I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a brief description of the whole content of the research, including background, formulation of the problem, objectives of the research, uses of the research, scopes of the research, and definition of term.

1.1 Background of the Problem

Reading is one of the essential skills to be mastered by learners in learning English. Even though it is quite difficult since it has some crucial aspects, such as, determining main idea, finding specific information, reference, inference, and vocabulary. In fact, reading is also valuable for learners to improve their comprehension in a text and beneficial in developing prior knowledge. However, in practical learning reading, reading has been seen a hard nut to crack all along time.

Haycraft (1978: 8) states that there are two broad skills in mastering a language: receptive skill, i.e. reading (understanding the written language) and listening (understanding the spoken language); and productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing. As a receptive skill, the learners are not required to produce the
language. But they have to read, think, and do what the instruction of the reading text is. Moreover, the learners have to understand what the messages of the reading texts mean.

In general, the complexity in reading skill makes it constantly difficult to be mastered. In reading skill it is not only focused on determining the main idea, indentifying specific information, or inference but also focused on improving their vocabulary, insight, or imagination. In accordance with Nuttall (1982: 5-6), one may have difficulties to comprehend a passage because of some problems like unfamiliar code in which the text is expressed, the amount of previous knowledge that the reader brings to the text, the complexity of the concept expressed, and vocabulary size.

Basically, there are many English texts which have good content for learners but sometimes there is a misunderstanding between what the writer of book means and what the learners mean. Having a good ability in reading makes easier for learners to understand what the content of a book is. Besides, there are many learners who still do not know how to understand a text properly. Sometimes, the learners are getting confused and consuming lots of time when they try to translate the text from English into Indonesian. It may occur because they use inappropriate learning strategies.

Unfortunately, some learners are not aware in employing their learning strategies effectively in mastering reading yet. The success of learning reading depends on how the learners use their learning strategies appropriately. Having different learning strategies is something that may be knowledgeable and useful
for learning reading in Second Language. Therefore, it cannot be denied that learning strategies give a good result of learners’ achievement in learning English. On the other hand, improper strategies will lead into failure. It means that by having appropriate learning strategies, learners can be successful in reading comprehension.

Related to language learning, Rubin (1975: 37) states that even though everyone basically has the same chance to be successful in learning a new language – some students approach the language learning task in more successful ways than other. Therefore, some students will be more successful than the other in learning a new language whether it is second or foreign language.

As Rubin (1975: 41) states that, the different success in second or foreign language learning suggests a need to examine in detail what strategies successful language learners employ. The previous statement implies that the different success of language learning among learners may be caused by the difference in maximizing the use of learning strategies. In other words, learning strategies become important in learning reading as one of English skills to be mastered. Learners should realize which one of learning strategies supports the big part of success in reading achievement. On the other way, learners should also know the reason why they are unsuccessful in reading which may be caused by inappropriate learning strategies employed.

As a matter of fact, when the researcher tried to find the real situation by conducting the pre-observation in SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung, the researcher found that some of the learners had a difficulty in comprehending
reading texts. The learners still found difficulties in comprehending the text or answering the easy questions of the text. It could be seen from their reading score test that was given by teacher in middle-term test and also the pre-test during the research showed that their average score was less than the standard of teaching criteria (KKM). Further, every class had an obvious different result of the test. It seemed that the gap among the classes in every English score tests was quite significant. The gap was obvious if the researcher compared the score between the main class and the regular class in the school. In addition, the previous research done by Widiono (2007) found the some problems. Some the students’ problems in comprehending the text which he found in his research were students’ lack of vocabulary and grammar, students’ low interest in the reading the text, teachers’ disability in guiding and managing the class, students’ choice of strategies on facing some reading comprehension questions. Thus, the researcher assumed some factors that cause those problems were; low interest in the material the text, learning strategy and teaching technique. It was also supported by regular teachers at the first grade of SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung who teach the main class and the regular class. They said that some students’ problem in reading was mostly concerned on the students’ strategies in solving problems such determining the main idea of a reading text, vocabulary, and inference. This situation makes the learners’ reading comprehension was low.

In addition, the other previous studies (see, e.g. Kurnia 2013 and Andam, 2013) also indicated that senior high school students experienced many difficulties in their reading, such as they tend to be passive, difficult to categorize information, difficulty to identify reference and inference, and difficult to
differentiate the characteristic of a text. Vocabulary mastery as a problem also made students difficult to comprehend the text given. Without understanding the word or phrases in the text, they might not understand the purpose of the whole text. This part not only became the learners’ duty, but also the teachers’ problem. Moreover, the structure of the sentence also became an obstacle for the students in getting the aim of passage they are reading. Therefore, if students could use appropriate strategies, the problems might be eliminated.

