

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

In order to understand something, people need to learn about it first. Take English for example; not everyone can understand English, but many non-native speakers can use the language very well. Not only in the case of English, but also in other subjects. Therefore, during the learning process, it is possible to find some people who can learn every subject or several subjects very quickly and well. On the other hand, some people have problems in learning. Thus, many researchers try to find out how learners learn something, what makes learners successful in learning something, and why some people are more effective in learning than others. These questions can only be answered by investigating the learning strategies used by the learners (William & Burden 1997).

Learning reading has never been easy especially for Indonesian students since English is only taught as a foreign language in Indonesia. As a matter of fact, students only learn and use English in the classroom as the demand of the curriculum and not in daily activities. Reading difficulties faced by students in EFL setting come from different sources: poor interpretation of the texts, poor vocabulary, the use of inappropriate reading strategies, and poor grammatical competences (Behroozizad & Bakhtiyarzadeh, 2012: 28). Research shows that the ability of Indonesia students in reading English text is very low (Hamra and Satriyana, 2012).

In reading, we find a technical-term called Critical reading. Critical here does not mean being “*Critical*” about some idea, argument, or piece of writing or claiming

that it is somehow faulty or flawed. More than that, critical reading means a process of analyzing, interpreting and, sometimes evaluating. Moving beyond comprehension, advanced EFL learners need to approach texts with a critical mind. When reading critically, readers use their critical thinking skills to question both the text and their own reading of it. In doing all these processes, it is not as easy as what we see. Learners need to employ strategies in enhancing their critical reading. If reading is an interactive process between the text and the reader to co-construct meaning, then teachers need to know which reading strategies students are successfully using to facilitate that interaction and the students' further interpretation.

As one of language skills, reading in English is expected to so competent. To help, the students must know some strategies in reading such as: using a dictionary to increase vocabulary, finding an unfamiliar word, predicting a content of the text, etc. Beside knowing about some strategies in reading, in order to improve reading and reading comprehension, students need to understand the importance of self-regulatory processes. Self-regulated readers are those who set realistic goals, select effective reading strategies, monitor their understanding of the text, evaluate progress toward their goals, and are highly motivated to read and learn. In other words, they actively use their own skills to build understanding (Gourgey,2001; Pressley, 2002; Zimmerman, Bonner and Kovach, 1996). Not only the knowledge and use of learning strategies are essential for learning and achievement but various individual characteristics of learners influence their ability to be self-regulated and to act strategically during learning (Dermitzaki, Andreou and Paraskeva, 2008).

Before reading, a good reader usually plans his activities from the beginning, the subgoals of action, the means, etc., through which the reader will increase the

possibilities to achieve his ultimate goal. According to Gourgey (as cited in Dermitzaki, Andreou and Paraskeva, 2008), once actual reading begins, skilled readers are able to distinguish important information or to skip information that is not relevant to their reading goals, to predict what is coming up next, and to analyze and combine activities and information. Skilled readers while reading might also activate prior knowledge, generate questions and pay attention to confusing or inconsistent points (Pressley and Hilden, 2006). The above are basic cognitive skills that facilitate performance in many achievement situations. Furthermore, successful readers take initiatives, show high levels of self-activation, persist in facing reading difficulties, and motivate themselves effectively throughout the activity (Dermitzaki, Andreou and Paraskeva, 2008). Good readers are skilled, active, and self-regulated before, during, and after reading using the repertoire of their skills and strategies to the full. Being a good reader leads to be a high achiever in reading.

On the other hand, students' failure to control and regulate their learning and problem-solving processes and limited strategic skillfulness have been associated to poor performance and learning problem (Dermitzaki, Andreou and Paraskeva, 2008). Studies on good reader-poor reader differences in text processing suggest that poor readers usually fail to (a) conceptualize reading as a search for meaning, (b) monitor their comprehension to ensure that they are deriving meaning, (c) engage in strategic behavior to bring meaning when there has been a breakdown in comprehension, and (d) modify their choice of strategies to meet the varying demands of reading (Horner and Shwery, 2002). Furthermore, poor readers in the eyes of Jacob and Paris (as cited in Dermitzaki, Andreou and Paraskeva, 2008) do not clarify adequately the relationships among the facts of the problem and they detect errors less often while

reading in comparison to good readers. In conclusion, researchers generally agree that poor readers lack engagement in strategic action and they lack in monitoring skills, flexibility to adapt and regulate their reading in different situations, and control over their reading comparing to good ones. Being a poor reader leads to be a low achiever in reading.

