

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Reading is the foundation of all knowledge and the foundation for a proper education. Good reading can be helpful to obtain the current information as it is necessary. However, if people can read, yet is not really able to interpret what is read into usable information, they have not gained much, until they have a good reading comprehension skill. Because comprehension is a part of the communication process of getting the thoughts that were in the author's mind into the reader's mind. Without comprehension, reading is simply following words on a page from left to right while sounding them out; the words on the page have no meaning. Thus, Reading comprehension has involved understanding what is being read, since the main objective of reading comprehension is to gain some understanding of what the writer is trying to convey and can utilize that information.

Reading comprehension is one of essential tool that guides education, it is a crucial instrument for communication and information gathering. Reading well and being able to understand what have been read is the basis ability in to the students' future academic learning, not only in reading and writing but also in math, science, social studies, and other subjects as well. It will help students to increase their vocabulary knowledge which is strongly needed in reading comprehension thus, making them more confident in speaking and writing. It will

also help them read effortlessly or more naturally. It will help them connect what they are reading to their life experiences and/or to their previous knowledge. Therefore it is necessary to possess and master a good reading comprehension for all students.

Reading comprehension plays important role to help students develop their knowledge, reading in foreign language in this case English language, is important skill that should be mastered by university students in Indonesia. California Task Force (2002) informed that the ability to read is crucial to the success of all students, and it essential succeed in society. In addition, Trelease (2001) stated that reading is a fundamental task that must be mastered by every student, in order to be able to functionally compete in society.

However reading comprehension is not yet achieved. For some readers, comprehension is always challenging. They may understand each word separately, but linking them together into meaningful ideas often doesn't happen as it should. These readers can decode the words, but have not developed sufficient skills to comprehend the underlying, deeper meaning of the sentences, the paragraphs, and the entire text. Reading can be challenging, particularly when the material is unfamiliar, technical, or complex, moreover, for them who have severe reading problems that included inability to pronounce words, limited academic vocabulary, and difficulty applying literal and critical comprehension skills when processing text.

These deficiencies are in Indonesian students that cause the lack of ability in reading comprehension. It is proved by the data that has been observed and

showed in *International Student Achievement in Reading*; the reading score of Indonesian students as reported by *PIRL* (Progress in International Reading Literacy, 2006) is low, Indonesia got the fourth lowest ranked from 45 countries, that it indirectly reveals that Indonesian students have a problem in reading.

This lack of reading comprehension ability is also found in Aceh university students, especially university students in Lhokseumawe, researcher finds that students have low score in reading comprehension achievement and they still find much difficulty in reading items that requires cognitive process; it is based on their score of reading comprehension examination for the last three semesters (STAIN Malikussaleh 2011-2012). The data is shown in the following table.

Table 1.1 Mean score of students' Reading comprehension in STAIN Malikussaleh year of 2011-2012

Unit	Semester II		Semester III		Semester IV	
	students	R.C	students	R.C	students	R.C
1	43	53.56	40	54.93	37	55.95
2	40	53.60	37	53.93	32	56.44
3	38	54.55	36	55.08	34	56.59
4	38	54.68	35	56.06	35	56.49

To overcome these problems of reading comprehension, a lot of researchers and teachers have tried hard to find out possible ways to help students read successfully, but there are many factors affect the reading proficiency, they are external and internal factors. The external factors are; text types, school and social environments, teaching methods including reading strategies. While the internal factors are; learning motivation, students' intelligence, including students'

cognitive style. One of the most important factors is learning strategy. From the previous studies, it demonstrates that reading performance relates to the use of reading strategies. A successful reader implements deliberate, conscious, effortful, time-consuming strategies to repair or circumvent a reading component that is not intact. Reading teachers and programs explicitly teach such reading strategies to handle the challenges of reading obstacles.

There are many strategies can improve reading comprehension that has been suggested by researchers, such as; peer-assisted learning strategies (PALS), which entails pairing children from preschool through the intermediate elementary grades to engage in reading activities including repeated reading, paragraph summaries, and making predictions. Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI), a broad strategy intervention for elementary school children that includes an emphasis on motivational practices for encouraging conceptual goal setting and affording student choice and collaboration. Including the strategy ASK to THINK-TEL WHY strategy describes readers learn how to ask deep level questions while reading.

