II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the concepts the researcher will use to do his research. By referring to those concepts that come from the experts' and the previous researchers' theories, the researcher formulates his assumptions. The researcher wishes much that those related concepts may contribute well for the finding of his research.

A. Concept of Reading

Reading is the cognitive process of deriving meaning from written or printed text. It is supported by Clark and Silberstein (1987) who defined that reading is an active cognitive process of interacting with print and monitoring comprehension to establish meaning. In line with this, Grellet (1981) mentioned that reading as the process of understanding a written text, means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible. It means that the reader are required being able to get a lot of information based on what they are reading in the text. Furthermore, Nuttal (1982) as stated in Simanjuntak (1988: 14) defines reading as the meaningful interpretation of printed or written verbal in symbol. It means that reading is a result of the interaction between the perception of graphic symbol

representing language and the reader's language skills, cognitive skill, and the knowledge of the world.

Reading is a complex cognitive process. It is stated by Simanjuntak (1989: 5) that the complex reading process consists of two majors sub process. The first level is simple 'identification' as the way of determining rapidly and accurately just what the text says. At this level, reading is a kind of information processing, the transferring of specific 'bits' of information from one system to another. The second level is interpretation as the cognitive skill required for the interpretation of the text, which mainly depend on knowledge of the subject matter of the texts, and of the way that information is organized in discourse. Those ideas tell us that through reading process, we bring the meanings that exist in our mind from written materials to get the idea from it.

Reading is a process where the reader is trying to resemble his understanding toward the text he is reading as what the researcher means. It is supported by Nuttal (1982) who stated that reading means getting out the text as nearly as possible the message that the researcher put into it. Furthermore, Edmund Burke Huey (1908) in Pearson (1978: 8) believed that if we could understand reading we would understand the mysteries of the human mind. It means that through reading, the readers will know any information of the world nowadays that they do not know. It is also supported by Darlis (1998) explained that reading is an important skill that enables the readers to bring the meaning, which exist, either in their

minds or in written material. It means that reading is a process that requires

interpretation and comprehension aspects to the idea needed.

B. Concept of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the first point should be made in the process of

reading. It is supported by Simanjuntak (1988: 47) who stated that the first point

in reading needs is comprehension, so the readers will gain the information from

the readers read. Furthermore, Hornby (2000) argued that comprehension is as

exercise that trains students to understand a language. It means that the reader are

required being able to comprehend the text to get a lot of information or ideas

from the text.

Reading comprehension is a passage presented to the reader, which they must read

either silently or aloud. Then a series of questions are presented that test the

readers' comprehension of the passage. In line with it, Smith (1981) conveyed that

reading is a process of understanding the text in term of question that the reader

formulates about the text. He also stated that in reading, the reader should be able

to comprehend the text and memorize what they have read.

Smith (1982: 6) defines reading is something that makes sense to the reader, and

always should. Comprehension is as a matter of "making sense" (means the reader

should activate their schemata when reading) of text, of relating written language

to what we know already and to what we want to know. It means that there is a

communication that occurs between the author of the text and the readers during reading process. This is because reading is a process of conveying meaning, information, ideas, etc from the author to the readers.

C. Components of Reading Comprehension

According to Philips (2000: 243), there are some types of question in reading comprehension, such as question asking about the ideas of the passage, specific information, references, inferences, vocabulary, tone, purpose, course, etc. The researcher explains five components that were applied in the research instrument as follows:

1) **Main Idea**

    Finding the main idea of a paragraph is one of the most important reading comprehension skills because it introduces the theme with the greatest depth. Hancock (1987:54) in Simanjuntak (1988: 103) defines that main idea is the essence of the paragraph, or rather what the author is trying to get across to the reader. In other words, that is what the author wants a reader to know about. So, the main idea is the important idea that the author develops throughout the paragraph. For example in text in Appendix 1, the main idea of the first paragraph is a woman sat opposite a young man who was fast asleep on a train journey.

2) **Supporting Details**

McWhorther (1986: 82) in Simanjuntak (1988: 106) states that supporting details are those facts and ideas that prove or explain the main idea of the paragraph. They develop the topic sentence by giving definition, examples, facts, comparison, analogy, cause and effect statistics and quotation. For example in text in Appendix 1, the specific information is that the story happened on a train journey.

