

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Reading, being one of the most important language skills, has been the focus of attention for ages for the foreign language professionals, pedagogues, researchers, teachers and teacher-trainers. It plays a very crucial role in learning and mastering of foreign language like English. It is the channel through which a learner gets the exposure of the target language which is a must in foreign language teaching and learning context like Indonesia.

According to Patel and Jain (2008: 113 – 114), reading is an important activity in life with which one can update his/her knowledge. Reading skill is an important tool for academic success. Reading is the most important activity in any language class. Reading is not only a source of information and a pleasurable activity but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language. Reading is very necessary to widen the mind, again and understanding of the foreign culture. In addition, Harmer (2007: 99) states that reading is useful for language acquisition. Provided that students more or less understand what they read, the more they read, the better they get at it.

In Indonesia where English is taught as a foreign language, the learning teaching of reading is of particular importance. Learners are expected to read a lot if they are serious to master English well. This is the

cheapest, easiest, and most effective way to acquaint themselves with the language, the customs, the political adherence, the kinship system, the educational system, the beliefs, of English speaking people (Baradja, 1999). Moreover, Harmer (1998:68) states that reading is useful for other purposes too: any exposure to English provided students understand it more or less is a good thing for language students.

According to Khatib (2012) said that reading is the most important instrument for academic settings. Hence, the ability to read well is a crucial asset for students, as they have to manage a certain academic achievement level (Alfassi, 2004; Brown. 2007; Nordin, Rashid, Zubir, & Sadjirin, 2012). Therefore, researcher can conclude that the reading learning is one of the aspect that must be achieved by students to learn other skills. In that, the students need to learn in reading comprehension to increase their insight, as well as to broaden their knowledge, and effective readings to stimulate learners in learning a second language.

Hammer (2009) states that reading is useful for language acquisition since it provides students with reading materials higher or lower than the students' ability. It affects on the students' vocabulary knowledge, grammar, writing, speaking in terms of talking about the idea gained from texts read.

It supported by Anderson (1994 as cited in Khatib, 2012) argues that the effective reading is essential factor of success in learning another language. The learning of reading, in fact, has become a big problem for

most Indonesian students. If one does not have sufficient number in their reading comprehension, then there will not be able to communicate with his surroundings, foreigners or to face global competition. Furthermore, Taylor (1995:251) stresses that a reader's background knowledge plays a crucial part in the reading comprehension process. People comprehend reading material by relating the new information in the text to their background knowledge. Readers use their background knowledge as they read in order to make inference regarding unstated information and also to make elaborations that enhance their comprehension. Therefore, reading comprehension is one of the primary elements of language proficiency that becomes the basis of how well learners can focused on input reading and listening, and then the meaningfocused output to speaking and writing.

Reading comprehension is “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (Snow, 2002: 11). In the development of students' reading skills, many factors are involved (Bellibaş, 2016; Cheung et al., 2017; OECD, 2016a; Snow, 2002).

Harmer (2007:99) asserts “through reading students get more. Reading can improve students' vocabulary knowledge, on spelling and writing”. Academically, reading is prominent to develop academic skills, critical thinking and academic purposes (Solikhah, 2015). “Reading is not just picking up words, phrases, and sentences written in the text; it is an activation of the prior knowledge students already have in mind.

The main purpose of reading, based on the review of literatures, for instance Nuttall (1985), Baradja (1984), Sadtono (1997), and Hedge (2010) are but a few examples, is to achieve comprehension. Without comprehension, reading is just an activity to decode printed materials with no understanding. With this view in mind, reading should provide readers with meaningful messages that come from the texts. The results of reading can affect the attitude of perception of the readers.

However, the implementation of the teaching does not change substantially, though the demand of teaching reading in secondary school levels receives more priority. This means that reading ability is important and teaching reading allocates much time in the school context. In spite of the attempt, reading ability of secondary school students is still poor (Sadtono, 1988; Huda, 1994). This is evidence that the teaching of reading comprehension is not successful yet, although new teaching methodologies are offered from time to time. Moreover, successful readers use different type of strategies for successful comprehension (Pressley, 2006). The readers who use more strategies score high in reading comprehension tasks (Anderson, 1991). For better performance, knowing of different strategies does not mean performing well; a reader who knows how to use different strategies can perform better.

