in mobile phones

Reading for specific information, answer the following question:

2. Who provides a cellular network?
3. The other name for a mobile phone is _____
4. A wide variety of other services on all mobile phones includes _____
5. What is the function of the following components?
 - A battery - A keypad - A screen - SIM card - Text message

Reading for detailed information, work in pair.

6. When is a hand phone called a smart phone?

Krashen (2004) categorized above text as compulsory reading, the students do the reading and then answer the questions of content, or reading as preparation of discussion or writing assignment. According to him, to make reading an English text have an optimum impact for language acquisition, the reading should be: enjoyable and voluntarily done by the students, the material is comprehensible, interesting and relevant, it is not grammatically sequenced, the students have the time and place to read, and if the text include some dialogue, it may also provide the tools to manage their conversation in target language.

Arwood (2011) stated that matching questions at the end of a chapter to sentences within chapter, word calling, and repetitive working on worksheets (such as the displayed reading material above) are pattern learning and at the *low level of processing in the brain* [emphasis added]. Activities that emphasize pattern are not asking for higher order thinking. Bookheimer (2014) even argue that practice of this meaningless pattern resulted in brain disengaging. This brain disengagement probably explains why we so quickly forget lessons in school.

Similarly, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also argue that we cannot simply describing and exemplifying what people do with language (ex. grammar exercises and compulsory reading in English) which will enable someone to acquire that language. Language can only be properly understood as a reflection of human thought process, in other words the key to successful language learning and teaching lies in understanding the process of the mind. Holt (1998) stated that language represents concepts and ideas; we use language to communicate and to shape our mind. We read, listen, speak and write because we need to communicate with others, not to fill exercises at the end of a chapter.

Based on the problem above, the researcher argues that high school students in Medan will improve their reading skills in English learning process if they know how to assess the underlying concept attached to the text, to construct meaning from the reading material. By focusing on the language function and not to language structure, the learning process is expected to be more effective for them.

In elementary level, teaching reading is mainly about “breaking code” and strategies for beginner readers, but reading in high school level is supposed to be about concept construction. Elementary level readers may able to read the word ‘*respect*’ without understanding the meaning contain in that word, but a high school level reader should be able to read ‘*respect*’ and assign conceptual meaning from the word (Arwood, 2011). Unfortunately the high-school level students do not get the concept-oriented reading directions within their English course book. The reading directions found in reading section within aforementioned English course book are: read the text carefully and then check your understanding by answering the following questions. The students will not able to build their layers of concept by that type of directions. The directions to build reading comprehension should be a precise step by step thinking process that should be done by the students while they read.

An example of clear reading directions can be found in ETS Test Taker Handbook (2017; p.19):

*Directions: In this section you will read several passages. Each one is followed by several questions about it. You are to choose **one** best answer (A), (B), (C), or (D) to each question. Then on your answer sheet, find the number of the questions and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen. Answer all questions following the passage on the basis of what is **stated** or **implied** in the passage.*

The types of reading material also become an important issue to address; the students will read if they like the reading material. From the researcher inquiry to several high school students of what kind of English material they like to read. They mentioned they like to read stories on **Wattpad**. **Wattpad** is a virtual place where the writers and their fellow readers form an online community to share their stories. The stories range from philosophical theme to non-fiction essays. These stories are available in 50 languages, but 77% of its content is written in English (from: <http://wattpad.com>). This is one of an interesting story according to the high school students with the topic of mobile phone.

A Wattpad Short Story by thessandeeep.

An elementary school science teacher had done with her dinner and started evaluating assignment notes done by a colleague's class students. Her husband is strolling around with a smart phone playing his favourite 'Candy Crush Saga' game. Meanwhile silent tears started rolling on her cheeks after reading the last sentence at one of the student's notebook. Her husband saw her and asked, 'Honey, what's the matter? What happened?'

Wife: *Yesterday, Sonia, the English teacher, has requested me to share her work load and evaluate few of the assignments she has given to her 3rd grade students as she would have busy with a ceremony at home. The assignment was to write a paragraph on the topic –My Wish-.*

Husband: *'OK, but why are you weeping?'*

Wife: *Just now I read something in one of the notes which made me a bit emotional, sorry I couldn't control my tears.'*

Husband: *curiously ask, what's written in it?*

Wife: *Let me read it out. 'My wish' is to become a smartphone. Yes, a smart phone. My parents love the smart phone more than anything else including their only son, me. My dad comes from his office tired and exhausted, he still has time for smart phone but not for me. Even when my mom is doing some important work, she will attend every phone calls or messages within no time. They play games on their smart phone but not with me. When we were out for picnic, they were so busy with check-ins, photo upload, likes and comments about the exotic destination instead of talking with me. I am lonely with my parents so busy with their smart phone. So I wish I can become a smart phone.*

Husband: *ow... who's the kid?*

Wife: *Our only son.*

People were created to be loved; Things were created to be used. The reason why the world is in chaos is because people are being used and things are being loved.-unknown-

(Sandeep, 2017)

Comparing the two reading materials (Sudarwati & Grace, Reading Text: Mobile Phones, 2014) and (Sandeep, 2017), although they have the same topic (mobile phone) but the second story is considered more interesting for the students to read. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) learning of a language is an emotional experience, and the feelings that learning process evokes will have a crucial effect on the success or the failure of the learning. The first text is focused on the language structure, followed by close questions (only have one correct answer) whereas the second text is focused on language function; to communicate a message and to shape the reader thinking.

