

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of The Study

Reading is one of the language ability skills. Reading skill is the capability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge by comprehending the text (Fauziati, 2010:138). In reading, the thought process is very urgent and vital because of the sentences it reads. On the contrary, at the same time their minds are working to get the message. In addition, reading is developing meaning to obtain word for word form, when students read a text, they must construct word to word and word groups to find out what the author wants to convey through written text. As an outcome, reading is the basis of further study that requires the ability to read to access textbooks and other reading materials outside of the classroom. Therefore, understanding is the ultimate goal of reading.

In this case, reading is one of the basic aspects that students in Indonesia need to learn. A good reader, at a minimum, should be able to identify main ideas and details; draw a conclusion; determine the author's intent, stance, and bias; summarize; synthesize two or more passages of reading; and extending textual information to new tasks, such as class projects, oral presentations, and written tasks (Grabe and Stoller 2013). For these reasons, teachers have some responsibility to teach English through reading and help students to capture information from the texts they read. In addition, reading is also a way for students to learn new information by capturing the author's ideas. To improve

students' reading skills, teachers must teach reading knowledge in an interesting and diverse way. In addition, a competent reader needs a repertoire of reading strategies and the capability to occur them in meaningful combinations, at the right time, to achieve their reading goals (Anderson 2009).

The objectives of reading in high school are not only to seek information, but also to understand the information provided by the author. So that students can come up with new ideas from the text to be compared with other texts that they find later.

In this study, researchers examined the ways in which English teachers at St. Thomas 2 Medan to 10th grade high school students in school in learning reading. This study focused on the analysis of teaching strategies used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension, especially in descriptive texts. The researcher also analysed whether the teaching strategy used by the teacher could make students draw information from the descriptive text well.

Reading comprehension of descriptive texts needs the development of a number of language processing skills. Students need to identify a large number of words to combine the text. Reading comprehension learning requires attention to various comprehension problems and reading comprehension systems. Therefore, teachers need to verify students' understanding of their reading goals. Thus, teachers can effectively combine explicit introductory strategies into reading materials currently used in the classroom.

Strategies in teaching reading are needed to improve students' reading comprehension. In addition, strategies in teaching reading can also be used to

improve English vocabulary. Adler C.R, (2001) states that strategy of teaching reading comprehension is a conscious plan-set of steps that a good reader uses to understand a text. Instruction of reading comprehension strategy can help students become active, purposeful readers who control their own reading comprehension. Harmer (2003:69) states that there are many reasons for teaching reading comprehension skills. First, reading is useful for other intend such as language gain process. Second, reading texts provide opportunities to learn languages such as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, sentences, paragraphs, and texts. That is, reading has many goals and benefits for students because reading is an active process.

Related to the problem of repairing students' reading comprehension, many ways have been filed to help students repair their reading capability. There are several ways filed by several experts such as mind mapping or semantic mapping. According to Kotcherlakota, Zimmerman, & Berger (2013) mind mapping can help students explain their thinking and lay the foundation for in-depth experience related to their research focus, literature review, and conceptual framework (Kotcherlakota, et al, 2013, p. 252). Farrand, Fearzana, and Hennessy (2002) states that mind mapping not only helps educational students in learning, but also encourages deeper levels of learning, especially when applied with a problem-based learning curriculum. In addition, Jones R.C, (2006) states that semantic mapping can be a useful reference for students to use in clarifying points that are confusing when they are reading. In addition, Bouchard (2005:69) states that

semantic mapping attends as a means to give students a partial and visual place to manage ideas, show relationships, and store important information.

Reading comprehension can be explained as a thought process in which readers become conscious of ideas, understand them based on their background experience, and interpret them in terms of their own needs and goals. Comprehension implicates almost all kinds of understanding and thinking. Teaching reading is teaching students how to understand what they read. Kenneth (2001:5) states that teaching reading as an act of one's essential skills or knowledge or giving instructions; teacher's job. According to Nunan (2003:68) teaching reading usually has two aspects at least. First, it can turn to teaching to learners who are just learning to read for the first time. Second, teaching reading turns to teaching learners who already have reading skills in their first language. This means that reading teaching can be done for students who are just learning to read for the first time and for students who already have the ability to read.

