

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **A. Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension consists of two words. They are reading and comprehension. Generally reading is the process of getting the information from the written words, whether the reading passages tell about the aim to grasp the author's ideas. As Smith (1980:6) states: "reading is an interactive attempt, on the part of the reader, to understand a writer's message. The reader interacts with, and tries, to reconstruct what a writer wishes to communicate." In the process of understanding the writer's message, a reader must have enough linguistic background to make contact with the writer. The reader should predict in line with what the writer says, how it is presented, the using language and language patterns, comprehension becomes quickly.

There have been definitions of reading stated by experts such as Valette (1977:66) argued: 'reading by definition of language skill requires a familiarity one part of the reader with his fundamental building block of the particular language under study, structure and vocabulary.' Then Donna (1980:370) added: "to comprehend the reading, the reader must understand the way an author the uses words and understanding words meanings."

According to Anderson and Durston (1969:5) "reading is more than visual task. Not only must the reader sees and identifies the symbols in front of him but he

must interpret what he reads in the light of his own background, associate it with past experience, one project beyond this terms of ideas, judgments, application, and conclusion.’

When the readers read a text, there will be interaction between the readers and the authors. This ideas is supported by Smith (1980:205) said that “reading comprehension means the understanding, evaluating, and utilizing the information and ideas gained through an interaction between the reader and the author.” This discusses that to comprehend the whole reading materials the reader must learn some skills to improve the reading skill.

There are some activities when the reading takes place as Pett (1982:18) said “visual mechanical skill of recognition, an ability to relate letters or group of letters to their sound correlate, remembering the meaning of individual words, integrating grammatical and semantic clues, and relating this to the reader’s own general knowledge and his knowledge of the subject being read.

When the readers read a reading text, they must have purposes to understand the author’s idea. Shaw (1986:518) argues the purposes of reading comprehension are as follows:

- a. To gain and understand accurate information and ideas.
- b. To recognize organization and style
- c. To interpret what is read in terms of personal experiences
- d. To analyze and evaluate

Reading is not only the need for the person, but reading is very important to the activity in every day life. Reading comprehension as defined by Grabe in Landry (2002) is "a combination of identification and interpretation skills". More than just reinforcement of oral communication, fluent reading is done when new information interacts with previous knowledge.

Bond et al (1984:2) defined reading as “the recognition of printed or written symbols which is served as stimuli to recall of meanings built up through the readers’ past experience.”

Goodman in Landry (2002:3) defined reading “as a process whereby a hypothesis is constructed based on the clues already sampled.”

According to Harmer (2002:70), there are six principles behind the teaching of reading:

1. Reading is not a passive skill
2. Students need to be engaged with what they are reading
3. Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language.
4. Prediction is a major factor in reading.
5. Match the task to the topic.
6. Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full.

Flavell and Wellman, 1977 in Masters, Mori & Mori (1993) state that there are four variables important to reading comprehension for the teacher and students to follow:

1. Text

The aspects of material to be read which will determine the memorization, and the later retrieval (e.g. vocabulary difficulty, sentence structure and writing style)

2. Task

The reason for reading (for fun, for examination, for answering questions at the end of a chapter)

3. Strategies

The activities that learner uses to commit the information to memorize and recall it later. Two strategies include fix up strategies (strategies employed by the learner to avoid comprehension failure) and study strategies (other approaches to text processing such as note taking, skimming, outlining, summarization, and self questioning).

4. Characteristics of the learner

Background experiences, reading skills, interests, motivation, experience of the subject area.

Moreover Ur (2002:140) stated that successful reading results from the understanding we bring to a text which is often based on previous knowledge of a type of story or context.

Furthermore according to Bond et al (1984:265) "Comprehension depends on the background the reader brings to the reading, his vocabulary development, and his ability to interpret the author's words into concepts. It has been emphasized that true reading is reading with understanding or comprehension. Comprehension depends on

facility in using concepts or meanings evolved through experience. To be of use in reading, the concepts acquired through experience must be attached to words or groups of words as symbols of their meanings.”

Sequera (1995) stated that “reading a text implies an interaction between the reader’s background knowledge and the text itself”.

## **B. Schema Activation Strategy**

What readers bring to the reading text affects their comprehension. Prior knowledge of readers is an important component in the reading process. Porter (2001) stated that “prior knowledge refers to all the knowledge which readers have acquired through their lives. Some theorists use the term prior knowledge synonymously with world knowledge, background knowledge, memory storage, or experiential background.”

