

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 The Background of the Study

English as a foreign language in Indonesia has many problems in teaching it, which includes both students and teachers. As usual, the human being has their own necessities in their life, such as: safety needs, belonging needs, and the needs to know or to understand. In this study the writer wants to see how are the students' mastery in reading skills, how are their motivation in learning English and how is the teacher's attitude.

Like other educators, language teachers must navigate between conservative and progressive tendencies. Language educators often follow pre-determined grammatical, discursive, or textual agendas, get an exclusive focus on established knowledge tends to undermine efforts to encourage students' creativity or to recognize students or agents in defining the terms and conditions of their learning (Lantolf and Pavlenko 2001).

Both in the East and in the West, it has been almost a truism that internalization is the key psychological mechanism discovered by the cultural historical school. When internalization is, in turn, reduced to children's learning of skills and knowledge in interaction with adults and more experienced peers, we get a version of Vygotskian research that looks very much like social learning theory flavored with fashionable terminology. (Engestrom : 1999: 26)

In relating to the above explanations, it can be argued here, that this research means to carry out the classroom interaction, which learn Reading skills in particular. Reading skills is one of the items in the national curriculum of Indonesia. Many items should be learnt in it, such as; structure, vocabulary, article, parts of speech, reading skills, writing skills, listening skills, speaking skills, etc. In which are sometime difficult to understand or to master. Reading skills are faced many efforts in it; such as how to skim, to scan, to get desire, etc. all these purposes are presented in the text books. If books could have more, give more, be more, they would still need readers, who bring to them sound and sell and light and all the rest that cannot be books. The book need you (Paulsen, 1989: 3). Books need readers; readers need books; There is no dispute among professionals regarding the facts that reading among adolescents declines sharply as a child ages (Vacca & Alvermann, 1998).

Students at the middle level do not spend any significant portion of their free time reading. The typical middle school student reads less than five minutes a day for his/her own reading interest, while a few students (approximately 10%) read voluntarily for periods of thirty minutes per day or more. Most do not spend any voluntary time reading books (Guthrie, Alao, and Rinehart, 1997).

As varied as each reader is from day to day, so is her/his preference for literature and likelihood to read. The distinguish factors that disperse readers into Guthrie's statistics are based upon three attributes. These attributes are time spent on reading voluntarily, the identification of self as a reader, and an individual's feelings about others who enjoy reading. These attributes are also used to reduce readers into

five categories of literacy. These categories are: avid dormant, uncommitted, unmotivated and unskilled (Beers, 1998)

Avid readers form the anchor to this hierarchical system. This type of reader demonstrates the epitome of reading engagement. Avid readers define reading as a “way of life”, have positive feelings about reading and make time to read. Dormant readers share the exact feelings regarding, as do avid readers; but do not read often, and just don’t make time to read.

Uncommitted readers do not enjoy reading and therefore do not make time to read. These readers view reading as purely functional and skillful, but never enjoyable. Unmotivated readers share the feelings of the uncommitted reader, except this group displays negative feelings toward other readers. Lastly, the unskilled readers cannot read and subsequently views reading as a struggle. (Beer, 1998).

By doing so, here, it will be underlined about the unskilled readers. They are faced to English texts, which strange for them, because English is a foreign language in this country. (Swain, 1995:152) stated that:

“Conversational exchanges... are not themselves the sources of acquisition derived from comprehensible input. Rather they are the source of acquisition derived from comprehensible out put: that extends the linguistic repertoire of learner as he or she attempts to create precisely and appropriately the meaning desired”.

Furthermore, Swain argued that the role of learners’ production of comprehensible out put is independent in many ways of the role of comprehensible input. She proposed a hypothesis relating to the foreign language acquisition,

learner's production comparable to that relating to comprehensible input. Pica et al, (1994: 65) pointed out:

“Although.... research has focused mainly on the ways in which negotiate interaction with interlocutor helps the learner to understand unfamiliar foreign language input, we believe that it is also through negotiation that learners gain opportunities to attempts production of new foreign language words and grammatical structures as well”.

To argue this quotation, that learners of foreign language input will help themselves in producing the foreign language acquisition or the result of learning it.

Through, reading, learners will try to produce their English as a foreign language. Then, how do the learners study their own foreign language. According to Boekaerts (1998: 21) noted that :

“ Interdependent learning situation.... require students to balance many goals and tasks simultaneously. In these social settings students may feel that they have to satisfy incongruent or even mutually exclusive goals, such as acquiring a new cognitive skill (master goals) coping with the threat of loosing face (well- being goal), pleasing one's friends and pleasing the teacher (social goals)”.

