

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Concept of Reading Comprehension

Generally people think of reading as a simple, passive process that involves reading words in a linear fashion and internalizing their meaning one at a time. But, reading is actually a very complex process that requires a great deal of active participation on the part of the reader.

Reading is “a construct process of guessing”, (Grellet, 81;7); reading is “an active process of deriving meaning” (Goodman, 1976, Smith, 1978). Consequently, from the very beginning, the students should be taught to use what they know to understand unknown elements, whether these are ideas or simple word. Reading as an active process as stated by Clark and Silberstein (1987). Reading is as an active cognitive process of interacting with print and monitoring comprehension to establish meaning. Reading is simply one of the many ways in which human beings go about their basic business of making sense of the world (Eskey, 1986). Nuttal (1982) defines reading as the meaningful interpretation of printed or written verbal symbol. Reading is active process (Ronald Mackay, 1979).

Moreover, Kenneth Goodman in *Journal of the Reading Specialist* (1976) states that reading is psycholinguistic guessing game. It involves an interaction between thought and language.

Efficient reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all elements, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are

right the first time. The ability to anticipate that which has not been seen, of course, is vital in reading, just as the ability to anticipate what has not yet been heard is vital in listening.

Grabe (1986) also states that reading is the ability to recognize vocabulary and syntax automatically. Reading is the ability to read at reasonable rapid rate, the ability to grasp the main idea and scan for piece of information and the ability to adjust rate and adapt strategies for careful analytic reading and critical evaluation. The researcher agrees that someone has purpose when he is reading. The purpose of reading passage commonly is to find idea/ information from reading passage and to enhance knowledge of the language being read.

Dallman (1982:23) has stated that reading more than knows what each letter of alphabet stands for; reading involves more than word recognition; that comprehension is an essential of reading; that without comprehension; no reading takes place. Heilman, Blair, and Rupley (1981:242) said that reading comprehension is a process of making sense of written ideas through meaningful interpretation and interaction with language. Comprehension is the result of reading.

Finocchiaro and Bonomo (1973:132) suggest that reading comprehension is ability which depends on the accuracy and speed of grapheme perception, that is, perception of written symbol, control of language relationship and structure, knowledge of vocabulary items and lexical combination, awareness of redundancy, the ability to use contextual clues and recognition of cultural allusion. Heilman, Blair, and Rupley (1981:242) said that reading comprehension is a process of making sense of written ideas through meaningful interpretation and interaction with language. Comprehension is the result of reading.

## **B. Concept of Narrative Text**

A narrative is a story that is created in a constructive format (as a work of writing, speech, poetry, prose, pictures, song, motion pictures, video games, theatre or dance) that describes a sequence of fictional or non-fictional events. Narrative text is a sequence of events, which is based on life experience and is person-oriented using dialogue and familiar language.

The purpose of narrative text is to amuse or entertain the readers with actual or imaginary experiences in different ways. Narrative always deals with some problems which lead to the climax and then turn into a solution to the problem.

The examples of genres that fit the narrative text structure:

- Folktale is very old traditional story from a particular place that was originally passed on to people in a spoken form, e.g., *The Mighty*
- Fairy tale is an old story about magic things happened intended for amusing and giving lessons, meanings, and moral values, e.g., *Cinderella*.
- Fables is traditional short stories that teach moral lesson, especially one with the animals as characters; these stories are considered as one group of animal stories, e.g., *The Lion and the Mouse*
- Myth is a story from ancient times, especially one that was told to explain about natural events or to describe the early history of place or people, e.g., *Tower of Babel*

Text organization of narrative text:

- Orientation  
(Refers to the characters, problem, place and time, such as: who is the character in the text, what is the problem in the text and where does it happen in the text)
- Complication  
(Denotes a crisis arises. It comprises initiating event, subsequent event and climax aspects when the characters face the problems)
- Resolution  
(Shows that the crisis is resolved. In this part, the character does the act of solving or settling the problem for better or for worse one)
- Re-orientation  
(Indicates the optional point. This mean that a story not always uses this, and usually, it states the conclusions of the event based on the writer point of view)

