

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **II.1 The Definition of Reading**

Reading is a process which is dominated by the eye and the brain. The information from the text is caught by the eye, then it is proceeded by the brain. The domination of the eye and the brain in reading process is in line with Goodman's opinion (cited in Carrell, Devine, and Eskey). He said that reading employs visual input. The eye is the input organ. It has certain characteristics and limitations as an optical instrument. He added that the brain is the organ of information processing. It decides what tasks it must handle, what information is available, what strategies it must employ, which input channels to use where to seek information (15-16).

Before talking about reading English and the performance in reading, the writer will show several definitions of reading given by linguists.

The first definition is offered by Mitchell Waldrop (cited in Dubin, Eskey, and Grabe 27). He defines reading as the ability to make sense of written or printed symbols to guide the recovery of information from his or her memory and subsequently use the information to construct a plausible interpretation of the written message.

The second definition is stated by Frank Smith (cited in Dubin, Eskey, and Grabe 28). He said that reading is a process of interpreting/understanding the

text in terms of the questions that the reader formulates about the text. That is, readers find answers to the questions they pose.

From the two definitions of reading described above, it can be concluded that reading is the process of interpreting the written or printed symbols. At the end of reading process, the students will pose some questions and then they will try to find the answers based on the text. So, in reading, two elements are needed: the reader and the text. Without the reader - or the student who reads - the text will never have a meaning. On the other hand, without a text, a student or any person will not be called a reader.

It is strengthened by Alderson and Urquhart in the introduction of their book *Reading in a Foreign Language*. They state that reading undeniably and incontrovertibly involves two necessary elements: a reader and a text (1). So, in reading in English, students of elementary school as readers and the texts or the passages become the important elements.

## **II.2 Learning to Read in English**

After describing some definitions of reading, the writer will describe the learning to read in English with its importance and problems faced by students, especially the sixth year ones in learning to read English.

Nowadays, children entering the first year of elementary school have known how to read in the native language - that is Indonesian. Most elementary schools, especially those located in big cities, have used the capability in reading in the native language as the first requirement for entering the elementary school.

It becomes a must because as new students of elementary school, they will get more materials and every material has its own books. One way to learn all materials is by reading.

English is one of materials learned by the students in elementary school. According to *Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* (Department of Education and Culture) of Indonesia, the English lesson as a local content in elementary school includes the skills of reading, listening, speaking, and writing in English in simple pattern (2). So, it can be seen that reading English has to be learned first by the students in elementary school.

It has been explained above that students have learned how to read in their native language before learning any new materials. English is the first foreign language learned by the students in elementary school. Consequently, the students of elementary school involve their knowledge in their native language when they learn to read in English. As Thonis said that the speaker of another language who is about to learn to read English is an individual and brings to the learning task his unique background of abilities (104). She explained further that when a pupil who speaks another language is learning to read English, he brings to the learning task his prior language experiences (117).

Two statements above which are offered by Thonis mean that when the students of elementary school learn to read in English for the first time, they read it the same way as they read in their native language. This happens because English is a new foreign language to them. They have to transfer their knowledge in their previous language to the new one - that is English. Therefore, it will be

easier to students for learning to read English if their previous or native language has the same pattern with English. It is strengthened by Thonis' next statement which said that transfer of prior language learnings to the task of learning to read in English will depend upon the learner's native language competence, the characteristics of the native language, the success of previous experiences with written language, and many other aspects of the learning situation (133).

### **II.2.1 The Importance of Learning to Read in English**

Learning English is very important for students in elementary school. This is reinforced by the statement of *Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* (Department of Education and Culture) of Indonesia about the function of teaching and learning English in elementary school which stated that the functions of English lesson as a local content are giving a chance to the students of elementary school to get knowledge and developing English knowledge to anticipate the environmental condition affected by the developments of science, technology, and culture, so that the knowledge of English becomes a need (1).

Most books from any disciplines of knowledge are written in English. Consequently, if the students of elementary school want to get knowledge from books, they must have the skill of reading English. They must learn how to read in English well.

So, by learning to read in English, the students of elementary school can get knowledge from books or written and printed materials which are written in English.