In learning a language, learners need to utilize suitable learning strategies. In the process of learning and mastering a language, learners employ several learning strategies as tools to help learners to independently master the effectiveness of the language learning (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993). In the recent era, there have been numerous studies of learning strategies used by language learners. Basically, research on learning strategies had two major goals. The first is to identify and compare the learning strategies used by more and less successful language learners. Secondly, to provide instruction to less successful learners that help them to become more successful in their language learning (Chamot, 2001: 25-26). In addition, many researchers (Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Grenfell & Harris, 1999; Harris, 2003; Wharton, 2000) state that language learners utilize a variety of learning strategies whether consciously or unconsciously. However, successful language learners usually employ more effective and various language learning strategies than less successful learners. Thus, one of the factors in English language teaching which needs to be taken into account is about learning strategies. In order to help language learners in general and less successful learners in particular, researchers have recommended integrating strategy training into language curricula (Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Tyacke, 1991).

Based on the explanation above, the writer is going to conduct a study entitled **“Language Learning Strategies Used in Critical Reading Class by High And Low Achievers of the second year Students of the English Education Study Program Of Widya Mandira Catholic University in the Academic Year 2018/2019”**. The writer intends to investigate the choice of learning strategies used by the 2nd-year students of English Education Study Program of Widya Mandira Catholic University in following Critical Reading class as one of the compulsory subjects which needs to be accomplished.

### **1.2 Problem Statements**

Based on the background provided by the writer above, there are 3 major questions that the writer will attempt to answer in this study, they are:

1. What are cognitive strategies employed by high and low achievers of the second year students of the English Education Study Program in reading?
2. What are the differences in cognitive strategies employed by high and low achiever students in reading?
3. What are socio-affective strategies employed by high and low achievers of the second year students of the English Education Study Program in reading?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify and describe cognitive learning strategies employed by high and low achievers of the second year students of the English Education Study program of Widya Mandira Catholic University in reading.

2. To identify and describe the differences in cognitive strategies employed by high and low achiever students in reading.
3. To identify and describe socio-affective learning strategies employed by high and low achievers of the second year students of the English Education Study program of Widya Mandira Catholic University in reading.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Three significances expected from this study are :

##### **1. For the Lecturers and Teachers**

This study will provide information about the use of language learning strategies which will enhance English learning for non-native learners. The better understanding of language learning strategies for lecturers and teachers can help students to learn more successfully and develop their learning autonomy. The writer also expects that by reading this writing, the lecturers and teachers may understand about how students use language learning strategy in reality, in the process of learning English as a foreign language. This study will also provide information about kinds of cognitive strategies used by high and low achiever students in reading. Thus, in the near future, the lecturers and teachers may see which language learning strategy is more effective in helping students enhance their comprehension and ability in English especially in reading. By knowing about the most effective language learning strategy, the lecturers and teachers can help students and direct them to use certain language learning strategies more often based on the right ways which convenient and suitable for the students themselves.

## **2. For the Students**

This writing will give the students a great understanding about types of language learning strategies they can use in learning English as a foreign language and also after reading this paper, the writer expects that the students can employ language learning strategies effectively and hopes that they can really find out what learning strategies really suit themselves and also their goals in learning a language.

## **3. For all the Readers**

The finding of this study will help the readers in general as a reference to conduct another research in the near future and also it is expected to enrich readers' knowledge regarding language learning strategies that can be used if the readers want to learn English as a foreign language.

## **4. For the Writer**

This study is really beneficial for the writer because during the process of writing this paper, the writer could learn many things regarding language learning strategies especially in the taxonomy of language learning strategies telling about the idea of experts strating from years ago up until this recent era which is very beneficial in enriching the knowledge of the writer herself.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitations**

In this paper, the writer is going to present the language learning strategies in general. In this case, the writer will provide information about the theoretical concepts of language learning strategies as a whole, where there are two great understandings of language strategies stated by Oxford which ultimately created SILL (Strategy

Inventory for Language Learning) as the most influential instrument in the area of language learning strategies which lays out the most exhaustive hierarchy of learning strategies to date, and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) which also present very well about language learning strategies itself. The most striking difference between them is the classification of types of learning strategies. According to Oxford (1990), learning strategies consist of six types which are divided into two main categories, direct strategies (Memory, Cognitive, and Compensation strategies) and indirect strategies (Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategies). Whereas according to O'Malley and Chamot, learning strategies comprise three main categories, cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective which refer to the language planning, learning process, monitoring learners' own comprehension or production, and evaluating the outcomes of their own learning.

