

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter elaborates the theories from several experts to cover the definition of reading, the reading comprehension, principle of teaching reading, RAP paraphrasing strategy, and relevant study.

A. Theoretical Studies

1. Definitions of Reading

There are four skills in the English language known by common people such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. All of those skills exactly have tight relation and important to be mastered. Each skill has a purpose and function in English.

The term of reading may not strange in our life. It surrounds us daily. This activity is the way how the writer and the reader communicate. The reader tries to understand the information or ideas that the writer has put in printed material. As stated by Djoni (2015) states “It is used as a means of communication, sharing information and ideas”. (p. 1).

Additionally, Nunan (2003) defines that reading as a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning (p.68). It means, when the readers had got the information or ideas from a reading text, they must activate their prior knowledge and then connecting it to the

information involved in that text. Thus, they can understand the text and get the meaning as well.

Reading is one of the most important language skills in the academic field. It is stated by Hagaman, Casey, and Reid (2010) assume that reading is an important skill required for many activities in school. (p. 1). By reading, students can get a lot of information. Thus, reading can bring students to be successful in language learning. Harmer (1998) claims that reading text also provides opportunities to study language: vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way we construct sentences, paragraphs, and text (p. 68). Therefore, reading is viewed as an essential aspect at school because this is one skill which has many contributions in enhancing and enriching students' knowledge especially for English subjects.

On the other hand, Marashi & Bagheri, (2015) clarify that reading is of course a major concern to many EFL learners as it is one of the four skills that they need to acquire in their language learning process if they wish to be fluent user of English. (p. 1).

In conclusion, based on the explanation above, reading is regarded as an important communicative skill in the learning process. Especially for EFL learners that want to be fluent in English, this skill is sorely needed as a basic skill in mastering English. It because, when doing a reading activity, the reader will get many advantages like gain broader knowledge, enrich the vocabulary, also learn grammar and

punctuation use in a text. It is of course will facilitate learners in language learning.

2. Reading Comprehension

The topic of reading comprehension is of great importance due to the fact that comprehension is a crucial thing needed to learn. Comprehension is the heart of reading. It is a process of deriving meaning from connected text. Therefore, reading comprehension does not happen just because the reader's eyes moving toward the written text. It must be a getting meaning process.

Mikulecky & Jeffries (2007) stated "Comprehension means making sense of what you read and connecting the ideas in the text to what you already know". (p.74). It means, when the readers do the comprehension, the readers try to gather the new information in the text then integrate those ideas with the readers' background knowledge.

Moreover, Oakhill, Cain, Elbro (2015) clarify that Reading comprehension is a complex task, which requires the orchestration of many different cognitive skills and ability (p.1). In line with the statement above, Klingner, Vaugh, and Broadman (2007) add "Reading comprehension is a multi-component, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in the text, understanding of

text types)” (p.8). From the statement above it can be said that it is a long process where the readers have to entail many components. Those components interact with one another in comprehending a printed text. When interference appears in those interactions, the readers gain their comprehension.

To comprehend a text well, the students should know the indicators of reading comprehension. Some of them are understanding vocabulary, identifying main ideas, identifying supporting details, and making inferences. Brown (2004) says that the indicators of reading comprehension cover “main idea (topic), expressions/idioms/phrases in context, inference (implied detail), grammatical features, detail (scanning for specifically stated detail), excluding facts not written (unstated detail), supporting idea(s), and vocabulary in context”. (p.206).

3. Principles of Teaching Reading

Understanding the principles of teaching reading can help a teacher to teach well so that the students can achieve the learning objectives as well. According to Harmer (1998: 70), there are several principles within the process of learning and teaching reading. They are:

- 1) Reading is not a passive skill.

Reading is an active activity. Readers need to decode the words first, to relate to the context (e.g. see the pictures), and to create meaning of the text. Moreover, to get the meaning of a text, readers

need to relate the context of the text with their background knowledge. If they just translate the passages into their first language with a dictionary without relating their existing background knowledge about the text, then the meaning does not make any sense.

2) Students need to be engaged with what they are reading.

Before a teacher asks students to read an English text, she/he should consider the topic of the text. The teacher should choose the topic of the text based on their interests and their proficiency level. An interesting topic of a text will motivate them to read and will engage them in the reading activity and the learning process.

3) Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language.

The main purpose of reading is to get information or a message of the text itself. Translating the meaning of the text into the readers' first language is an effort to understand the meaning of the text. Therefore, after getting the meaning, teachers must give opportunities to the students to express their feeling and to respond to the information of the text.