## **II.2.2 The Problems of Learning to Read in English**

Previously, it has been explained why learning to read in English is very important. Though it is important to be learned, most students still face some problems in learning to read this foreign language, that is English. Most students, according to Alderson, fail to learn to read adequately in the foreign language. Very frequently, students reading in a foreign language seem to read with less understanding than one might expect them to have, and to read considerably slower than they reportedly read in their first language (1). From Alderson's statement, the writer assumes that most students from any part of the world seem to face the same problems in learning to read in English as a foreign language.

One of the problems – and it is the main one – is because the students cannot transfer their native language to the foreign language. As Jolly (Cited in Alderson and Urquhart) asserts that students who fail to read adequately in the foreign language fail because they either do not possess the 'old skills', or because they have failed to transfer them (2). So, it can be concluded that a student who is a poor reader in the native language will also be a poor reader in the foreign language.

According to the writer's opinion, reading failure in English as a foreign language of elementary school students in Indonesia is not only because the failure in transferring or possessing the native language. 'Transferring' here means the ability of elementary school students to transfer their native language (Bahasa Indonesia) to the foreign language (English), while 'possessing' here means to possess the foreign language as well as the native language. The students of

elementary school – of course – can read in Indonesian well but still cannot read and do the reading tasks well. There are some problems faced by the students, such as: limited class hours, unqualified English teachers, unmotivated students in learning to read in English, and uninteresting materials and tasks. Those problems have become obstacles for students – not only the elementary school students – for learning English, especially learning to read in English.

### **II.3 The Competence in Doing English Reading Tasks at School**

It has been described in the previous subchapter that reading in English is a difficult skill for students of elementary school. The main reason is English is a foreign language for them. That is why the reading tasks should be given as many as possible. The results in doing reading tasks will be regarded as the students' competence in reading in English at school. As Goodman states (quoted in Carrell, Devine, & Eskey) in his research about reading process that competence, what readers are capable of doing, must be separated from performance, what we observe them to do. It is competence that results in the readers' control of and flexibility in using the reading process (13-14).

From Goodman's statement above, the writer can underline that competence in reading in English is important to be measured in order to find out how the students as readers can control their flexibility in using reading process.

Furthermore, the writer assumes that the results of students' English final test at school can be used to find out their competence in reading in English. The

English Final Test was administered at the Second Trimester of School Year 2001-2002.

### **II.3.1 The Measurement of Competence in Doing Reading Tasks**

In order to know the competence in doing reading tasks of elementary school students, the writer takes the result of the students' English Final Test which is conducted at the Second Trimester of School Year 2001-2002 at school. The writer takes it as the measurement of students' competence in doing reading tasks because of some reasons. The first reason is, when the writer is about to give the reading performance tests, the students have just done The Final Test and they have just received the results. The second is, the result of their Final Test in English is the result of what they have already learned at the Second Trimester. The last reason is, the Final Test in English mainly consists of reading passages and lists of vocabulary. Therefore, based on the reasons mentioned, the writer assumes that the result in scores of the Final Test in English can be used as the measurement of competence in doing reading tasks.

## **II.4 The Performance in Reading English**

Reading is one of the four skills in English that should be learned by the students of elementary school. So, it will be important to observe their performance in reading in English. Performance, according to Goodman (quoted in Carrel, Devine, & Eskey), is what we observe them to do (13). Here, 'we' refers to the researchers or the teachers, while 'them' refers to the readers or the students.

Goodman means that performance is what the researchers or the teachers observe the readers or the students to do - in this case, to read passages and do the tasks.

The reading performance in English of elementary school students is assessed by three tests - comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, and rate of reading. As Clarke said that in low level ESL classes, students are presented with reading tasks only after they have oral/aural familiarity with the structures and vocabulary contained in the passages (114). Grabe (quoted in Dubin, Eskey, & Grabe) also asserts that reading for instructional purpose, is the ability to recognize vocabulary and syntax automatically, the ability to read at a reasonably rapid rate, depending on the context, the ability to grasp the main idea and scan for a piece of information, and the ability to adjust rate and adapt strategies for careful analytic reading and critical evaluation (45). The two theories proposed by Thonis and Grabe have made it clear that in English reading performance, the writer should assess comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, and rate of reading tests.