Language rules describe the language and learning about the language rules does not necessarily provide the tools for teaching a person to speak, read, think, write, listen and calculate with the target language (Arwood, 2011). A person have the language competence when he/she knows when to speak, when not to speak, what to talk about, with whom, when, where in what manner, but a person who is able to formulating grammatically correct sentence is not automatically become a competent language user (Hutchinson & Waters, 1991).

Researches in building literacy skills for English language learner have been done several times, such as: (Lombardi, Behrman, & Edward, 2016) who proposed balanced literacy as a compromise or middle ground between philosophical approaches to reading instruction that stress teaching of word recognition and those that stress construction of meaning . Thus, the balanced

literacy classroom "balances" time devoted to skills-based activities such as alphabetic principle, phonemic awareness, and phonics with literature-based activities such as predicting, drawing inference, discussing, and writing about text. Although there is no definitive balanced literacy pedagogy, balanced literacy in various applications has been shown to be a hallmark of effective reading instruction.

Other study related to improve English literacy in Indonesia has been done by Indhira et al (2015). The study highlights the teacher's habit to teach English by using traditional method where all students in the classroom are taught using the same techniques despite the heterogeneous condition of the students in the classroom. As the results, the students are mostly bored or struggling to follow the lesson. This paper proposed differentiated instruction implemented in the classroom in order to help every student in the classroom develop themselves in their full potentials. The result of the study stated that the differentiated instruction is very powerful to increase students' English literacy and every student enjoys his/her time in the classroom.

The study on English reading material and high order thinking skill also have been done but mainly for the post-reading exercises, not for the reading material itself, such as Arvianto & Faridi (2016). Reading should be a tool for the students to learn English at school, reading is not the goal in learning (Kerr & Frese, 2016).

All the previous study have not touched the reading directions to build literacy skills for high school EFL students, directions on the cognitive process that need to be done in order how to construct meaning from a written text, this

skills will enable them to use their reading as a learning tool. So the current study has developed reading directions with reference to metacognitive strategy intended for grade XI students in IMMANUEL Senior High School. The researcher had adapted the Gall, Borg, and Gall (2003) Educational Research and Development steps, but for the constriction of time and other sources, the researcher will use the simplified version of the E-RD steps namely: evaluation of the existing material, need analysis, material drafting, validation, final revision and material production as Dirgeyasa (2011) stated that steps in Educational research and development are not strict rules for researcher. They are able to create material in accordance with available resources.

The 21st century learners need to read effectively, they need to think critically, communicatively and collaboratively to solve any problem they encounter in life (Wardi, 2016) . The school literacy movement is a great entry point to build literacy skill amongst the students. Reading should become a culture we grow continuously, not just to improve our literacy index and reading rating in international scale but the most important thing is to be a literate citizen.

The new paradigm of literacy, which no longer focus on the technical ability to read and write but on student's power of reasoning, of course requires the continuous process of reading practice, from early to adult education level (Sudaryanto, 2016). When we see reading as a skill, means we understand that as any skill, reading need to be practiced daily, the students' right to practice reading, the time and place to do this have been established by the government through the permendikbud no.23 (2015). The current study is expected to contribute toward Indonesian adolescent students' literacy skills.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The problems of the study are formulated as following:

1. How are the existing English reading materials used today by the students in language learning?
2. What reading directions are needed by the students to enable them learning English effectively?
3. How are the reading directions with reference to metacognitive strategy developed for students of grade XI SMU IMMANUEL Medan?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems, the objectives of the study are,

1. to examine how the existing English reading materials used today by the students in language learning,
2. to find out the reading directions needed by the students to enable them learning English effectively, and
3. to develop the reading directions with reference to metacognitive strategy for students of grade XI SMU IMMANUEL Medan.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study deals with the development of non-formal or supplementary material intended for grade XI students in SMU IMMANUEL Medan.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give a valuable contribution to improve the literacy in Indonesia. First, theoretically, the results of this study are expected to add up new horizons for theories in literacy instruction, particularly building

literacy skill for EFL students and its impact for second language acquisition. The findings of the current study also will be relevant for other researcher to conduct further studies in related topics.

Second, practically, the result of this study is significant for the following parties:

1. To EFL students of senior high school in Medan, this study provides a literacy manual for intermediate student. 21st century language learners need to develop their literacy skills to comprehend and think critically about multiple form of text.
2. To English teacher, this study can be used as a reference or also a manual book to teach comprehension strategies, since the students who were taught these strategies will gained greater confidence as a reader.
3. To other researcher, this study can be used as reference to further related studies.