

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Study

This world today contains a vast amount of knowledge stored up in every page of books and articles available both in conventional library buildings and in digital libraries. Throughout ages, people shared their ideas and feeling through writings which being addressed to the society where they lived. Although those authors might have passed away even centuries ago, but their minds are still living in each of their writing for generations after generations. It simply shows that “language is one of God’s greatest gifts to humans.” (Bosma & Blok, 1992), especially to that language inscribed into writings that can be read by people across nations. Through reading, one can learn things from all around the world, and even knowing thoughts and ideas from people throughout history. Words help people to tell others what they are feeling, and even how they express their gratitude for what God has given to them (Bosma & Blok, 1992).

It is a grace from God that nobody in this world has ever given zero capability in reading and understanding a text. However, to read and understand fully what one has written is difficult. Not everyone can comprehend what is read just as what is intended by the writer. Having been created as limited humans, people encounter difficulties along their way in bustling through words. People’s ability to comprehend reading is partial, “they do not exhaustively control the meanings of words and sentences that they receive; ... they do not plumb all the

implications of what they read.” (Poythress, 2009, pp. 168-169). Thus, to understand fully the meanings of any texts is indeed a problem for everyone. This condition can be seen clearly as early as in school-level. Some students having difficulties with the written texts they need to read, such as in grasping the most important elements, making connection between parts, and searching out information they are looking for (Cornoldi & Oakhill, 2013).

The same condition is also occurring in class XI MIA students at one High School in Nias in English subject. From the observation and test result, many students find it difficult to get the main idea of a text, understand what the sentences in the text meant, and search for the answer of questions relating to the text when they were presented with a text they need to read. As a source of learning, Nation (2009) states that through reading, students can learn vocabulary and grammar, as well as finding enjoyment and gaining knowledge of the world. In order to achieve that, good reading comprehension is essential for the students, though on the practical side, good ability in comprehending a text is important for them to be able to strive in their education as they would have even more reading texts for the rest of their study in school as well.

When someone does not understand what is read, he/she is very likely to get the wrong information and thus misunderstands what is really meant in the reading text. Teachers, especially in this context, need to give more attention in improving students’ reading comprehension. Since, reading comprehension is a skill and can be trained and developed, in schools, teachers have a role to help guiding the students to develop it.

Concerning this problem, the researcher suggested a solution that was applied at this school to help the class XI MIA students improve their reading comprehension. The solution offered was named Pre-reading Strategy. Madaoui (2013) suggests that building prior knowledge to reading results in better reading comprehension, and Pre-reading Strategy is intended to bring appropriate background knowledge relevant to the reading that is needed by the students, that is to activate the knowledge of students about the subject and providing any language preparation that is needed in dealing with the reading (Celce-Murcia, 1991). There are various activities that can be done in this strategy, but to make any pre-reading activity effective, the purposes of the activity must provide background knowledge and involve pre-existing knowledge (Carrell, 1984, as cited in Madaoui, 2013). Through the implementation of Pre-reading Strategy, it was hoped that students' reading comprehension in class XI MIA at this school could be improved.

## **1.2. Statement of Problem**

Based on the background of study, therefore, what this research is trying to answer are:

1. Does the implementation of Pre-reading Strategy improve students' reading comprehension in class XI MIA in English lesson?
2. How the implementation of Pre-reading Strategy affects students' reading comprehension in class XI MIA in English lesson?

### **1.3. Purposes of Study**

According to the statement of problem above, thus, the purposes of this research are to discuss the effect of implementing Pre-reading Strategy in improving students' reading comprehension and to analyze how the implementation of Pre-reading Strategy can help students in class XI MIA in this school to improve their reading comprehension.

### **1.4. Definition of Terms**

#### **1.4.1. Reading comprehension**

Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro (2015) note that reading comprehension is an important skill a person needs to have for a successful career and education. It is a complex skill which needs adequate orchestration of cognitive skills and abilities.

Reading comprehension requires skills such as decoding, knowledge in several domains, and cognitive processing capacities (August, Francis, Hsu, & Snow, 2006).

Over decades, many have thought of the skills that describe reading comprehension. However, the researcher has collected some descriptions and chose from many several skill descriptions which can appropriately represent students' reading comprehension and as well being used in the indicators of reading comprehension as following:

1. Students are able to know the meaning of words in the text through inferencing from the content.
2. Students are able to understand the meaning of words.

3. Students are able to understand the structure and organization of words and sentences.
4. Students are able to identify the topic of the text.
5. Students are able to extract main idea of a passage.
6. Students are able to make correct inference from the text.
7. Students are able to make gist representation of what the text is about.
8. Students are able to find answers that explicitly stated or paraphrased in the text.

(Davis, 1968, as cited in Leslie & Caldwell, 2009; Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2015; Clarke, Truelove, Hulme, & Snowling, 2014).

#### **1.4.2. Pre-reading Strategy**

Carrell (1983, as cited in Mihara, 2011) suggests that readers who know the background knowledge of the topic area of the text should understand the text's content. In order to activate students' background knowledge of a reading text, Pre-reading Strategy is considered helpful (Carrell 1983, as cited in Mihara, 2011) as it has been developed to bring connection of the new information to the students' prior knowledge (Aljideh, 2006). In short, Pre-reading Strategy is any activities that can provide necessary background knowledge for the readers to comprehend the material (Ringler & Weber, 1984, as cited in Aljideh, 2006).

In regard to this study, the researcher had chosen three pre-reading strategies that were applied to class XI MIA students by considering the context, students'

condition, and the curriculum expectation. Those pre-reading strategies and the steps are:

A. Word Association

1. The teacher mentions the topic of the text before reading.
2. The teacher draws a semantic map and writes the reading topic on the board.
3. The teacher asks the students to mention what things they can relate the topic with.
4. The teacher writes on the map several things that are related to the topic.

B. Pre-questioning

1. The teacher asks the students to think of what questions can emerge in relation to the topic.
2. The teacher asks the students to try answering the questions themselves first.

C. Vocabulary Pre-teaching

1. The teacher writes on the board several words that the students might encounter in the reading text.
2. The teacher gives definition of each word written on the board.

(Aljideh, 2003; Alemi & Ebadi, 2010; Zhao & Zhu, 2012; Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2015; Stahl, 2003, as cited in Ridge & Skinner, 2011).