Many readers have an illusion of comprehension when they read text because they settle for literal levels of analysis as a criterion for adequate comprehension (Kintsch & Rawson, 2005). Literal readers believe they have adequately comprehended text if they can recognize the content words and can understand most of the sentences. However, deep comprehension requires inferences, linking ideas coherently, investigating the validity of claims with a critical stance, and sometimes understanding the motives of authors. Acquisition

of better reading strategies is apparently needed to crack the illusion of comprehension in readers who are settling for low standards of comprehension. They need to acquire and implement strategies to facilitate deeper levels of comprehension. Therefore ASK to THINK-TEL WHY strategy appropriately to apply to the students in order to promote the deeper comprehension of text through critical reading, thoughtful analysis, and complex inference generation. Thus, this particular comprehension strategy emphasizes thinking critically about text meanings and intentionally making connections between text and relevant knowledge of the world beyond that text.

In addition, reading comprehension is the result of effective reading. Effective reading is grounded in strong cognitive skills such as attention, auditory analysis, sound blending, sound segmenting, memory, processing speed, and visualization. Students' learning to read use a cognitive style that will enable them to reason, think, and solve problems they encounter in their daily reading instruction as well as in their independent reading. Researchers have devoted considerable attention to defining and categorizing students' cognitive styles and interpreting how they relate to reading instruction.

Subsequently, cognitive styles are also related to the reading comprehension proficiency (Witkin, 1977). They are described as how the individual acquires knowledge (cognition) and processes information (conceptualization). Cognitive styles are related to mental behaviors which individuals apply habitually when they are solving problems. In general, they affect the way in which information is obtained, sorted, and utilized. It is

classified individuals according to their preferred mode of information intake (sensing or intuiting), and their preferred mode of information processing and subsequent decision-making (thinking or feeling) (Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

A review of the literature indicated that students have different processing styles—that they synthesize and express the information learned in different ways (Riding, 1997). Researchers indicated that cognitive styles exist and affect the way individuals assimilate and process information and express what they know. Furthermore, cognitive psychologists have studied the cognitive/information processing styles and divided the cognitive styles of field-dependence and field-independence. Witkin et al. (1986) described individuals who tended to rely on external cues and were less able to identify an embedded figure in an organized field as being *field dependent* and those who tended to rely on internal cues and were more able to identify an embedded figure in an organized field as being *field independent*.

A study had been conducted by King (2007), that investigate the reading strategies to promote deep understanding of the text, it is inspring researcher to conduct the same research, and in relation of some problems that students have in reading comprehension, the researcher is interested to conduct a research about findings the effect of reading strategies as possible way to overcome the reading comprehension challenging and investigates their relationship to the students' cognitive style which has found as one of internal factor that influence reading comprehension.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

In line with the background has been explained, the research problem will be formulated as following questions.

1. is students' achievement in reading comprehension that taught by using ASK to THINK-TEL WHY strategy higher than those that taught by using Guided Reciprocal Peer Questioning strategy?
2. is students' achievement in reading comprehension with field independent style higher than those with field dependent style?
3. Is there any interaction of reading strategies and students' cognitive style in reading comprehension?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are:

1. to know whether students' achievement in reading comprehension that taught by using the ASK to THINK-TEL WHY strategy is higher than those that taught by using Guided Reciprocal Peer Questioning strategy.
2. to know whether students' achievement in reading comprehensions with field independent style is higher than those with field dependent style.
3. to know whether there is interaction of reading strategies and students' cognitive style in reading comprehension.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

Reading is an extraordinary achievement when one considers the number of levels and components that must be mastered. The role of strategies in

improving reading at deeper levels is likely to receive increased attention in the future. This is particularly true in societies that demand more expertise in science, engineering, and technology—areas where world knowledge is modest and the need for comprehension strategies is enormous. Related to the cognitive style, readers are expected to pursue the deep explanations, causes, and implications underlying the knowledge presented, which would enable them to organize the knowledge and to comprehend the text's deeper meanings, its message, or point effectively.

These research findings are expected to be useful for the theoretical and practical development. Theoretically, this study is expected to provide information, which may have as well as practical values for English Language Teacher to promote deeper comprehension on reading, by using the various type of reading strategies. Practically, these research finding is expected to increase students reading comprehension proficiency, especially in the focus on improving the students' reading comprehension level on mastering reading material that requires cognitive process.