3) **Inference**

McWhorther (1986:31) states that an inference is an educational guess or prediction about something unknown based on available facts and information. The reader will be able to do this by making use of the context in which the story occurred in order to give him a rough idea of prediction. For example in text in Appendix 1, the reader can create a prediction based on the facts he finds in the story. Inference will lead to the conclusion that the young man get up from his seat in a great hurry to buy a meal and drink.

4) **References**

Latulippe (1987:20) defines references as words or phrases used either before or after the reference in the reading material. When such words are used, they are signals to the reader to find the meaning elsewhere in the text. For example in text in Appendix 1, 'she' in sentence *she hurried after him* refers to the researcher's daughter as the sentence occurs after 'after a minute my daughter noticed that he had left his jacket on the seat'.

5) **Vocabulary**

According to Wallace (1982:30), vocabulary is the stock of words used by people. Vocabulary is fundamental for everyone who wants to speak or to produce utterances for reading. In reading, the reader guesses the meaning of a word by making use of the context in which the word occurred in order to give him a rough idea of its meaning. For example in text in Appendix 1, the reader would know that 'hurtled' means moved very fast after reading the sentence that builds the context for the word 'hurtled'.

D. Description of Word Meaning in Context

As Adams and Huggins (1985) in Nation and Coady (1987: 101) claim that word recognition abilities are the single best class of discriminators between good and poor reader, understanding words meaning becomes the important component of reading comprehension. These symbols are cues to the readers in which they are identified and interpreted to understand the message.

In reading a text, a reader may confront with many unfamiliar and difficult words that may stop the flow of reading due to trying to identify and figure out the meaning for some time. According to Nation and Coady (1987: 97), vocabulary difficulty is estimated in various ways, the most usual are word frequency or familiarity and word length. It is stated that sentences are more readable if they contain words that are of high frequency in occurrence and that are shorter rather than longer.

Context in which the word occurred is considered as an important aid to word identification and interpretation. It is a practical way that gives the readers a rough idea of a word's meaning and enables them to identify it immediately. It is supported by Nation and Coady (1987: 102) who stated that context can be viewed as morphological, syntactic, and discourse information in a given text which can be classified and described in terms of general features. It is means that the readers take advantage of such background knowledge in processing the text, and in creating expectation about the kind of vocabulary that will occur.

Furthermore, words have multiple meanings and require context for definition. It is also supported by Nation and Coady (1987: 72) who stated that most words have more than one meaning. It is through the use of sentence and paragraph context that we are able to decide which alternative meaning to assign a word. It means that by identifying the words or sentence surrounding the unfamiliar or difficult word, a reader can infer the meaning. The following example describes the influence of context in determining word meaning of 'run'.

- *Don't run so fast.*
- *She has a run in her stocking.*
- *Soon there will be a run on the banks.*
- *He batted in a run when it counted.*
- *The car will run better now.*

The word 'run' in the sentences above may have different meanings. The word 'run' in the first sentence means move at a speed faster than walk; in the second sentence the word 'run' means a broken mend in stocking; in the third sentence the word 'run' means a widespread and sudden demand of withdrawal; in the

fourth sentence the word 'run' means a track made or regularly used; in the last sentence the word 'run' means operated. It means that words have multiple meaning based on the context in the sentence or passage.

E. Description of Inferring Word Meaning from Context

According to Simanjuntak (1988: 73), inferring word meaning from context is the ability of knowing the meaning of a word by considering its context. The reader infers the meaning of the word by making use of the context in which the word occurred in order to give the reader a rough idea of its meaning. It also supported by Nuttal (1985: 70) who stated that inferring meaning is a skill of meeting the words frequently and in concrete situations, the reader gradually assimilated their meanings. In expressing the idea of inferring meaning from context, Nuttall (1982:70) provides examples defining the word 'tock' (a nonsense word).