4) Prediction is a major factor in reading.

Prediction is important in reading a text. The meaning of a word in a text sometimes depends on the context of the text rather than the meaning that is written in a dictionary. To get the meaning, readers

need to predict the meaning by looking at the previous sentences or relating it to their knowledge about the text. For example, a big school and a school of fish, the meaning of *school* in these phrases are different. A big school is a big place where children go to be educated. Meanwhile, a school of fish is a large number of fish. Therefore, a prediction is needed in reading.

- 5) The task must be matched to the topic.

In the teaching and learning process, a teacher should match their task with the topic. The teacher also can set an interesting activity in reading lessons such as games, puzzles, and songs. It will help the students engage and understand the reading material well.

- 6) Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full.

Good teachers integrate the reading text into interesting class sequences, using the topic for discussion and further like teacher command the students to find out the synonym of the vocabulary in the text as much as they can. Using that activity can help them to improve their vocabulary.

4. RAP Paraphrasing Strategy

- a. The definitions of RAP strategy

RAP strategy is also called a paraphrasing strategy. It is a strategy to teach students in paraphrasing information. This strategy asks students to find critical information like the main idea and details from each paragraph and then they have to paraphrase

that information. As stated by Schumaker et al (2006) “With the Paraphrasing Strategy, the students pick out the main ideas and details within each paragraph that they read, and then they translate the main idea and details into their own words”. RAP is the abbreviation of the three acts, which are read, ask, and put. Schumaker et al (1984) state that RAP strategy consists of the three steps: first, read a paragraph; second, ask myself “what was the main idea and two details?”; and the last, put it into my own words or paraphrase.

RAP strategy can be used for elementary, middle, and high school students across many different content areas. The studies from Hagaman, Casey, and Reid (2010); Hagaman and Reid (2008); Katims and Harris (1997) have shown that the use of RAP strategy was effective in improving students’ reading comprehension of text across multiple age groups and for students with and without disabilities. The RAP strategy can easily be incorporated into the existing curriculum as a support for a variety of readers who struggle with comprehension.

b. The benefits of RAP strategy

Courtney Blume (2010) states the purpose of RAP strategy is to aid reading comprehension by helping students find the most important information in a given reading selection” (p.5). Moreover, Fisk and Hurst (2003) clarify that in their efforts to help

students better comprehend text, they have found paraphrasing for comprehension to be an excellent tool for reinforcing reading skills (p.182). In line with the statements above, Hagaman, Luschen, and Reid (2010) also state that this strategy can improve the reading comprehension of students. Through questioning and paraphrasing, students are expected to have a better understanding of the material that they have read. In addition, Schumaker et al (1984) in Hagaman, Casey, and Reid (2010) state that students are actively involved in reading rather than passively approaching text because the strategy requires students to paraphrase material they read in their own words. Then, students remember detailed information of the text because this strategy requires students to break a long passage into smaller units or “chunks”.

c. The steps of RAP strategy

In the implementation of the RAP strategy in reading class, the researcher taught the RAP strategy with the following steps:

1. The researcher described what RAP strategy is used for, where it can be used when it can be used, and why it should be used.
2. The researcher explained and modeled the strategy to the students on how to identify the main idea and its supporting details.

3. Then modeled how to paraphrase information (main idea and supporting details).
4. The researcher gave students a short text to read.
5. Then asked them to identify the main idea and supporting details in each paragraph.
6. The students were given a graphic organizer with the steps of the RAP strategy as a worksheet.
7. The students were asked to write the main idea and supporting details in their own words in the worksheet.
8. Then the researcher checked the result of their work.
9. The researcher tested the students' comprehension again about the content of the text with open-ended questions orally.

B. The Relevant Study

This research is relevant to the research conducted by Yunitasari (2015) entitled "Improving Reading Comprehension of the Eighth Grade Students at *SMPN 15* Yogyakarta through RAP Strategy in the Academic Year of 2014/2015." This research was done using the action research method. The researcher was helped by the English teacher as a collaborator. The result of her research showed that the use of the RAP strategy successfully improves the students' reading comprehension skills in the narrative texts. Their post-test scores were higher than their pre-test scores. The mean of pre-test scores was 61.11, while the mean of post-test scores was 85.57.

Even though the previous research and the present research are about RAP strategy. There are differences between these two studies. The research of Yunitasari attempt to improving the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students through the RAP strategy. Meanwhile, this study focused on the students' perception about the implementation of RAP strategy on the teaching reading comprehension.