In reading comprehension, the important things are how to find the main idea and to know the organization of the text. In reality, not all students can identify the main idea easily. Sometimes, they must read the whole passage to know the aim of each paragraph. It is because they do not know the right way. Beside, the structure of a text can also make them hard to comprehend it. Often, teachers do not explain it at the beginning before discussing the content of text.

Consequently, as a candidate of English teacher, the researcher must realize that there are some lists of successful students and unsuccessful students in every school. How to make the unsuccessful students have same capability with the successful ones is the question that has to be answered. Since everyone knows that in classroom, a teacher cannot give full attention to every single student. Hence, it becomes the greatest duty for the teacher to find out the appropriate ways to help the unsuccessful students to have better capability in comprehending the text.

In reference to the clarification above, this research tried to find out the learning strategy that was mostly used by successful and unsuccessful learners in
reading achievement. Therefore, the researcher proposed this research entitled *Identifying Learning Strategies between Successful and Unsuccessful Learners in Reading Comprehension.*

1.2 Formulation of Research Problem

In accordance with the problem of background above, the following problems were formulated as follows:

1. In general, what types of learning strategies are mostly used by successful and unsuccessful learners in reading comprehension in terms of macro skills?

2. Specifically, which aspects of reading comprehension in terms of macro skills have the highest correlation with those language learning strategies?

1.3 Objective of the Research

Referring to the formulation of the research problem above, the objective of this research were:

1. To determine kind of learning strategies which are mostly used by successful and unsuccessful learners in reading comprehension in terms of macro skills.

2. To find out the aspects of reading comprehension in terms of macro skills that have the highest correlation with language learning strategies.
1.4 Uses of the Research

The uses of this research were:

1. Theoretically, the result of this research was supposed to support the previous theories about types of learning strategies mostly used by successful and unsuccessful learners in learning reading.

2. Practically, the result of the research hopefully could be used as a reference in consideration for English teachers to support the learners on applying learning strategies optimally by their own way in learning reading.

1.5 Scopes of the Research

This research was conducted at SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung. The subject of this research was the first grade students in 2014/2015 academic year. The 2006 School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) of English, in the first semester indicates clearly that the students in this semester have already studied grammar, vocabulary and certain expressions for communication. So it meant that the students have had good enough basic in English reading skill.

Thus, this research identified language learners’ learning strategies that were mostly used by successful and unsuccessful learners in reading comprehension. As we knew that the learning strategies were divided into three categories (O’Malley et. al.: 1985): 1) metacognitive strategies, 2) cognitive strategies, and 3) social strategies. It was assumed that the success of learning reading depends on the learning strategies applied by the learners themselves.
1.6 Definition of Terms

Some definitions used in this research were needed in order to have perception crucial the ideas of the terms as follows:

1) Reading comprehension is important and difficult enough since it is a matter of identifying letters in order to recognize words to get the meaning from what is read, involving making connection, among words and ideas presented in the text and the readers’ own background knowledge about the text they read will have difficulties such as determining main idea, finding specific information, reference, inference, and vocabulary in comprehending a text. Moreover, reading comprehension is result of the interaction between the perception of the written text that represents language and the reader’s language skills, cognitive skill and the knowledge.

2) Learning strategy is sets of a way of technique to achieve a learning goal by learners in the process of gaining the knowledge.

3) Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning task and they involve more manipulation directly of the learning material itself. Using background knowledge, repetition, resourcing, translation, note taking, elaborations are among the most important in cognitive strategies.

4) Metacognitive strategies are actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process. They also refer to knowledge above cognition or executive
control of self-management through such processes as planning, monitoring, and evaluating.

5) Social strategies are often called as a social mediation, the strategies under category are asking question, cooperating with other, and empathizing with other. This strategy indicates that people prefer to ask other people than to learn by themselves and also they tend to learn with their peers or to consult with the teacher they find some difficulties in facing problems.

6) Macro skills are a big scope that including of some principles in mastering reading (e.g. Scanning text to locate specific information, skimming text to obtain the gist, identifying stages of an argument, and identifying examples presented in support of an argument)

This is the end of this chapter. In this chapter, several things have been discussed consisting of the background of problem, research questions, objectives, uses of the research, scope, and the definition of terms.