Comprehension comes first because the writer assumes that in reading performance, the students should learn to comprehend the passages based on the cultural background so that it can help them comprehend because they have been familiar with the passages.

Vocabulary knowledge comes after comprehension of passages. It is because the teacher usually presents the meaning of difficult words before giving the reading passages. So, the writer assumes that their knowledge on vocabulary is mostly affected by the reading comprehension. The other reason is the observed



students here are the sixth year ones. They have been given many reading passages. Therefore, the vocabulary knowledge has been enriched.

According to Thonis, rate of reading is more accurately called rate of comprehension (83). That is why the writer takes the rate of reading as the last test, after comprehension test and vocabulary test. So, after comprehending some passages and developing their vocabulary knowledge, the students are assessing their speed of reading comprehension through the rate of reading test.

Williams, in the results of his paper about a study of reading performance of primary-five pupils, reports that some factors relate to performance in reading English as a second language. The related factors are language environment, reading resources, attitude towards reading English, exposure to the mass media (English), type of school, sex differences, and age. The results of multiple regression analysis indicate that type of school and reading resources were the best predictors of scores on reading tests (31). It means that those two variables affect the reading performance in English very much, while the other variables mentioned previously do not affect it as much as type of school and reading resources.

#### **II.4.1 Comprehension**

Comprehension is often related to a reading passage. In order to be able to know the meaning of a passage, a reader or a student should comprehend the passage. Smith (quoted in Dubin, Eskey, & Grabe 6) has made a simple definition

of comprehension. He said that comprehension means relating what we don't know, or new information, to what we already know.

From Smith's basic definition of comprehension, it can be seen that students' or readers' comprehension of a passage surely depends on what they already know about the passage or background knowledge of the passage. Furthermore, Smith adds that how well a student may know a language, he cannot read in that language with good comprehension if the subject of the text is one he knows absolutely nothing about and therefore can have no real interest in (6).

Eskey seems to have the same opinion about reading comprehension as Smith. He suggests that reading comprehension is most likely to occur when students are reading what they want to read, or at least what they see some good reason to read (6).

From the two opinions proposed by Smith and Eskey above, the writer concludes that in reading an English passage, the students of elementary school should be given easy-to-read and familiar passages. Also, it is better if the passages are already been familiar with them in their native language.

After reading easy-to-read and familiar passages, the students will have good comprehension of passages. As Thonis said, comprehension in English depends upon a knowledge of words, of groups of words, and of arrangement of words to the conventions of written English (164). Without those factors, Thonis assumes that the students cannot comprehend reading passages in English. This opinion is also strengthened by Hosenfeld (quoted in Barnett). She observed that the level of reader's comprehension of the text is determined by how well the

reader variables (interest level in the text, purpose for reading the text, knowledge of the topic, foreign language abilities, awareness of the reading process, and the level of willingness to take risks) interact with the text variables (text type, structure, syntax, and vocabulary (n. pag).

Above all, the writer concludes that success in comprehending English passage depends on the students as readers and the passages.

## II.4.2 Vocabulary

The development of students' vocabulary knowledge in English can be observed after they can comprehend English passages well. As Thonis said that the speaker of another language begins to develop his reading vocabulary in English when he is able to recognize and to associate written forms of words with oral language which he possesses (160). Thonis means here that as the speaker of another language, the students of elementary school can begin to develop their vocabulary knowledge in English when they have already had the ability to comprehend the written forms of words or passages in their native language.

Meanwhile, Carl B. Smith in his paper which is stated in *ERIC Digest*, suggests that students learn vocabulary more effectively when they are directly involved in constructing meaning rather in memorizing definitions or synonyms (n. pag). So, it can be said that memorizing definitions or synonyms of words in learning vocabulary in English cannot be effective for students in elementary school. They should learn how to construct the meaning of words by applying those words in sentences. When they face a new word they do not recognize, they

can guess the meaning from the context without looking up in the dictionary. That is why in the test of reading performance on vocabulary knowledge in English, the writer takes some words that they have been familiar with and some difficult words. It is hoped that the students can guess the meaning of difficult words without looking up in the dictionary.