The limitation of this study is that although there are two schools of Language Learning Strategies, the writer will only make use of the school proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). The writer will present the entire theoretical concepts regarding language learning strategies, but in the research process, the writer will only focus on looking at the behavior of selected students in implementing cognitive and socio-affective language learning strategies according to O'Malley and Chamot (1990) in critical reading.

In this writing also, the writer is going to only find out the differences in cognitive strategies used by high and low achiever students in reading and not in mid achiever students in reading. Thus, the aim of the research is clear that the writer is going to do the research only to find out kinds of cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies used by high and low achiever students in reading by looking at



their behaviors in carrying out tasks given by the lecturer in critical reading class. The types of cognitive strategies that the writer will attempt to investigate are *resourcing, repetition, grouping, deduction, imagery, getting the idea quickly, elaboration, inferencing, note-taking, summarizing* and the types of socio-affective are *question for clarification, cooperation, self-talk, and self-reinforcement*.

Lastly, another limitation which might occur during this study are: (1) the amount of meeting for observation and retrospective interview the writer can conduct. The highest number of meeting the writer plans is 6 meetings where the writer will only focus on the process when the students work on the reading texts and if the writer can not afford in the end due to several externalities (for example, time constraints due to the busy schedule of the lecturer, or the failure in time negotiation with the participants), then the very less meeting the writer plans is only 3 meetings; (2) the things that will become the main concerns of this study are the actions and behaviors of the students in carrying out the reading tasks given, the output produced, and the score that later will be obtained by the students in the end after completing and submitting the tasks; (3) even if the writer has already provided 12 cognitive strategies and 4 socio-affective strategies as the ideal parameter of a good reader, but if in the end, for example, the result shows that even the high achievers only employ less number of cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies as provided in the theory, then the writer will still analyse and report the data only based on the facts and will not try to force or manipulate the data telling that all the strategies are employed effectively by the students.

## 1.6 Definitions of the Terms

There are some terms related to the study that should be clarified, such as:

### 1. Learning Strategies

O'Malley and Chamot (1991:1) state that "learning strategies are special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information". In the context of this writing, what the writer means by learning strategies are specific actions and behaviors used by learners to help their learning to be more successful especially in reading.

### 2. Cognitive Strategies

Wenden (1991:19) states that "cognitive strategies are mental steps or operations that learners use to process both linguistic and socioinguistic content". On the other hand, O'Malley and Chamot (1990:44) state that "cognitive strategies operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning". Cognitive strategies mean by the writer in this writing will be in line with the definition proposed by O'Malley and Chamot which refer to the steps or operations used in learning or problem-solving, which require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials.

### 3. Socio-affective Strategies

Socio-affective strategies mean in this writing are the mental and physical activities that language learners consciously choose to regulate their emotions and interactions with other people during their language learning process. Socio-affective strategies represent a broad grouping that involves either

interaction with another person or ideational control over effect (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

#### 4. High and Low Achiever

According to Collins English Dictionary, high achievers are those who are successful in their studies or their work, usually as the result of their efforts and low achievers are those who achieve less than those around them. In this study, high achievers are the students who passed the three previous reading classes with high score constantly and low achievers are those who passed the three previous reading classes with low score constantly.

#### 5. Reading

Daiek and Anter (2004:5) in their book “ *Critical Reading for College and Beyond*” clearly state that “reading is an active process that depends on both an author’s ability to convey meaning using words and the reader’s ability to create meaning from them”. To read successfully, a reader needs to constantly connect what he has already known about the information to the words the author has written. Reading in this writing means an active process on both an author’s ability to convey meaning using words and the 2nd-year students’ of the English Education Study Program of Widya Mandira Catholic University ability to drag the meaning from what they read.

#### 6. Widya Mandira Catholic University

Widya Mandira Catholic University is one of private universities in Kupang that has 2 main campuses. The first campus is located at Jalan Jendral Ahmad Yani No. 52, Merdeka, Kupang while the second campus is located in Jalan San Juan, Penfui, Kupang.