Reading ability is the most basics skill for academic learning and success in school. The use of reading strategies can have an effect on students to repair students' reading comprehension. Reading is a psycholinguistic process. This requires the use of a portion of the minimal available language signs selected from perceptual input based on student expectations. In addition, understanding and doing multiple reading tasks quickly and with good comprehension becomes important for students. In an academic setting, reading is considered the primary means of learning new information and gaining access to alternative explanations and interpretations. In addition, reading is the primary means of self-study

whether the goal is to do better academic tasks, learn more about the subject matter, or improve language skills (Grabe and Stoller, 2001, p.187). Therefore, in learning to read, teacher must use some of techniques that explore and maintain students' thinking processes. Teachers must be creative to solve these problems. In line with this, the author proposes a solution, namely by using semantic mapping techniques in teaching reading to improve students' reading comprehension.

It is widely depended that learners learn better if they are taught to establish relationships between terms in a text. The semantic mapping strategy is based on establishing new relationships between text components. Semantic mapping technique is used to motivate and involve students in aspects of thinking, reading, and writing. It increases vocabulary development by helping students relate new information to previous experiences. Therefore, the researcher depends that it is important to use a semantic mapping strategy to teach reading comprehension. Students need to read about what they are interested in and to assort and communicate effectively.

There are many different ways that teachers can use in teaching reading descriptive texts. In this paper, the authors limit the discussion of how to use semantic mapping in teaching reading comprehension for high school students. In Semantic Mapping learning, students study carefully to do a task or solve a problem or to achieve learning objectives. Semantic Mapping is a learning technique that can be used to improve reading comprehension, written expression, and vocabulary development. In addition, Crow and Quigley (1985:23) and Brown and Perry (1991:46) argue that Semantic Mapping is an effective method

that can be used in learning English, so as to improve their reading skills and abilities.

Harvey, et al 2000 mention that semantic mapping strategy is a valuable learning tool. Unlike many tools that have only one purpose, semantic mapping is flexible and endless in applications. One common trait found among semantic mapping strategies is that they indicate the order and completeness of students' thinking processes - the strengths and weaknesses of understanding become clear. Many semantic maps show different aspects of a problem up close as well as the big picture, because many semantic maps use short words or phrases, they are ideal for many types of learners, including intermediate-ability English readers.

In addition, the researcher hopes that this paper can be useful for increasing students' motivation in reading and helping teachers in teaching reading descriptive texts using semantic mapping techniques.

1.2 The Problems of The Study

Based on the background of the study above, the problems of the study formulated as follows:

1. What kinds of strategies are used by the English teacher at SMA St. Thomas 2 Medan in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text?
2. How does the English teacher at SMA St. Thomas 2 Medan use the strategies in teaching reading comprehension?

1.3 The Objectives of The Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze the strategies used by the English teacher at SMA St. Thomas 2 Medan in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text.
2. To analyze the English teacher at SMA St. Thomas 2 Medan use the strategies in teaching reading comprehension.

1.4 The Scope of The Study

In collecting data for this study, the author will limit this research to only focusing on the strategies of English teacher in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text to grade 10 students at SMA Santo Thomas 2 Medan. There are several types of reading comprehension teaching strategies that have been proposed by experts. Some of the strategies include: Mind Mapping, Scaffolding, Think-aloud, Reciprocal Teaching, and Question Answer Relationships (QARs). For this reason, the researcher analyzed the teaching strategies are used by the English teacher at SMA Santo Thomas 2 Medan in teaching reading comprehension.

1.5 The Significances of The Study

- Theoretically, the findings of this study provide information and theory about teacher strategies in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive texts.

- Meanwhile, practically the findings of this study will be useful for English teachers for high school (SMA), in developing their strategies in the teaching and learning process of reading skills, especially in descriptive text.