### **II.4.3 Rate of Reading**

Rate of reading is the last instrument used by the writer to measure the students' performance in reading in English.

Rate of reading is also called rate of comprehension. In rate of reading, students are asked to grasp the whole materials in a limited time. Therefore, they do not have much time to translate and memorize each word. For this reason, students who read faster seem to be better readers than those whose rate of reading is slow.

Rate of reading is very essential to be used in measuring the performance of students in reading English. According to Smith (Cited in Dubin, Eskey, and Grabe 78), rate of reading is essential for the following reasons:

1. For good comprehension
2. For concentration
3. To affect strategy change

The main purpose of involving the rate of reading in the performance of reading in English is to assess the speed of comprehension. Due to the shortness of periods of time, students must have full concentration in reading the material.

They do not have any reasons to be sleepy or bored of the material. Students usually do the task of material carefully because they do not want to get any mistakes. Consequently, they will take long periods of time to do it. In rate of reading with short periods of time, students must become risk takers. They have to make quick decisions without getting the fullest meaning of the material.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that rate of reading depends on the student, the material, and the purpose for reading. It is in line with Thonis' opinion. She said that there should be more speeds of reading which depend upon the pupil, the material, and the purpose for reading (83).

#### **II.4.4 Reading Performance Tests**

The reading performance in English will be tested in three ways. They are comprehension test, vocabulary test, and rate of reading test. The writer uses the cloze procedure in the comprehension test. The cloze procedure is used because the cloze procedure helps to identify students who are either frustrated or not challenged by the text (Readence, Bean, & Baldwin 1981, cited in Searfoss and Readence 307). The comprehension test is a 30-item test consisting of two passages taken from *Start with English 3 for the Sixth Year of Elementary School* (39) and *New Standard English Readers 5 for Elementary Schools* (36-8). The first story is about a famous legend from West Java; the second is about a fable that can interest children at any age. Each story is divided into three paragraphs and each paragraph contains five deletions. The students are asked to read the passages and choose the correct word from a number of alternatives. The students

are instructed to find the one word that belonged in each space and to circle the letter in front of that word. A maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for the completion of the test.

The second and the third tests are vocabulary and rate of reading tests. The multiple-choice procedure is used for testing vocabulary and rate of reading. The writer uses the multiple-choice procedure because the writer assumes that scoring can be done quickly and it involves personal judgement as to degrees of correctness. Also, less time is consumed in examination process. The second test is the vocabulary test. The vocabulary test is a 35-item consists of sample of words they have learned before. In constructing the vocabulary test, a pool of items is assembled from a random sample of English exercises taken from *Start Testing Your Vocabulary, Test Your Vocabulary 1*, and *Kumpulan Soal Bahasa Inggris SD Jilid 3*. In conducting the vocabulary test, the writer read aloud each of the test sentences, pausing sufficiently for the students to follow the reading and circle the alternatives of their choice. The time allowed for the completion of the test is 30 minutes. The third or last test is the rate of reading test. The test consists of 35 items taken from the same books as the vocabulary test. But, the selection of items for the rate of reading is made with reference to the experiential background of the students. Since the essential purpose of the test is to assess speed of reading comprehension, it is necessary to ensure that the content is familiar (Williams 37). The items cover activities and situations in the house, the school, the streets, and so on. The time limit of 10 minutes is set for the completion of the 35 items.

## II.5 The Correlation Coefficient

In order to discover the correlation between English reading performance of elementary school students and their competence in doing reading tasks, the writer uses the product-moment correlation devised by Pearson. The writer chooses Pearson Product-Moment Correlation because – according to Popham - it is the most widely employed measure of statistical correlation (66). He means that Pearson Product-Moment is commonly used by the researchers in discovering the correlation between two variables.

In statistical analysis, correlation refers exclusively to a quantifiable relationship between two variables. So, there must be at least two variables in this measurement.

There are some formulas which can be used in Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. In this calculation, the writer applies *raw score correlation formula* which uses original measurements. The writer takes this formula because it is the easiest to compute on an automatic calculator.