An understanding of the above concept is to determine that learners and teachers have their own tasks to make learning to be successful. It means that learners should know their own goal in learning English as a foreign language and the teachers also know about that goal. Reading skills have a particular goal. This statement is based on the national curriculum in Indonesia, (2004: 17). It has been determined that “the goal of reading is to understand the meaning and the steps of the developing rhetoric in the texts includes the descriptive, narrative and recount”.

Again, reading is of course the process in mind. To understand the texts; to know the types of texts such as; narrative, descriptive, recount all these are processed in mind. Then, the reading itself is known throughout the writing form or the letter symbols. To know or to master the better symbols are processed in the cognitive process. This way has been shown by the expert, in this case, Flavell has explained his own opinion. It can be seen through the following quotation:

Flavell, (1963: 155) stated “ Pieged..... stresses the enormous role which [a] Linguistics system plays in the development of conceptual thinking. Language is the vehicle ... of symbolization, without which thought could never become really socialized and thereby logical. But thought is nonetheless far from being a purely verbal affair ... in essence what happens is that language, first acquired through the auspices of a symbolic function which has arisen earlier, will reflexively lend tremendous assistance to the subsequent development of the latter”.

When given reading attitude surveys, readers often rank reading for pleasure at the bottom of the list. Responses such as, “ reading is for some one with no life “and “ I’d rather take out the garbage “ are not uncommon (Guth & Heaney, 1998: 34). It means that reading is always unskilled for Indonesian. Then, Abrams and Hogg, 1999) illustrated psychologists looking at the relationship between the individual and the surrounding social world have typically adopted one of two perspectives an individualistic or a societal.

In this research, the writer tries to see the individualistic performance. It means that how the readers’ motivation and teacher’s attitude upgrade the reading skills of the students. Most of the researchers carry out about the reading comprehension, without searching such the motivation factor and the attitude factor.

For example, Routman, (1988: 17) noted that, “ The agonizing truth is that most readers learn to read without ever gaining a desire to read or understanding what is read”. It means that most readers are unskilled.

In the previous discussion, it has been mentioned that the unskilled reader means that they can not read well, and subsequently views reading as a struggle. (Beers, 1998).

For these reasons may be, the students' achievements in mastering reading is low enough. The low achievements of the readers or students are caused many factors; for examples, the cognitive domain, the affective domain and psychomotor domain. Waberg (1979) explained that, “ motivation is essential for learning and achievement in all fields of human endeavor. Motivation and educational achievement as reflected in grade point average are positively at all levels of schooling, elementary through college”.

In enhancing to the above statements, it can be said that in reading skills is necessary to know how, the readers upgrade their reading skills in English as a foreign language. What does make their reading skills is high or low? It is of course interesting to search it. This is one reason this topic to be chosen in this research. Actually, there are many factors which make the students' reading skills to be low, they are; motivation, interest, attitude, knowledge background of the readers and so forth.

By doing so, this topic is never been carried out by the researchers yet. This is another reason, why the writer here wants to discuss this topic. There by, it will be

discussed or carried out all that topics, such as; the nature of motivation, the nature of reading skills, the nature of attitude, and some factors which include to them.

1.2 The Research Problem

The research problem is formulated as follows:

Is there a significant relationship of students' motivation, teacher's attitude and reading skills of English as a foreign language?

1.3 The Purposes of the Study

The purposes of the study are:

1. To identify the reading skills of the students in SMP N 7 Padangsidempuan Hutaimbaru of English as a foreign language
2. To find out the relationship of students' motivation, teacher's attitude and reading skills of English as a foreign language.

1.4 Hypothesis

The hypothesis used as a guideline of this study is:

There is a significant relationship of students' motivation, teacher's attitude and reading skills of English as a foreign language in SMP N 7 Padangsidempuan Hutaimbaru

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The significance of this study can be addressed to:

1. The English teachers, in order they are able to manage their class in teaching English as a foreign language.
2. The students who learn English as a foreign language
3. The teachers who want to be successful in their job as a professional teacher
4. The National Education Department of Indonesia for improving or progressing the learning-teaching process of reading skill in particular.
5. All researchers who want to use the result of this research to become the comparison of their research.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

The researcher here has identified the scope of this study, such as the following;

1. Knowledge included is only applied to the area of reading skills of English as a foreign language.
2. The nature of motivation and attitude and their factors are only applied to know the students' achievement in reading skills of English as a foreign language.
3. The students here are concerned with the second year's students at the junior high school of SMP Negeri 7 Padangsidempuan Hutaimbaru.

Based on the above statements so, the writer has some limitation as follows;

- a. The limitation of the writer in financial and time.
- b. The lack of literature
- c. The lack of computerization mastery