Language Features of narrative text:

- Focus on the specific and individualized participants.
- The use of noun phrases  
(A beautiful princess, a huge temple)
- The use of connectives  
(First, before that, then, finally)
- The use of adverbial phrases of time and place  
(In the garden, two days ago)
- The use of simple past tense  
(He walked away from the village)
- The use of action verbs

(Walk, sleep, wake up)

- The use of saying verbs

(Say, tell, ask)

- The use of thinking verbs, feeling verbs, verbs of senses

(She felt hungry, she thought she was clever, she smelt something burning)

Example of narrative text:

### **Beauty and the Beast**

Orientation            Once upon a time there was a beautiful girl named Beauty. She lived with her father and her two sisters. She was a hard worker; she always helped her father on the farm.

Complication            One day, her father set out for the city. He saw an old castle and went in. None was in but there was food on the table. Then he walked around the castle. He picked a rose from the garden for Beauty. Suddenly, an angry beast appeared. He wanted to kill Beauty's father unless Beauty was brought to him. Beauty's father told his daughter what had happened, Beauty's sister ordered her to see the beast. Beauty went to see the beast and had to stay at the castle. She left scared, lonely, and sad. She tried to run away but was stopped by the beast. The beast treated the castle's magic mirror. Beauty saw that her father was sick. The beast allowed her to go home. Her father was happy to see Beauty.

Resolution                    One night, Beauty had a dream; a fairy told her that the beast was sick.  
  
Beauty hurried saw the beast dying, she began to cry. Tears fell onto the  
beast, suddenly the beast change into a handsome prince. Beauty and the  
beast got married and lived happily ever after.

### **C. Concept of Recount Text**

Recount is a text which retells events or experiences in the past. Its purpose is either to inform or to entertain the audience. There is no complication among the participants and that differentiates from narrative

Text organization of recount text:

1. Orientation  
(Introducing the participants, place and time.)
2. Events  
(Describing series of event that happened in the past.)
3. Reorientation  
(It is optional. Stating personal comment of the writer to the story.)

## Language Feature of Recount

- Introducing personal participant  
(I, my group, etc)
- Using chronological connection  
(then, first, etc)
- Using linking verb  
(was, were, saw, heard, etc)
- Using action verb  
( look, go, change, etc)
- Using simple past tense

Recount text can be occurring in the form of personal recount (such as biography), factual recount, or imaginative recount. The major difference between recount and narrative text is the generic structure. If a passage doesn't have a conflict and it retells past events, that is called as a recount text.

Example of recount text:

Orientation                      Let me remind you my experience during an earthquake last week. When the earthquake happened, I was on my car. I was driving home from my vocation to Bali.

Event 1                              Suddenly my car lunched to one side, to the left. I thought I got flat tire. I did not know that it was an earthquake. I knew it was an earthquake when

I saw some telephone and electricity poles falling down to the ground, like matchsticks.

Event 2                      Then I saw a lot of rocks tumbling across the road. I was trapped by the rock. Even I could not move my car at all. There were rocks everywhere. There was nothing I could do but left the car and walked along way to my house, in the town.

Re-Orientation            When I reached my town, I was so surprised that there was almost nothing left. The earthquake made a lot of damage to my town. Although nothing was left, I thanked God that nobody was seriously injured.

#### **D. Concept of Schema**

(Widdowson, 1983) Schema theory is a theory of how knowledge is acquired, processed, and retrieved. Schema is the technical term used by cognitive scientists to describe how people process, organize, and store information in their heads. Schemas, or schemata, cognitive construct which allow for the organization of information in our long-term memory. Cook (1989:69) puts it thus: ‘the mind stimulated by key words or phrases in the text or by the context, activates a knowledge schema.’ Widdowson and Cook are emphasizing the cognitive characteristics of schemas which allow us to relate incoming information to already known information.



