

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the introduction of the research which deals with several points i.e., background of the research, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, formulation of the research problem, objectives of the research, the uses, and scope of the result.

1.1 Background of the Research

As English becomes an international language, Indonesian Department of National Education had declared that English as the first foreign language learned by Indonesian students. Based on this statement, government had a big responsibility to maximize teacher's role. Both English teachers and students need to improve their English by mastering the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Furthermore, the four skills had their own functions to support the improvement of English. Listening and speaking will be naturally learned by people, while reading and writing were more difficult to be studied. Reading is one of the important skills which must be learned by students in order to master English well and it is one of the

language skills that cannot be separated from other language skills because the students' ability in one aspect will support their ability in mastering the others.

By reading, the students can access much information which might have otherwise been unavailable, especially in English textbook. English textbook is one of the mediators which can be used in teaching learning process for junior high school students. In the book, there are some examples of the texts that are learnt and comprehend by the students differently in every grade. The main goal of reading a text as it has been mentioned by Chastain (1975) is comprehension. Talking about reading comprehension, it must also be popular with reading aspect. Nuttal (1982: 109) states there are five short reading aspects that should be mastered by reader to comprehend a text deeply; determining main idea, finding the specific information or part of text, finding reference, finding inference, and guessing meaning of vocabulary (difficult word).

These elements of reading, they can influence students reading comprehension. Although they are thought by the same teacher, but the result of their reading comprehension will not always be the same. It is affected by some factors. From the internal factors of students, their reading comprehension can be influenced by their learning style, their motivation, and their cognitive style. In the other hand, students' reading comprehension can be affected by the teachers' role as the external factor.

A teachers also has function as an educator, as a facilitator and motivator for their students in the class. Similarly, teachers can identify strong style patterns in their classes and make effective use of such information by devising lesson plans which accomodate individual learning style preferences. Students can enhance their learning power by being aware of style areas in which they feel less comfortable--and by working on the development of these--thus, providing avenues to foster their intellectual growth (Kang, 1999). But unfortunately, sometimes the teachers give the materials or knowledge to their students without considering some aspects from students' side. It looks like natural's law in education. That is one of the factors that make students have low achievement. In fact, none of the students has the same achievement in getting the required goal, although they have received the same treatment from the teacher.

The other reasons happen because there are many factors that influence the students. One of them is psychological factor which can influence the students' achievement in teaching-learning process. The students grow in heterogeneous environment and of course it will influence the students' way of thinking, attitude, and their personality. This situation is not realized and gets less attention by the teachers, so the students at school cannot optimize their given capability in learning. The students cannot identify their characteristics, which one is their strength comprehension in learning and which one is not.

There are many characteristics of the students when they learn at school. Such as, some students are like to have discussing with the friends when they have read something; some students tend to be individual when they want to read something, have quick response to the teaching process, slow in understanding the materials, interested in specific or general things when they are reading or learning. The way when students learn something in general or particular, then the solution they make for solving the exist problems, it relates to the link between their personality and cognition. This link called cognitive style. Several cognitive style constructs have been identified through research.

Ausbeul (1968: 70) defines cognitive style as a self-consistent and an individual endurance difference in cognitive organization. A self-consistent will be needed for every student to solve the problem which they find by their own ways. In line, individual endurance in every student will not be the same. It will show there are some levels of students' endurance. In the other words, it will determine how far the students' effort goes in solving the problem. Both of self-consistent and individual endurance have important role in students' reactions especially in teaching learning process.

According to Brown (1980) cognitive style mediates between emotion and cognition. In line with it, Hilliard says that the style can be observed in all areas of...expression, such as through... worldview, language, music, religion, art, work, dance, problem solving, sports, writing, or any other area of human expression. Human cognitive style is the framework that provides an individual his or her view of the world. Every

action which is done by the students is influenced by their emotion and cognition. Both of them will balance your style in cognitive, for example to be more like field dependent or independent.

Durodoye and Hildreth (1995) point that cognitive style is now defined within the dimensions of the psychological processes an individual utilizes to perceive and react to his/her environment. While Brodinsky (1993: 77) believes that cognitive style to be the self-consistent modes of adaptation that mediate the ways in which individuals process information. Luk (1998: 151) adds that cognitive style reflects an individual's preferred way of actively processing and transforming information, categorizing new knowledge, and integrating it within the memory structure. Tennant (1988) indicates that cognitive style is a consistent approach that an individual uses to organize and process information. Riding (1997: 21) further describes cognitive style as one's "habitual preference" for processing information for the completion of specific mental tasks.

Cagley (1983) states that at least there are a dozen different cognitive style dimensions have been systematically studied. However, field dependent and field independence have received the most attention of all the cognitive style dimensions. Even though later researchers have coined new terms, such as "analytics" and "wholists" (Riding, 1998), "reflectives" and "impulsives" (Kagan and Kogan, 1970), "divergent" and "convergent" (Bahar and Hansell, 2000), the characteristics ascribed to these processing styles are reflective of those associated with field dependent or independent.