- *She poured the water into a tock*
- *Then, lifting the tock, she drank.*
- *Unfortunately, as she was setting it down Again, the tock slipped from her hand and broke.*
- *Only the handle remained in one piece.*

After reading the first sentence, the reader considers how much information he has about the meaning of the word 'tock'. Then go on to find out how much more the reader knows after reading the second sentence and so on. Finally, the reader is able to infer the word 'tock'. It means that this example shows how context can help explain the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Furthermore, in reading, context is provided not only by preceding words or sentences but also topics, titles, as well as preceding and following paragraph, illustrations, tables, and so on. It is also supported by Nation and Coady (1987: 102) who asserted that there are two types of context. The first type is general context in terms of the readers' background knowledge of the subject matter of a given text, and the other type is context within the text in which context is viewed as morphological, syntactic, and discourse information in a given text.

Inferring word meaning from context is practical but it is not an easy task. It needs a strategy. The following strategy is an elaboration description by Clarke and Nation in Nation and Coady (1988: 104). The strategy consists of five steps that represent a procedure that learners can use to ensure that they are making good use of the available context clues. The steps are:

1. Finding the part of speech of the unknown word.

2. Looking at the immediate context of the unknown word and simplifying this context if necessary.

3. Looking at the wider context of the unknown word; looking at the relationship between the clause containing the unknown word and surrounding clauses and sentences.

4. Guessing the meaning of the unknown word.

5. Checking that the guess is correct.

The strategy presuppose two things, firstly that learners are able to follow the ideas in the text they are reading; they have sufficient command of vocabulary,

grammar and reading skills in order to achieve basic comprehension of the text, and secondly that the learners bring some relevant background knowledge to the text.

F. Parts of Speech as Specification of Vocabulary

According to Frank (1972: 1), the words that form the central core of the sentence are the parts of speech known as nouns (or pronouns) and verbs; the word that modify the central core words are the parts of speech called adjectives and adverbs; the words that show a particular kind of connecting relationship between these four parts of speech are called prepositions and conjunctions. The researcher explains some parts of speech as the base for specification in the research instrument as follows:

1) **Nouns**

The noun is one of the most important parts of speech. Its arrangement with the verb helps to form the sentence core which is essential to every complete sentence. Classified by meaning, some nouns may belong to more than one of the types given below.

   a. Proper Nouns

   A proper noun begins with a capital letter in writing. It includes personal names such as *John Smith*; names of geographic units such as *Holland, Paris*; names of nationalities and religions such as *Dutchman, Christianity*; names of holidays such as *Easter, Thanksgiving Day*; names

of times units such as *Saturday, June;* words used for personification

such as *Nature, Liberty.*

b. Concrete or Abstract Nouns

A concrete noun is a word for a physical object that can be perceived by

the senses–we can see, touch smell the object such as *flower, girl.* An

abstract noun is a word for a concept–it is an idea that exists in our minds

only such as *beauty, justice, mankind.*

c. Countable or Noncountable Nouns

A countable noun can usually be made plural by the addition of –*s* such

as *one girl, two girls.* A noncountable noun is not used in the plural. They

are words for concrete objects stated in an undivided quantity such as

coffee, iron.

d. Collective Nouns

A collective noun is a word for a group of people, animals or objects

considered as a single unit such as *audience, committee, class, family,*

government, group, majority, nation, public, team.

2) Verbs

The verb's varying arrangements with nouns determine the different kinds of

sentences–statements, questions, commands, exclamation. Classified by

complement of verb, a verb may belong to more than one type below:

a. Predicating or Linking Verbs

A predicating verb is the chief word in the predicate that says something about the subject such as *cry, write*. A linking verb is a verb of incomplete predication such as *become, remain, seem.*

b. Transitive or Intransitive Verbs

A transitive verb takes a direct object such as *read, send*; an intransitive verb does not require an object such as *sleep, walk*. Only transitive verbs may be used in the passive voice.

c. Reflexive Verbs

A reflexive verb requires one of the compounds with –*self* (reflexive pronoun) as its object such as *express oneself, wash oneself.*

3) Adjectives

The adjective is a modifier that has the grammatical property of comparison. It is often identified by special derivational endings or by special adverbial modifiers that precede it. Its most usual position is before the noun it modifies, but it fills other positions as well. The types of adjectives are explained below:

a. Determiners

Determiners consist of a small group of structure words without characteristic form.