Widdowson (1983) has reinterpreted schema theory from an applied linguistics perspective. He postulates two levels of language: a systemic and a schematic level. The systemic level includes the phonological, morphological and syntactic elements of language, while the schematic level relates to our background knowledge. In Widdowson's scheme of things, this background knowledge exercises an executive function over the systemic level of language. In comprehending a given piece of language, we use what sociologists call interpretative procedures for filling the gaps between our schematic knowledge and the language which is encoded systematically.

(Goodman, 1976; Smith, 1978) have developed interactive theories of reading which place great importance on the role of the reader and the knowledge s/he brings to bear on the text in the reading process. These interactive theories which now dominate reading research and strongly influence teaching practice draw heavily on schema theory.

(Bransford, 1985; Norris & Phillips, 1987) Schema theorists have advanced the understanding of reading comprehension by describing how prior knowledge can enhance a reader's interaction with the text. Accordingly, comprehension occurs when a reader is able to use prior knowledge and experience to interpret an author's message. Educators and researchers have suggested numerous instructional strategies to help students activate and use prior knowledge to aid comprehension.

(Cook 1997: 86) Schema theory deals with the reading process, where readers are expected to combine their previous experiences with the text they are reading. (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983) formalise the role of background knowledge in language comprehension as schema theory, and

claim that any text either spoken or written does not itself carry meaning. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983: 556) claim that "... a text only provides directions for... readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own, previously acquired knowledge." The very important role of background knowledge on reading comprehension is noted by Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) and Anderson (1999), that a reader's comprehension depends on her ability to relate the information that she gets from the text with her pre-existing background knowledge.

(Carrell and Eisterhold 1983; Carrell 1987; Alptekin 1993; 2002; 2003; Singhal 1998; Stott 2001) Content schemais defined as background knowledge of the content area of the text that a reader brings to a text such as knowledge about people, the world, culture, and the universe.(Perkins 1983; Zaher 1987; Anderson and Pearson 1988; Cook 1997; Alderson 2000; Brown 2001; Harmer 2001) of ordinary events (Nassaji 2002) Schemata are accepted as interlocking mental structures representing readers' knowledge. In the reading process, readers integrate the new information from the text into their pre-existing schemata (Nuttall 1996; Wallace 2001). Not only do schemata influence how they recognize information, but also how they store it. According to Harmer (2001), only after the schema is activated is one able to see or hear, because it fits into patterns that she already knows. The notion of schema is related with the organization of information in the long-term memory that cognitive constructs allow (Singhal 1998).

#### **E. Concept of SchemaActivation Strategy**

(Shahan & Lomax, 1986) Schema activation strategy reading is very likely to have an impact to increase student's reading comprehension achievement. Schema activation strategy could encourage students actively to be engaged in constructing meaning from text. Schema activation, a technique usually associated with the pre-reading phase, also occurs in the while reading and the post reading phases. The same observation is true for other techniques like skimming and scanning. Currently, there is a growing interest in pushing forth the notion of reading as a skill useful in increasing the student's writing proficiency. According to the reading-writing connection advocates, reading provides a perfect venue for potentially thought generating writing drills that the language teacher may construct to improve the students' critical thinking skills. Yet, schema theory does not explain how readers modify and create new schema when presented with novel information in texts.

Research on the theory of schema activation had great impact on understanding reading comprehension in first and second language. It made clear the case that understanding the role of schema activation in the reading process provides insights into why students may fail to comprehend text material.

(Grabe, 1991) By reminding students that one reads first to see what a passage is about, the instructor helped students set goals for an initial reading and called attention to the skills and strategies that might serve them best. Knowledge of cognition (metacognition) and the ability to monitor one's comprehending processes can aid in successful reading. Reader expectations are based on readers' prior knowledge. Background knowledge that aids in text comprehension has recently been studied under the rubric of schema theory. This theoretical framework (aptly

termed by Grabe, 1991, a “theoretical metaphor) emphasizes the role of preexisting knowledge (a reader’s “schemata”) in providing the reader with information that is implicit in a text.