In the context of the reading substance, in other side, the problems arise from textual and reader's knowledge (Nuttall, 1985). The textual factors include vocabulary, sentence structure, cohesive devices, discourse

markers, and meaning beyond the plain sense, such as contextual and pragmatic meanings. In addition, the reader's knowledge involve the amount of previous knowledge a reader brings to a text, and the amount of shared assumptions between the writer and the reader that support the understanding of the texts. Meanwhile, Ellis and Hedge (1993: 14) states, "the students know different words and have different prior knowledge in the topic, which means that some words are unknown for some of students, but familiar for others." As result, this activity continues for a long time. Sometimes there are vocabulary exercises in the pre-reading but they include only if the text contains some specific or specialized vocabulary, terminology, proper nouns, which they helped the students to understand the idea of the text better.

Thus, it implies that English teachers of secondary schools would perform in a limited range of ability in teaching reading because of the appearance of their individual barriers and practical skills that they have to perform in front of the class. Researchers emphasize the important role of teacher's qualification and experience in reading instruction. Carlisle, Correnti, Phelps, and Zeng (2009), for instance, argue that teacher's knowledge and experience can positively or negatively influence students' reading performance and achievement in regular classroom situations.

The limitation of knowledge in reading English texts due to textual problems promotes significant impact for the teachers. Neither the teachers are self-confidence to understand the English texts nor they can easily

quote the messages that can be adopted in the teaching. Consequently, the teaching methods the teachers bring to the class are patterned with the methods they received previously. Modifications or creative changes that are different from the patterns are hard to adapt. Carnine, Silbert, and Kameenui (1990) suggest that much of the failure in schools can be attributed to deficits in the instructional system. First, many of the English reading programs do not carefully control the introduction of vocabulary, either in decoding and comprehension exercises. Second, pre-skills of complex strategies review and practice are minimal and are usually insufficient for many students to master new information and skills at a time. Third, teachers are required to cover too many topics every day. Consequently, finding the time to provide adequate reading practice time is difficult. Fourth, teachers are often not trained to place students carefully in students should be intrinsically motivated to learn to read. In other words, the failure in English reading class is because of the deficiency of the instructional system.

The facts of teaching reading in secondary schools have brought problems to the English teachers is because of some existence conditions. Traditionally, the problems arise from the condition of ineffective classroom. Scholars of Indonesian teaching, such as Sadtono (1997) and Baradja (1984) have put several problems that are responsible on this matter. The problems include: big class size, limited frequency of

teaching, low motivated students, unprofessional teachers, and limited teaching facilities.

Thus, the problems also experienced by the English teacher at SMK N 5 Surakarta. Based on the preliminary interview conducted by the researcher with the English teacher of the tenth grade at SMK N 5 Surakarta, the teacher stated that the students have difficulties to achieve all the competence in the English subject. The first is students are not familiar with English reading. The second is that they do not have the self-confidence to speak English. The third is students more likely to use their mother tongue. The fourth is students do not know the meaning of the word. The fifth is the students are not able to speak English correctly and also fluently.

Then, the teacher tried to use interesting teaching media such as short story, video, picture, and games or online games to help students in English learning process, and also can develop the students' reading comprehension. Based on interview, short story becomes one of the effective way for the English teacher to attract students on reading section.

Short stories are the most suitable literary genre to use in English teaching due to its shortness, is supported by Collie and Slater (1991: 196) when they list four advantages of using short stories for language teachers. First, short stories are practical as their length is long enough to cover entirely in one or two class sessions. Second, short stories are not complicated for students to work with on their own. Third, short stories

have a variety of choice for different interests and tastes. Finally, short stories can be used with all levels (beginner to advance), all ages (young learners to adults) and all classes.

Some scholars believe that ability to read is the prerequisite for autonomous learning Khatib, (2012). Most learners in EFL contexts have little or no opportunity to contact with native speakers, so reading literary text will give them the opportunity to have a better interaction with foreign culture and people. Besides literary texts are too amusing that keeps learners to continue reading and the more learners read the more input they receive. In fact literary texts can be used as a valid and authentic source for increasing the amount of comprehensible input students receive.

Integrating literature in EFL classes provides an authentic model of language use with its rich potential; by reading literary texts students face language written for native speakers and try to understand the texts. They also have to learn literary features such irony, exposition, climax, narration and so on (Collie & Slater, 1987). In this way, literature develops readers' language and literary awareness. It is very motivating and it provides them with an understanding of another culture (Lazar, 1993).