The raw score correlation formula used in the calculation of the product-moment correlation coefficient is:

$$r = \frac{\Sigma XY - \frac{(\Sigma X)(\Sigma Y)}{n}}{\sqrt{\left(\Sigma X^2 - \frac{(\Sigma X)^2}{n}\right)\left(\Sigma Y^2 - \frac{(\Sigma Y)^2}{n}\right)}}$$

where

$r$  = the correlation coefficient between reading competence (X) and reading performance (Y)

$\Sigma XY$  = the sum of the cross product of reading competence (X) and reading performance(Y)

$\Sigma X$  = the sum of reading competence (X) scores

$\Sigma X^2$  = the sum of the squares for reading competence (X)

$\Sigma Y$  = the sum of reading performance (Y) scores

$\Sigma Y^2$  = the sum of the squares for reading performance (Y)

$n$  = the numbers of respondents

Previously, it has been described that there must be two variables in the calculation of Pearson product-moment correlation. The variable from which the prediction is made is called the independent variable or predictor variable (X), while the variable that is predicted is called the dependent variable or the criterion variable (Y). Thus, in analyzing the result of the study, the writer takes the competence in doing English reading tasks at school as the criterion or dependent variable (symbolized as X) and English reading performance as the independent or predictor variable (symbolized as Y).

The strength of the correlation coefficient is usually interpreted according to the nearness of  $r$  to the perfect correlations of +1.00 and -1.00. It means that when the coefficient symbolized as  $r$  ranges between 1.00 and -1.00 with a perfect positive relationship reflected by an  $r$  of 1.00, a perfect negative relationship reflected by an  $r$  of -1.00, and a lack of any relationship reflected by an  $r$  of zero. According to Hadi (Cited in Arikunto 2009), there is another way which is simpler and easier to interpret the  $r$  value by using the table of interpretation of  $r$  value. The table is as follow:



Table 1  
Interpretation of  $r$  value

The $r$ value	Interpretation
Between 0.800 to 1.00	High
Between 0.600 to 0.800	Sufficient
Between 0.400 to 0.600	Rather low
Between 0.200 to 0.400	Low
Between 0.000 to 0.200	Very Low (No correlation)

In addition to understanding the general relationship between two variables computed, the writer also makes reasonable prediction for one respondent at a time. The statistical technique used to make such prediction is called *regression*. It is closely related to the product-moment correlation technique. With correlation, according to Popham, both of the measures that are involved represent random variables. With regression, however, only one measure is variable, the other is a given (102). He means that through regression, a prediction may be made regarding a particular respondent's score on a criterion variable ( $Y$ ), given his score on a predictor variable ( $X$ ). The regression equation  $\tilde{Y} = a + bX$  with which values of  $Y$  can be predicted from known values of  $X$ . The values of  $a$  and  $b$ , the basic components of the regression equation, are determined from a set of sample data where scores for both  $X$  and  $Y$  are available. Both  $a$  and  $b$  are understood by referring to the regression line formed when the regression equation is plotted on graph. Furthermore, the writer also computes the standard error of estimate for  $Y(S_{y,x})$ . The standard error of estimate ( $S_{y,x}$ ) reflects the strength of the relationship between two variables. It is used to

estimate the agreement of a predicted  $\tilde{Y}$  score with the "real"  $Y$  score. Furthermore, Popham says that the standard error of estimate is used somewhat as a standard deviation may be used as a unit of measurement along the baseline of a normal distribution (107). The formula for the standard error of estimate is as follows:

$$S_{y \cdot x} = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma y^2 - \frac{(\Sigma xy)^2}{\Sigma x^2}}{n - 2}}$$

$S_{y \cdot x}$  = The standard error of estimate

$$\Sigma y^2 = \Sigma Y^2 - \frac{(\Sigma Y)^2}{n}$$

$$\Sigma xy^2 = \text{The squares of } \Sigma XY - \frac{(\Sigma X)(\Sigma Y)}{n}$$

$$\Sigma x^2 = \Sigma X^2 - \frac{(\Sigma X)^2}{n}$$

$n - 2$  = the numbers of the respondents minus two

BUNGO BALK  
FACULTAS SAINS DAN MIPA

# CHAPTER III

## PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

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