Related to the new terms in cognitive style, Riding (1998) suggests that for the Wholist-analytic dimension, wholist are likely to be unstructured, global, and inclusive in their thinking. By contrast, analytics are likely to be structured but socially separate, resulting in behaviour that are generally more controlled but that may exhibit frustration and intensity, and they may be socially unaware and exclusive.

Furthermore, Kagan and Kogan (1970) state reflection implies a delay in response latency until being sure about the correct alternative. Reflexive individuals show accuracy but high response latencies. Impulsivity entails a quicker choice of a response alternative. Impulsive individuals show lower response latencies but greater inaccuracy. Impulsive individuals accept the first hypothesis that arises in their minds without testing for its accuracy.

Moreover, Bahar and Hansell (2000) investigate the interaction between convergence/divergence and working memory capacity. The result of their study shows a significant positive correlation between students' convergence/divergence test results and the results of the working memory capacity test. According to this, divergent students tend to have a high working memory capacity and convergent students tend to have a low working memory capacity. In the study, convergent students are defined as high IQ learners who score better in intelligence test. Divergent students are defined as highly creative learners who score better in open-ended tests.

The concepts of Field Dependence (FD) and Field Independence (FI) were first introduced by Witkin and his associates in 1954 to describe individual differences in tendencies to rely primarily either on external visual cues or internal gravitational or body sensations for the perception of the upright. Later, they tried to link people's performance to their ability to visually separate an item from a complex context or field.

In his earliest research in 1976 about field dependent and independent, he explained his theory of cognitive style. His earliest research dealt with how an individual locates the upright in space. The result analysis of Variance was conducted to explore the main effects for field dependency and cueing strategy and any interaction effect between the two factors. The results showed that field independents outperformed field dependents in all tests. There were no significant differences for the three treatments; the cueing strategies employed in this study had no effect on participants' learning. A significant interaction was seen between field dependency and cueing strategy. However, the results of a one-way ANOVA are unexpected: the cueing strategies employed did not improve field dependents' performance on the assessments and actually hindered the performance of field independents.

In this research, the researcher focused on field independent-dependent as one of cognitive styles in style of learning. This was important for the teachers to know the cognitive style especially field independent and field dependent of their students, so they can easily find the approaches that suitable for the students. Because of the

teacher knowledge about the characteristics of their students, it would help the teaching learning process more enjoyable.

In reference to this situation, the researcher was interested in carrying out a research on the differences in reading comprehension through the students' field independent and students' field dependent. Field-independent persons are the persons who have more analytical thought, self-respect and also have high self-confidence. On the other hand, field-dependent persons are the persons who are more sociable, communicative and tend to be more depend on the other people.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the limitation of problem above, the researcher addressed the following research question:

Is there any significant effect of students' cognitive style on their reading comprehension at eight grade students of SMP N 21 Bandar Lampung?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

Based on the formulation of the research problem above, the researcher objective of the research as follow:

To investigate whether there is any significant effect of students' cognitive style on their reading comprehension at eight grade students of SMP N 21 Bandar Lampung.

1.4 The Uses of the Research

1. Theoretically, the result of this research was expected to confirm and clarify of theory of cognitive learning style which focused on students' field independent and students' field dependent in learning process especially in reading comprehension.
2. Practically, the result of this research could be used as reference and consideration for English teachers concerning with cognitive style which was more influential on increasing students' reading comprehension.

1.5 Scope of the Research

This research focused on the effect of students' cognitive style especially in filed independent and filed dependent with their reading comprehension. This research conducted at SMP N 21 Bandar Lampung while the subject of the research was 60 students of second year of SMP N 21 Bandar Lampung. The researcher used random sampling. The sample divided into two groups according to students' cognitive style,

namely students' field independent and students' field dependent. Then, those two groups compared in the result of their reading comprehension. It had done to see how far the students' cognitive style affected their reading comprehension.

1.6 Definition of the Terms

In order to avoid the ambiguity some terms used in this skills are comprehensively defined, they are:

1. Cognitive Style

Cognitive Style is the psychological process an individual utilizes to perceive and react to his or her environment. It is concerned with how an individual thinks, solves problems, relates to other, and learns. Cognitive style is considered value free and stable over time (Witkin, Moore, Goodenough, and Cox, 1977). Researchers had identified several different cognitive styles, but this study was concerned with only the dimensions of field dependent and field independent.

2. Field dependent

According to Witkin (1997) field dependent is the dimension of cognitive style in which the individual is characterized as having a greater aptitude for interpersonal skills but has difficulty in breaking information into isolated parts, seeing an item as discrete from its background, or providing structure to context. This style is often

equated with global, whoelistic, or relational cognitive style (Rayner and Riding, 1997).

3. Field independent

Based on Witkin (1997) field independent is the dimension of cognitive style in which the individual is described as analytical. The person who has this cognitive style has the comprehension to see isolated parts of a problem, perceive an item as discrete from its background, and provide structure to context. This cognitive style is often equated with the analytical style (Rayner and Riding, 1997).

4. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the level of students' ability to understand what they have to read from the text. Reading comprehension means extracting the required information from the text as efficiently as possible (Grellet, 1981).