According to researcher’ opinion, Schema Activation Strategy is an active strategy. As new knowledge is perceived, it is coded into either pre-existing schema or organized into a new script. In essence schemata are organized mental structures that aid the learner’s ability to understand and associate with what is being presented to them.

#### **F. Teaching Reading through Schema Activation Strategy**

Research on the theory of schema had great impact on understanding reading comprehension in first and second language. It made clear the case that understanding the role of schema in the reading process provides insights into why students may fail to comprehend text material.

(Carrell, 1988:245) points out, “students’ apparent reading problems may be problems of insufficient background knowledge [content, formal, and linguistic]”. However, as further pointed out by the same author, students might have sufficient schemata, yet unable to comprehend the text if such schemata are not appropriately activated. Students are familiar with the topic of the text they are reading (i.e., possess content schema), aware of the discourse level and structural make-up of the genre of the text (i.e., possess formal schema), and skillful in the decoding features needed to recognize words and recognize how they fit together in a sentence (i.e., possess language schema), they are in a better position to comprehend their assigned reading. Deficiency in any of the above schemas will result in a reading comprehension

deficit.(Brown, 2001) the hallmark of schema theory, with regards to reading, is that a text does not by itself carry meaning. The reader brings information, knowledge, emotion, and culture – that is schemata, to the printed word.

Clark and Silberstein (1977, quoted in Brown 2001) indicate that research has shown that reading is only incidentally visual. More information is contributed by the reader than by the print on the page. This would all seem to point to the fact that our understanding of a text depends on how much related schema we, as readers, possess while reading. Consequently, readers', natives and non-natives, failure or confusion to make sense of a text is caused by their lack of appropriate schemata that can easily fit with the content of the text. This lack of appropriate schemata can be either formal or content-based. Brown (2001) defines these two as follows: content schemata includes what we know about people, the world, culture, and the universe, while formal schemata consists of our knowledge about discourse structure.

(Aebersold & Field, 1997) Perhaps one of the most important schemas that pose immediate threat to students is content, or topical schema. As assert “If the topic ...is outside [students’] experience or base of knowledge, they are adrift to an unknown sea” (p. 41). Ways of activating content schema, I believe, is an area that needs further exploration.

Cook (1989:69) states “The mind stimulated by key words or phrases in the text or by the context activates a knowledge schema”. Cook implies that we are not necessarily dealing with conscious processes, but rather with automatic cognitive responses given to external stimuli. This view clarifies that schemata are activated in one of two ways:

1. New information from the outside world can be cognitively received and related to already known information stored in memory through retrieval or remembering. In this case, new concepts are assimilated into existing schemata which can be altered or expanded;
2. New information can be represented by new mental structures. In this case, in absence of already existing schemata, new knowledge builds up new schemata.

(Plastina, 1997), in both cases, the individual is piecing bits of knowledge together, attempting to make sense of them. It follows that the main features of schemata are flexibility and creativity. Schemata are flexible in that they undergo a cyclic process within which changes are brought about actively and economically, i.e., information is stored in memory and provided when needed with the least amount of effort. They are creative in that they can be used to represent all types of experiences and knowledge - they are specific to what is being perceived.

Thus, because texts are never completely explicit, the reader must rely on preexisting schemata to provide plausible interpretations. Yet, there is much evidence that good and poor readers do not always use schemata appropriately or are unaware of whether the information they are reading is consistent with their existing knowledge.

If students are to become independent language users, they will need to experience a range of reading tasks corresponding to the kinds of reading they intend in the target language.

Widdowson (1975) argue that comprehension of poetry requires the same interpretive processes required for any text. Our sample class demonstrates the use of procedures appropriate for many kinds of reading. As would be the case with many texts, students first skimmed the poem to

obtain a general sense of its content. One often skims, for example, to determine if a more careful reading is warranted.