According to Krashen (1982) students should be provided with enough comprehensible input which is also interesting so that reduces students' anxiety. And since literature is rarely used for pedagogical purposes it can be a good authentic source for language learners. Sage, (2005) called the use of short stories as a useful technique in language

classes. He pointed out that since short stories are short; it helps both teachers and students to easily cover it. Besides, since stories are about universal problem, it may relate to students' own situation, in this case students would definitely get more involved in the story and try to put more time and effort to comprehend it. In addition, as mentioned by Hismanoglu (2005) class discussions about the story will help students to think critically.

Moreover, in teaching reading, to make the students more active and classroom condition run effectively, the English teacher of the tenth grade at SMK N 5 Surakarta also apply technique in teaching reading, such as discussion. This technique can make students become more active and make classroom ambience controlled as appropriate with the purpose of learning. Discussion technique is collaborated with small group method to support students as readers and thinkers.

Nunan, (1989: 91) states that the classroom organization does not deal directly with the reading process, or with materials, methods, or approaches to teaching reading comprehension. Yet without good classroom organization and classroom management, reading instruction may be totally ineffective. It is enough for teachers to know what organizational patterns and management techniques are conducive in learning. According to Barker, Small Group Discussion (1987: 159) there are three or more people interacting face to face, with or without an

assigned leader in such a way that each person influences, and is influenced by another person in the group.

According to Kenz and Greg (2000:4) Small group is a small member of human, work together through interaction whose interdependent relationship allows them to achieve a mutual goal. The students can work together in solving their problems or they can answer the question from the teacher". Sagala (2008: 20) says that group discussion is more effective if the group consisted of 3-4 students; enable students to give their opinions or ideas to other students easily. In a group, the students are free to talk and to discuss the solution to answer the questions because they do not accomplish their tasks individually.

Small groups that will help children to: a) read with engagement and enthusiasm, b) read strategically, c) engage in meaningful, invigorating conversations about books, d) read fluently and with expression, e) read increasingly more challenging text. Serravallo (2010: 3)

According to Brown, (2011: 177) Small group discussion method is a group which consists of six or fewer students who are assigned a task that involves collaboration. Meanwhile, McCrorie (2006). Stated that small group discussion method is a group consist of three to six learners facilitated by a teacher.

Based on the above explanation and interview with the English teacher of the tenth grade at SMK N 5 Surakarta, the researcher is

interested to carry out research on the process of teaching reading using small group discussion with short story by the English teacher at SMK N 5 Surakarta Therefore, this research entitled “*Teaching Reading Using Small Group Discussion With Short Stories At SMK N 5 Surakarta*”.

B. Limitation of the Research

The researcher focus on the analysis on the process of teaching reading using small group discussion with short story by the English teacher at SMK N 5 Surakarta. The subjects or informants chosen for this research are the tenth grade English teacher and students. Instead of analyzing the process of teaching reading using small group discussion with short story, the researcher also identify the responses of students on the use of small group discussion with short story in teaching reading by the English teacher at SMK N 5 Surakarta.

C. Problem Statement of the Research

Based on the background of the research stated previously, there are some research problems proposed by the researcher, as follow:

1. How do the teachers use small group discussion with short stories in teaching reading at SMK N 5 Surakarta?
2. How do the students respond to the small group discussion technique with short stories used by the teacher in teaching reading at SMK N 5 Surakarta?

D. Objectives of the Research

Based on the research problems proposed by the researcher, the research objectives can be formulated as follow:

1. To describe the use of small group discussion with short stories by the teacher in teaching reading at SMK N 5 Surakarta.
2. To identify respond of students to the use of small group discussion technique with short stories used by the teacher in teaching reading at SMK N 5 Surakarta.

E. Benefits of the Research

By this research, the researcher hopes that it can give some significances to all parties, both theoretical and practical significances.

They are as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

It is expected that the results of this research can give some additional information and knowledge related to the use of small group discussion and short story in teaching reading at secondary school.

2. Pratical Significance

a. For the English Teacher

It is expected that this research can give input for the English teacher on the use of small group discussion and short story in teaching reading.

b. For the English Department Students

It is expected that this research can be a source of information and additional references for the English Department students who carry out similar study.

c. For the Next Researcher

It is expected that the results of this research can be used as an additional references for the future researchers who intends to conduct the similar research on teaching reading.