“Prior experiences help readers fit what they read into meaningful patterns. When people are lacking any experiential base related to what they read, they may find the information difficult to understand, and they may fail to grasp certain important ideas.”(Savage and Armstrong 1996:474)

Prior knowledge and reading comprehension seem to go hand-in-hand. Increasing reading comprehension may come from building background knowledge. Piaget and Inhelder (1985) said that, “when people encounter new areas of knowledge they begin thinking about the concepts in a concrete way and react experiences to connect new information to what is already known from their own experiences.”

Schema theory is a theory about knowledge, about how knowledge is represented, and about how that representation facilitates the use of knowledge in various ways. “A schema is an abstract knowledge structure derived from repeated experiences with an object or event. It is knowledge stored in memory that plays an important role in the interpretation of new information.” (Kitao: 1989)

Many reading texts will be easier to understand if the reader has the relevant background knowledge. Likewise, Hedge (1985:44) said that “reading is influenced by the way in which the subject matter of topic to a reader’s existing background knowledge.” He categorized background knowledge into three kinds as mentioned below:

1. General knowledge

Teachers of English as foreign language have to know the way to explain or to assist students in activating their prior knowledge. If the topic that is given unfamiliar to the students, teacher can assist this process in valuable ways by giving a sensible mix of the familiar and unfamiliar, and by presenting new things easily.

2. Subject specific knowledge

By beginning with known material, students are able to use their background knowledge of particular subject by helping to learn new vocabulary and to understand the structure.

3. Cultural knowledge

Cultural background affects success in reading. It is knowledge which is gained from the readers' culture.

There are many definitions about schema. D'andre (1995) defined "schema as organizational unit." It shows that schema is a set of relate place holders or slots which can be filled in by context or by additional information from the reader. It means when readers read the text they get new information. Thus, the new information is influenced by the old information which is placed on the other slots.

Individuals acquire schemata through their experiences. As individuals have more experiences, they refine, reshape, correct, and restructure their schemata. According to Singhal (1998:1), there are three types of schema:

1. Content schema (background knowledge) refers to a reader's background or world knowledge. This provides readers with a foundation, a basis for comparison. Content schema plays an integral role in reading comprehension. Readers appear to have a higher level of comprehension when the content is familiar to them.
2. Formal schema (textual schema) refers to the organizational forms and rhetorical structures of written text. It can include knowledge of different text types and genres, and also includes the understanding that different types of texts use text organization, language structures, vocabulary, grammar, level of formality/ register differently.
3. Linguistic (language) schema includes the decoding features needed to recognize words and hoe they fit together in a sentence.

“Schema activation is a strategy to use with encoding complex information. This relates new information to students’ prior knowledge.”(Huitt:2000)

“Schema theory describes the process by which readers combine their own background knowledge with the information in a text to comprehend that text.”(Stott: 2001).

Thus according to Candace and Vaughn (1991:154), “Schema activation strategy is designed to get students to think about and apply what they are known to stories.”

“In schema theoretic terms, a reader comprehends a message when he or she is able to bring to mind a schema that gives a good account of the objects and events described in the message.”(Cox 1998: 269)

Because the goal of schema activation is to help students become independent readers (Cox 1998:269), the reading process, therefore,” involves identification of genre, formal structure and topic, all of which activate schemata and allow readers to comprehend the text.”(Swales in Stott 2001:6)

Schema activation strategy includes activating prior knowledge and concept development (Cox 1998:269).McWhorter (1989:76) claimed that “activating your background knowledge on a topic before reading makes for effective learning because:

1. It allows you to relate new information to information already stored in your memory.
2. Topics become more interesting if you can connect them to your own experience.



3. Material that is meaningful is easier to learn and remember than that which is not.
4. Comprehension will be easier because you will have already thought about some of the ideas the assignment presents.”

### **C. Teaching Reading through Schema Activation Strategy in SMP Negeri 2**

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In teaching learning activities the teacher should be able to select an appropriate material that is suitable to the aim of the students' level. Beside that, it should be supported by interesting strategy.

In reading class, teacher uses reading material in the text books and in the teaching reading itself teacher uses strategy to activate their background knowledge and improve their comprehension.

In applying Schema Activation Strategy, teacher chooses the appropriate material that adjusted to the level of the students. By doing it, the students will be interested to follow the teaching learning process. Since the students are still in second year of Junior High School, teacher can only choose reading text that suitable to their level.

Group discussions are made in order to allow students to share their experiences. This is done because not all students have the same idea with the text. By having the group discussion, students who have the similar experience as the reading text, can share to the other students in the group.