This initial reading is followed by a more careful examination of the texts. More detailed reading for thorough comprehension allowed students to paraphrase the author's ideas. The literal restatement of a text is the sole focus of many reading activities. In this instance, the students went further. Some scanned, looking for specific words or phrases (that they had previously recognized automatically) that would support their arguments. Through critical reading students drew inferences and recognized implicit relationships, which allowed them finally to create a meaningful discourse. Students returned to the text using different strategies to achieve comprehension.

In Schema Activation, the students taught reading comprehension through pictures. The students' have positive effect to accept the lesson, because Schema Activation use their prior knowledge, so they will remember what they learn. The researcher believes that Schema Activation is the appropriate strategy for teaching reading comprehension.

## **G. The Procedure of Teaching Reading Comprehension through Schema Activation Strategy using Narrative Text**

The researcher takes some steps in the presentation of Schema Activation Strategy as follows:

### **Pre-activity**

1. Greeting

2. Students were given the topic and begin the brainstorming material based on their background knowledge. This is used to build the students' thought before they learn further from the narrative text.
3. Students were informed about the material they are going to learn, the goals of learning to achieve, and the reading strategy they will use.

### **Whilst-activity**

1. Students were shown pictures of the following important events of the story, "Sangkuriang and Tangkuban Perahu Mountain"
  - Background picture – Tangkuban Perahu mountain.
  - Event #1. Dayang Sumbi asked her son to go hunting with his lovely dog, Tumang.
  - Event #2. Dayang Sumbi was very angry and hit Sangkuriang's head.
  - Event #3. Sangkuriang made a boat for Dayang Sumbi in one night.
  - Event #4. Sangkuriang was very angry and kicked the boat.
2. The teacher explained to the students that today they will be reading the story "Sangkuriang and Tangkuban Perahu Mountain." Students were asked to look at the background picture on the poster. The teacher asked the following question:
  - What do you think is happening in the picture?
  - Students answer:
3. The teacher explained to the students about three events based on the picture.
4. Students were asked one of the following questions which will have them relate their own personal experience to this story.
  - Event#1. Have you ever heard of someone who married an animal?



- Event#2. Did you ever make your mother angry?
  - Event#3. How do you feel when you do not reach your desire?
5. Next the teacher asked students to answer questions about each event that will predict what will happen in the story.
    - Event #1. Will Dayang Sumbi become angry with Sangkuriang?
    - Event #2. How could Sangkuriang fall in love with his mother?
    - Event #3. What do you think about Sangkuriang's feelings?
  6. Students brainstormed with their peers for the answers to these questions and wrote them on paper.
  7. Students took turns reading the story aloud. They then discussed the answers they predicted concerning the three important events and examined whether their answers followed the story.

**Post-activity:**

1. The teacher asked the students to read "Sangkuriang and Tangkuban Perahu Mountain."
2. The teacher asked the students to answer the questions.
3. Close the meeting

**H. Theoretical Assumption**

Based on the literature review, it is assumed that *Schema Activation Strategy* is an effective technique to be used in teaching reading in order to improve the students' achievement in reading comprehension of narrative text or recount text. As has already been stated, in reading activity the students make contacts and communication with ideas that relate to their previous

knowledge or schemata. It is important that students are able to interpret what they read and associate it with their experience, but also that they see and identify the symbol in front of them, and the Schema Activation Strategy involves those things. Schema Activation Strategy requires the learners to be actively involved in the teaching and learning processes based on the previous knowledge that the students have to construct their own understanding. In Schema Activation Strategy, the students are asked to construct their own sense of meaning from new experience based on prior knowledge and are motivated to make connections between knowledge that they get and its application to the real world, so the students experience, not just know, the knowledge.

Therefore, the researcher assumes that after doing this process with the information contained in the text, automatically the students will have better understanding of the text, and as the result, she assumes that Schema Activation Strategy can be an effective strategy to teach reading.

## **I. Hypothesis**

Based on the theories and the assumptions above, the researcher would like to formulate the hypothesis as follows: “There is a significant improvement of students’ reading comprehension achievement of narrative and recount texts after taught by Schema Activation Strategy.”

