

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

As one of the important skills in learning, reading is considered as a complex skill to be mastered. Reading is an interactive cognitive process in which readers interact with text. Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning (Nunan, 2003, p.68). It means that reading is the process of the reader's mind or process of mind activity in trying to interpret the perception of symbols that present language.

As a human being, it is really important to be able to read and comprehend the information of the text when reading. It is one of the commands of Allah. He the Almighty said in the Al-Quran Surah Al-Alaq verse 1-3, Allah SWT.

إِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾

The verse showed that reading is one of the main commands by Allah to mankind. Based on the verse, it can be inferred that reading is the bridge to all knowledge. Without reading, people will not be able to acknowledge the truth. Therefore, reading is very important to be learned by everyone especially in this case, by students.

Furthermore, reading comprehension is important skill for English language learners. Khoiriyah (2010, p.1) states that reading comprehension is

a thinking process through which readers become aware of an idea, understand it in terms of their experiential background and interpret it in relation to their own needs and purposes. Reading comprehension also means the understanding, evaluating utilizing of information and gained through the interaction between reader and author (Smith and Johnson, 1980). Students need a variety of information that is easily obtained through reading activities. By reading a lot, students will be rich in words. The more they read, the more wealth they have within they will be extraordinarily diverse (Nurhadi, 2003). Therefore, students are required to really be able to understand a reading text and always improve their ability to achieve high level of reading skill.

Having a good ability to comprehend the reading text does not come easily. Research shows that reading comprehension is a complex process and students usually have difficulties in constructing meaning from written text (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Students often face some challenges in comprehending texts in English. Many students have some problems in reading. They still have a low ability in reading, they are able to read the text but they face difficulties to recognize and understand the content of the text. This is due to the different strategies for understanding a text between students. There are students who are able to understand the entire contents of the text well and there are also students, with the same text conditions, only able to understand part of it.

Having an excellent ability to comprehend the text is a must for university students especially students of English Education Department to acquire knowledge in all courses. English Education Department of UIN Antasari Banjarmasin is one of formal education that prepares its students not only to become professional teachers but also able to comprehend their reading skills in any situations whether offline or online. Subsequently, reading puts as one of the subjects that be taught for the students. In order for students to have an excellent ability and be able to develop their ability in reading comprehension skill, students are required to take reading subject for several semesters which are Intensive Reading I, Intensive Reading II, Intensive Reading III, and Extensive Reading. In reading learning, students learn how to comprehend the text by using reading strategies. Students must also get used to reading variety of books, articles, and other english materials to form their habit in reading text. In reading activities, students of course also have to apply or use the appropriate strategies so that the reading process can run well and the reading goals can be achieved. In other words, the students trained to improve their abilities in comprehending the text

Reading strategy is an important for help student to get information and comprehend the meaning of the text. A strategy is procedures used in learning, thinking, and others that act as a way to achieve goals. Meanwhile, the purpose of using strategy is to influence motivational or effective states for students and select, acquire, organize, or integrate new knowledge. It is important to use appropriate strategies in different text materials. Therefore,

reading comprehension skill require a strategy that integrate with the material studied mentally or physically, namely metacognitive strategies related to knowledge, thinking skill, and understanding.

A metacognitive strategy is one of several language learning strategies used by students when they are learning a foreign language, especially in reading comprehension. This strategy is almost used by adult students because they have knowledge and experiences to draw on. It is also believed that metacognitive strategy plays an important role in the process of reading and affects reading outcomes.

According to Suharman (2005, p.107), metacognitive reading strategies are knowledge and awareness. With such awareness, students will be able to organize themselves to achieve the desired goals, namely being able to obtain in-depth information and be able to critically process reading material. So, in the metacognitive process, it is very important in the effort to understand the reading material and often the ability of the metacognition is not realized or known by the student. Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) state that metacognition is awareness and monitoring processes described as the knowledge of readers' cognition about reading and self-control mechanism. By developing metacognition, the students are expected to be able to control themselves to plan, monitor, and evaluate their reading activity. Metacognition helps students estimate the likelihood that they will be able to remember the learned material for later use.

Regarding metacognitive reading strategies, Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) categorized reading strategies into three groups which are Global reading strategies, Problem Solving reading strategies, and Support reading strategies. Global reading strategies are those deliberate and carefully planned techniques by the reader in order to monitoring and manage their reading. Problem Solving reading strategies are defined as tools, techniques, and procedures used by the readers while working directly on the text. Support reading strategies are using support tools to help the reader comprehend the text easily.

A student's reading ability can be predicted by the presence of metacognition ability because in reading activities through the process of metacognition ability can make it easier for students to understand a reading. Like the previous study which encourage used to investigate the reading strategies. In this research is focus on the reading strategies, especially metacognitive reading strategies because some students ignore the use of strategies in reading so that they have low ability in comprehending the text. Students should have a knowledge of the reading strategies and they can use it exactly in comprehending the text. In addition, Study on the importance of metacognitive reading strategies as one of the elements to facilitate the students reading activity should always continue to be implemented because this strategy has function to know the awareness about one's mental process in learning and management of such processes of the students in reading comprehension.

The researcher is going to share a questionnaire with the fifth semester students of English Education Department to know what is metacognitive reading strategies used in reading comprehension and what level of students' awareness in using metacognitive reading strategies.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in investigating this research which entitled Metacognitive Reading Strategies in Reading Comprehension in Islamic Higher Education.

B. Research Questions

Based on the background of study, the problems of the study are as follow:

1. What are the metacognitive reading strategies in reading comprehension used by students in Islamic Higher Education?
2. What is the level of students in using metacognitive reading strategies in reading comprehension in Islamic Higher Education?

C. Objectives of Study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To find out the metacognitive reading strategies in reading comprehension used by students of the English Education Department.
2. To find out the level of students in using metacognitive reading strategies in reading comprehension in Islamic Higher Education.

D. Significance of Study

It is expected that the result of this result will give many inputs as follow:

1. Theoretical Benefits

The result of this study hopefully could be useful input for understanding the use of metacognitive strategy, especially in reading skills.

2. Practically Benefits

The researcher hopes that this study paper will be useful for the teacher or lecturers and students, it will give information about the use of metacognitive reading strategies in Islamic Higher Education. It is hoped to extend the teachers' and lecturers' knowledge in teaching reading. For students, it would help them to understand and develop their strategies in reading comprehension and apply the appropriate strategies in reading comprehension text.

3. Other researchers

This study hopefully will be useful for the other researchers who are interested in investigating the other things which have related to this research.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding about some terms in this study, the researcher gives some definition of key terms:

1. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a series of processes carried out by readers to find information and understand the information contained in a reading text. Related to the problem, the students of the English education department should have a good ability to comprehend the reading text. It can be achieved by implementing the appropriate strategy.

2. Reading Strategy

A strategy is the knowledge or tips in utilizing all available resources to achieve the stated goals. Reading strategy is defined as the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively and make sense of what they read. In this research, the intended reading strategy is the metacognitive reading strategies used by students in reading comprehension.