

I. INTRODUCTION

In this introduction chapter, the researcher explains the background of the problems that is the reasons for conducting the research. It includes the identification of the problems, the limitation of problems, formulation of the problems, the objective, uses and scope of the research and the last part of this chapter is the definition of terms related to the topic of this research.

1.1. Background of the Problems

In learning English, there are four kinds of language skills to be mastered, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. For the students who learn English as foreign language, they need to develop their language skills. Based on the 2006 curriculum, in junior high schools that apply the school-based-curriculum (KTSP), the students are expected to learn English from various types of text. It means that the students are dealing with many texts which are mostly discussed in reading activity. Reading plays an important role in teaching and learning process. By reading the text, the learners are involved in bringing the information, knowledge, emotion, experience, and culture.

In reading process, the students are required to be a good reader. In reading, they have substantial skills to comprehend the text. There are five aspects which

helped the students to comprehend the English text, they are identify the main idea, getting the specific information, making inferences, reference and identify the vocabularies. Meanwhile, based on the information from the teacher when the researcher conducted the pre research in SMP Taman Siswa Tanjung karang, in comprehending the descriptive text some of Junior High School students still have difficulties to identify the main of those five reading aspects from the text. They also tended to be passive because of the students have no good self confidence in learning English. So, it was difficult for them to learn English well because they regarded that English was difficult to be learn. In addition, when the students had some problems to get the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from the text, they would spent much time looking up their dictionary to see the meaning of that unfamiliar vocabulary then they were able to understand the meaning and answered the questions.

Moreover, there was one important factor that might influence the students' problems in reading that was the reading strategy. Based on the researcher's observation in SMP Taman Siswa Tanjung Karang by interviewing the students, the researcher found that the students' difficulties in transferring the information from the text and answering the questions were caused by the reading strategy. For example, when the teacher gave the students some questions directly, they could not answer quickly. So, the teacher asked to the students what was become their problem, some students said that they could not answer because they do not know how the way to understand the text. In addition, they did not understand about the meaning of the words, so that they did not understand the content of

reading passage. As the result the students could not answer the questions from the text, identify the main idea, get the specific information, make inferences, find reference and identify the vocabularies from the text, so that those factors give the influence to the students' achievement in comprehending of descriptive text.

There are many reading strategies that can be used to teach reading, one of them was contextual clues strategy. Contextual clues strategy is the strategy how the readers use some clues of word based on the reading passage. The clues are sometimes placed in the same sentence as an unfamiliar word, or in nearby sentences. It proposed to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and clues which are related to the content of the text. Moreover, it can also be used to overcome the students' problems identify the main idea, get the specific information, making inferences, reference and identify the vocabularies from the text given by the teacher.

Realizing the benefit of contextual clues strategy in reading comprehension, the researcher assumed that might be the influence of this strategy to the students' achievement in reading descriptive text that would also help the students get the information from the text by understanding the meaning unfamiliar words. Moreover, the researcher proposed this research to investigate whether or not contextual clues strategy can give the influence on the students' reading comprehension achievement. In this research, the researcher focused on the descriptive text because the students' problem comprehended the descriptive text.

1.2. Identification of the Problems

Based on the background of the problem there are five main problems that could be identified:

1. The students got difficulties in comprehending the reading text, especially identifying the main idea, get the specific information, making inferences, reference and identify the vocabularies from the text.
2. The students' problems of getting the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from the text, they would spend much time looking up their dictionary to see the meaning of that unfamiliar vocabulary
3. The students' difficulties in transferring the information from the text and answering the questions were caused by the lack information about the reading strategy.
4. The students tend to be passive (Teacher-centred).
5. The students have no good self confidence in learning English. So, it is difficult for them to learn English well because they regard that English is difficult to be learn.

1.3. Limitation of the Problems

In line with the identification of the problems above, the researcher focused the research on the students get difficulties in comprehending the reading text, especially identifying the main idea, getting the specific information, making inferences, reference, identify the vocabularies and the students' problems getting the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from the text. As the solution to overcome

the students' difficulties, the researcher was interested to investigate the influence of contextual clues strategy on the students' reading comprehension achievement.

1.4. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problems, the researcher formulated the research problem as follow:

Can contextual clues strategy give the influence on the students' reading comprehension achievement?

1.5. Objective of the Research

In line with the formulation of the problem, the researcher determined the objective of the research is to investigate whether or not contextual clues strategy can give influence on the students' reading comprehension achievement.

1.6. Uses of the Research

The findings of the research may be beneficial both theoretically and practically:

Theoretically, the findings of this research are expected:

1. to support the existing theory on the reading comprehension and the contextual clues strategy in teaching learning of reading,
2. to be a reference for the future research.

Practically, the finding of the research is expected to give the information about the influence of contextual clues on the students reading comprehension achievement.

1.7. Scope of the Research

This research was quantitative by nature. It was conducted to the third grade of SMP Taman siswa, Tanjung Karang. The design of this research was one group pre-test post-test design (Hatch and Farhady, 1982). There were four classes of third grade on SMP Taman Siswa which consists of 22 until 24 students each class. One class was taken as the experimental class. For the experimental class, the researcher used the reading text concerning several reading aspects (main idea, specific information, inference, and vocabulary) and focused on the training of four types of contextual clues strategy suggested by Joffe (1997), namely synonym, antonym, explanation and example. The materials were taken from English handbook and internet that were relevant to junior high school curriculum (KTSP).

1.8. Definition of Terms

There are some terms that the researcher used to make them clearer, as will be defined in the following sections:

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is an active process which involves the interaction between thought and language. The readers use their prior knowledge for connecting words to their thoughts to get the information from reading the text.

Contextual Clues

Contextual clues are word clues that can help you figure out the meaning of an unknown word and the clues related to the text. They may be in the same sentence as an unfamiliar word, or in nearby sentences.

Contextual Clues Training Strategy

The strategy that used some clues of word based on the reading passage. The clues are sometimes placed in the same sentence as an unfamiliar word, or in nearby sentences. It proposes to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Descriptive Text

A descriptive text is a text, which list the characteristics of person, place, or things. It describes living and non living things such as animals, plants, town, building, etc.