

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Language plays an important and indispensable role in our lives. We can not fully understand others without knowing their language. One can only interact with others or expresses his feelings by using language or by manipulating the words of the language other people know. There are many languages in the world, one of them is English. English is taught in schools as a school subject. As a foreign language, reading is one of the most difficult skills to read. Readers have to memorize vocabularies well in order to understand a text because reading is an interaction with a text.

Reading means constructing meaning by the reader from the symbols in text. The meaning is decoded from the language as the form of the writer's thought. (Samuels and Kamil.1988:23). Also, reading is the action of person who read (Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary of Current English:699). Collier (1989:521) states that successful reading performance is a strong predictor of students' academic performance in the second language at the secondary and post-secondary level. By giving the children reading instruction, it means that giving the children a prospective future to explore knowledge and give chances for them to gain their lives; purposes. Beside mastering vocabularies, they also have to follow all the steps of a story of the text. To be more enthusiastic, they have to know about the goals of the text that as the subject of the text/discourse. If

a student does not have well in vocabularies or well in follow the development of the information, the text will be meaningless.

Based on its difficulties, linguists consider that reading is an important part of learning. English language is included in curriculum and is taught to students from 1 grade up to university level. Its materials are arranged systematically from the simple up to the complex one. Such arrangement are hoped to be easier for the student to master it, in case of achieving the objective of the reading in English subject.

The goal of teaching reading that is stated previously cannot be attained. In general, most of the second year students of Senior High School cannot master a certain text totally. They face many problems in mastering their text. The problem might result because the unsuitable technique of the teaching learning process, in this case in teaching reading of English subject.

The Senior High School Curriculum concentrates on the use of genre. According to 2007/2008 the Competency Standard for Senior High School (Depdiknas, 2007 :2) the students should be able to comprehend short functional text, dialogue and monologue text in form of narrative, recount, news item, descriptive, report, exposition, explanation and discussion. They are not hoped to write a text in a certain genre, but they are expected to be able to comprehend some sorts of text and answer some questions related to the text.

Furthermore, the application of the strategy used during the teaching-learning process used by the teacher in conveying the materials of reading to the students might be causing problem. In order to get the optimum result of teaching

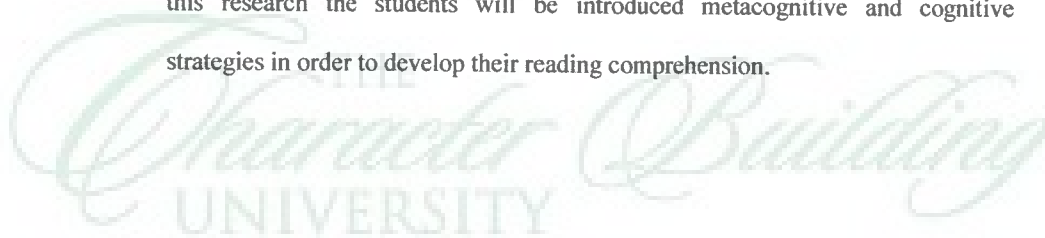
reading, the strategy used must give further chance for the student to read and re-read their text. In this result, an experimental research will be conducted by which teaching reading to the second year students of State Senior High School 4 Binjai, North Sumatera by using metacognitive and cognitive strategies.

Metacognition is one of the latest buzz words in educational psychology, but what exactly is metacognition? The length and abstract nature of the word makes it sound intimidating, yet it is not as daunting a concept as it might seem. We engage in metacognitive activities everyday. Metacognition enables us to be successful learners, and has been associated with intelligence (e.g., Borkowski, Carr, & Pressley, 1987; Sternberg, 1984, 1986a, 1986b). Metacognition refers to higher order thinking which involves active control over the cognitive processes engaged in learning. Activities such as planning how to approach a given learning task, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating progress toward the completion of a task are metacognitive in nature. Because metacognition plays a critical role in successful learning, it is important to study metacognitive activity and development to determine how students can be taught to better apply their cognitive resources through metacognitive control. Metacognition is an important concept in cognitive theory. It consists of two basic processes occurring simultaneously: *monitoring the progress* of learning, and *making changes and adapting* the strategies if students perceive they are not doing so well. "Metacognition" is often simply defined as "thinking about thinking." Flavell (1979, 1987) states that metacognition consists of both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive experiences or regulation. Metacognitive knowledge refers to

acquired knowledge about cognitive processes, knowledge that can be used to control cognitive processes. Flavell further divides metacognitive knowledge into three categories: knowledge of person variables, task variables and strategy variables. In other words, it means that if students used metacognition regulation while they are reading, they will: develop a plan of action (before), maintain and monitor the plan (during), and evaluating the plan (after).

Another strategy that will be applied in this research is cognitive strategy. Cognitive learning strategies refer to the steps or operations used in learning or problem solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Cognitive strategies involve the identification, retention, and retrieval of language element. For example, students may use memory-enhancing strategies (e.g., the keyword method) to help them remember new words. Thus, cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning materials. Repeating, resourcing, translating, grouping, note-taking, inferencing are among the most important cognitive strategies that are very important in forming a person's intelligence.

Teaching reading comprehension from the interactive prespective consists of developing learning strategies for relation previously acquired knowledge towards and concepts of a text, monitoring one's comprehension of text, and learning how to recognize old knowledge with the new knowledge in the text. In this research the students will be introduced metacognitive and cognitive strategies in order to develop their reading comprehension.



1.2 The Research Problems

The problems of this study are formulated as follows:

- (1) Do metacognitive and cognitive strategies significantly affect students' reading comprehension?
- (2) Which of these strategies is the most effective one in improving students' reading comprehension?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the above problems the objectives of this study are:

- (1) To find out the effects of metacognitive and cognitive strategies on students' reading comprehension.
- (2) To find out whether metacognitive or cognitive strategies are the most effective on students' reading comprehension.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

There are many learning strategies that can help students to handle the tasks in language skill such as; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This study deals with the learning strategies in reading comprehension. The study will be focused on the effect of metacognitive and cognitive strategies on students' reading comprehension.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The result of this research is expected to be useful for the students who have problems in reading so they can use learning strategies in developing their reading comprehension and give contributions to English teacher in teaching reading subjects because by metacognitive and cognitive strategies, they will easy to motivate the students in solving their problems in reading tasks. It is also expected that this thesis will give contribution for those who are interested in performing further study in other fields of research.



