

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Background of the Problem

Reading is an essential skill for all students at all levels started from elementary school to university. It is supported by Brown (2000: 185) stating that reading is arguably the most essential skill for success in all educational contexts and remains a skill of paramount importance as one creates assessment of language ability. Reading also has one overriding purpose to get meaning from a text. By giving reading activity in the language learning, teacher actually activates students' schemata. If the students have limited knowledge, they automatically will not be able to write something or speak something even though they master the structure of English well.

In fact, the knowledge will not be reached by students if they lack of comprehending a text. It is because the reading is not only as the process of communication between the reader and the writer through written symbol in the text but also as an activity which must enable the students as the readers to grasp the information implied in the text by activating their thinking process so that the reading comprehension is earned.

The above ideas principally respond to Irwin (1986: 9) stating that comprehension is an active process to which each reader brings his or her individual attitudes, interests, expectations, skills, and prior knowledge. It is as the process of using one's own prior experiences (reader context) and the writer's

clues (text context) to infer the author's intended meaning. This process can involve micro processes, integrative processes, macro processes, and elaborative processes. These processes work together and can be controlled and adjusted by the reader as required by the reader's goals (metacognitive processes) and the total situation in which comprehension is taking place (situational context).

In addition, Light and McNaughton (2012) utter that the reading comprehension require the learner to decode or recognize by sight the words in the written text, understand the meaning of the words/ sentences, relate meaning of the sentence(s) to the rest of the text, activate prior knowledge and experience about the topic, use this prior knowledge to infer meaning and support understanding, monitor understanding of the text continually.

In Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (Educational Oriented Curriculum) 2006, reading is one of language skills that must be taught in English classes of Junior High School students. Through the teaching and learning of reading, the students are expected to be able to comprehend the reading passages they read well. The objective of reading instruction in Junior High School is to develop the students' reading skill in order they can read English texts effectively and efficiently.

In reality, reading is not as easy as people think; it is not easy to have ability of drawing a meaning from a text and interpret the information appropriately. There are so many students who are able to read out loud some texts in the class with the appropriate pronunciation but they do not know what they are reading about. They spent their time to earn the meaning word by word,

then consult the unknown vocabularies, continue with the meaning of each sentences. The students need twice, three times or even more to read a text and comprehend a text to get the meaning or information from the text.

The same problem also happened to the students of SMP Dwi Tunggal Tanjung Morawa. It is found that students' achievement in reading comprehension score of eleven grade students at SMP Dwi Tunggal Tanjung Morawa only 30% got high score in reading comprehension. This is actually the phenomenon teacher faced in the class included in SMP Dwi Tunggal Tanjung Morawa. The detailed data can be seen in the following table:

**Table1. Students' Achievement in Reading Comprehension in SMP Dwi Tunggal Tanjung Morawa 2008-2012**

Academic Year	KKM	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Average
2007/2008	65	78	40	59
2008/2009	68	80	45	62.5
2009/2010	70	85	50	67.5
2010/2011	75	90	50	70

*(Source of Daftar Kumpulan Nilai (DKN) SMP Dwi Tunggal)*

The result shown by the table indicates that the students' achievement in reading comprehension is still satisfactory. It is concluded that the students' achievement do not meet Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (The minimum Passing Grade; MPG) determined which 75 are as long as the academic year 2011-2012.

Considering the condition above, it is necessary to find factors may affect the students' reading comprehension achievement. The low level of the students' achievement in reading comprehension actually was influenced many factors.

Alexander (1988) identifies some factors that influence reading comprehension, they are: reading material, the total program of reading instruction, the children own personality, attitudes, interest, motivation, habits and their out of school environment.

As cited above, the teachers should have effective reading instruction strategies to improve students' reading comprehension, because effective reading instruction strategies beyond literal and inferential comprehension by challenging students to make inferences about text, to think critically about the material they read, and to creatively transform the text they encounter into other format and form. Moreover, effective instruction in comprehension should be designed in way that challenge students to think creatively and to display their creative thinking to work in ways that are engaging, authentic, and enjoyable. And the effective strategies are chosen by the researcher in this study that can be used by teacher to accommodate these skills and improve the students' reading comprehension are directed reading thinking activity (DRTA) and reciprocal teaching.

Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) is a strategy that is intended to develop students' ability to read critically and reflectively. The directed reading thinking activity attempts to equip readers with the ability to determine the purposes of reading, the ability to extract, comprehend, and assimilate information, the ability to make predictions to examine reading materials based on the purposes of reading, the ability to pass judgments, and finally the ability to make decisions based upon information gleaned from reading. Research findings have provided evidence of the superior effect of various types of DRTA used to

facilitate reading comprehension (Dougherty Stahl, 2004 and Riley, 2006). The findings also prove that the directed reading thinking activity yielded statistically significant effects on fluency as measured by a timed maze task and effects on reading comprehension. The value of directed reading thinking activity is to make predictions before reading each section. Requiring students to make predictions encourage use of context clues and establishes a purpose for reading. This cycle requires students to use their background knowledge to set purposes for reading and develop their questioning ability. Verifying predictions while reading extend thoughts and promotes interactive learning. The power of the directed reading thinking activity strategy increases when the teacher guides students to check their predictions after reading (Allen, 2004).

While the reciprocal involves explicit instruction by the teacher in the students' use of the strategies, such as predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarizing, to develop their reading comprehension. Reciprocal teaching is based on meta-cognitive strategy instruction (Hashey & Connors, 2003). Reciprocal teaching has been heralded as effective in helping students improve their reading ability in pre-post trials or research studies (Pearson & Doyle, 1987). As the students become more familiar with the use of the strategies, the teacher plays a less prominent role and the students develop the ability to work cooperatively with their peers (Wisaijorn, 2010). In the area of reading comprehension interventions, reciprocal teaching has been proven to increase the reading comprehension abilities of students (Lederer, 2000).

One of the internal factors which also affect reading processes is readers' prior knowledge. Prior Knowledge is a determining factor when it comes



to comprehension (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004). Good readers are active in constructing meaning through the process of interacting with what they read and connecting this knowledge with what they already know (Anderson, et al 1985). These connections, or associations, help to elucidate meaning and deepen comprehension. Successful reading comprehension depends primarily on the integration of readers' prior knowledge with the information in the text (Goldman & Bisanz in Kandeou 2003). Experts or novices Van den Broek, et al (2002) argue that readers' prior knowledge is one of many factors that affect learning from texts. The findings are first, readers with high or low knowledge, readers possessing or lacking misconceptions, all remember information from the texts they read largely as a function of the interactions between their prior knowledge and the features and ideas contained within the text. Second, a reader's prior knowledge is subject to incorrect assumptions and beliefs.

According to underlying facts, this study is intended to discover the use of the two strategies and students' prior knowledge of text in teaching reading and to find out which of the two strategies and students' prior knowledge have significantly affect on the students' reading comprehension. It means that the effect of applying the two strategies will be proven whether they are effective towards the reading comprehension of students with high prior knowledge and low prior knowledge.

## 1.2 The Research Problem

In relation with the background, therefore it is concluded that the problems of this research are formulated as the following:

1. Is the students' achievement in reading comprehension taught by using Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategies significantly higher than taught by using Reciprocal Teaching strategies?
2. Is the students' achievement in reading comprehension for those students with high prior knowledge significantly higher than those students with low prior knowledge?
3. Is there any significant effect between teaching strategies of reading and prior knowledge?

## 1.3 The Objective of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are to answer the questions that mentioned in the problem of the study, they can be listed as follows:

1. To find out whether the students' achievement in reading comprehension taught by using Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy is significantly higher than Reciprocal Teaching strategy.
2. To find out whether students' achievement in reading comprehension with high prior knowledge is significantly higher than with low prior knowledge.
3. To find out whether there is a significant interaction between teaching strategies and prior knowledge in students' achievement on reading comprehension.

#### **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

Achievement in reading comprehension is caused by many factors namely internal and external factor, including teaching strategies and prior knowledge. In this study, the researcher restricts the study to two teaching strategies, namely Directed Reading Thinking Activities (DRTA) Strategy and Reciprocal Teaching Strategy in reading comprehension. Then, the researcher will identify the level of students' prior knowledge text. By knowing the level of prior knowledge of the students whether they have high or low prior knowledge, it is expected that this research will give clear description on the effect of teaching strategies and prior knowledge on students' achievement in reading comprehension.

#### **1.5 The Significance of the study**

First of all, findings are expected to be useful for development of theory and practice. Theoretically, this study will give positive input for teaching in overcoming problem in area of reading comprehension either to the teachers, students, or researchers through value finding in the area of teaching reading.

Practically, the finding of this research will provide students to improve their reading comprehension and to be more enjoyable when reading process and also teachers with series of guides of reading strategies (DRTA and Reciprocal) related with reading comprehension. So, they can practice both strategies in their classroom when they are teaching reading. Then, it is also hoped that the finding of this study will lead the teachers, students, and other researchers to multi-dimensional perspectives and give beneficial solution to the problem faced by them so that they can follow up the strategies in other settings.