1. Articles – *the, a, an*

2. Demonstrative adjectives – *this*, plural *these; that*, plural *those*

3. Possessive adjectives – from pronouns such as *my, your, one's*; from nouns such as *John's, the girl's*

4. Numeral adjectives – cardinal such as *four, twenty-five, one hundred;* ordinal such as *fourth, twenty-fifth, one hundredth*

5. Adjectives of indefinite quantity – *some, few, all, more*

6. Relative and interrogative adjectives – *whose, what, which*

b. Descriptive adjectives

Descriptive Adjectives usually indicate an inherent quality such as *beautiful, intelligent,* or a physical state such as age, size, color. Some descriptive adjectives take the form of:

1. Proper adjectives – a Catholic church, a French dish

2. Participial adjectives – an interesting book, a charming view

3. Adjective compounds – with present participles such as *a good-looking girl, a heart-breaking story;* past participles such as *a turned-up nose, new born kittens;* with *–ed* added to nouns such as *absent-minded, ill-tempered.*

4) Adverbs

The adverbs range in meaning from words having a strong lexical content (those that describe the action of the verb, or those that indicate such

meanings as time and place) to those that are used merely for emphasis. The types of adverbs are explained below:

a. Adverbs of manner – *quickly, neatly, awkwardly*

b. Adverb of place and direction – *here, away, outside, left, straight*

c. Adverb of time – definite time such as *yesterday, today, tomorrow;* indefinite time such as *recently, nowadays, soon, already, before, later*

d. Adverb of frequency – *usually, always, sometimes, never*

e. Adverbs of degree – *very, too, quite, extremely, more, almost, entirely, partially, wholly*

5) Verb-Preposition Combination

A preposition may combine with a verb to form a new vocabulary item. This verb-preposition goes by several names-two-part verbs, composite verbs, phrasal verbs. For example *bring about (cause), call up (telephone), give up (surrender),* and *hand in (submit), bear up under (withstand).*

G. Correlation between Inferring Word Meaning from Context and Reading Comprehension

The previous discussions, Smith (1981) conveyed that reading is a process of understanding the text in term of question that the reader formulates the text. The reader conveys meaning, information, ideas, etc from the author to the readers. Pearson (1978: 15) states that there is a good evidence to suggest that people at all levels of development have more difficulty understanding passage composed of

infrequently used rather than frequently used words. It means that word knowledge is strongly related to reading comprehension achievement.

Moreover, Davis (1968) in Nation (1988: 98) did empirical correlational studies and factor analysis arriving at four factors: (1) recalling word meaning, (2) determining meaning from context, (3) finding answer to explicit questions, and (4) drawing inferences. Of all the factors, vocabulary was the most important and had the strongest effect. It means that trying to comprehend a text without sufficient knowledge of vocabulary is assumed impossible. Therefore, many alternative ways to solve this problem proposed by the experts, one of the efforts is by learning the meaning of a word through its use in a sentence. Nuttal (1985: 69) also suggested the reader to develop skill of inferring the meaning of a word by considering its context. It means that the reader infers the meaning of the word by making use of the context in which the word occurred in order to give the reader a rough idea of its meaning. In other words, vocabulary knowledge affects reading comprehension, thus, as one of the solution toward reading gap, ability in inferring word meaning from context has strong correlation with reading comprehension achievement.

H. Theoretical Assumption

From all literatures reviewed above, the researcher assumes that students' ability in inferring word meaning from context seems to have a significant correlation toward their achievement on reading comprehension as Adams and Huggins

(1985) claimed that word recognition abilities are the single best class of discriminator between good and poor reader. It means that trying to comprehend a text without sufficient knowledge of vocabulary is assumed impossible.

The researcher assumes that if the learners have the ability in inferring word meaning from context, they will be able to read effectively and efficiently in terms of obtaining a good comprehension of the text in a small amount of time. As Herlina (1997) found that teaching reference word increased students' reading comprehension achievement. The researcher, therefore, assumed that by having the ability in inferring word meaning from context, students will be able to achieve the learning objective maximally, especially in reading comprehension of first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Kibang, East Lampung.

I.   Hypothesis

Concerning with the theories and the assumptions above, the researcher would like to formulate the hypothesis as follows:

> "There is significant correlation between students' ability in inferring word meaning from context and their achievement on reading comprehension."