

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter attempts to discuss theories and the previous studies related to this research. There are five major subtopics to be reviewed in this chapter namely reading skill, reading problems, reading strategies, related studies, and conceptual framework.

#### **Reading Skill**

Reading is one of the four skills in language learning which is used to facilitate the learning process. The word reading has been defined variously by experts, which make difficult to get the comprehensive definition of it. However, the basis of the commonly definition of the reading based on these three categorization namely linguistic level, discourse level, and level of cognition (Qanwal, Karim, 2014). On the linguistic level, reading is defined as an interpretative or decoding skill. On the level discourse level, reading is defined as interactive skill, whereas on the level of cognition reading is defined as an active, cognitive and thinking process.

Reading is regarded as interpretative or decoding skill, as it engages the readers to decode the textual message by identifying the printed symbols in order to interpret the meanings (Qanwal & Karim, 2014). Many researchers define reading as interpretative process for instance Urquhart and Weir (1898), Williams (1996) and Grabe and Stoller (2002). According to Urquhart and Weir (1898, p.22) reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print. Similarly, Williams (1996) defined reading as a process of looking

at and understanding the written text. Furthermore, Grabe and Stoller also define reading in a same way. They stated that reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed pages and interpret the information appropriately (2002, p.9).

Reading is defined as an interactive skill because in reading the readers do interaction process. Many experts defined reading as an interactive skill. To begin with, Ransom as cited in Qanwal and Karim (p.1020) stated that reading is a conversation between the writer and the readers. Nuttal (1996, p.4) defined reading as a process of getting out the text as nearly as possible to get the message which the writer puts into it. Likewise, Singhal (2006, p.7) defined reading in more comprehensive as a dynamic and interactive process in which learners might use L1 related knowledge, and real-world knowledge as well as their personal purpose and goals, to arrive at an understanding of written material.

Some experts defined reading as an active, cognitive, and thinking process employed by the readers in order to catch the writer' meaning. For instance, Rauch and Weinstein (1968, cited in Qanwal, 2014, p. 1020) defined reading as an active and alert thinking process where the readers match the writer thought for thought. Nunan (2003) defines reading as thinking, in which consist of active process of identifying important ideas, comparing, evaluating, and applying them. He proposes that readers' background knowledge will influence the reader's interpretation of textual meaning.

To conclude that, the researcher conceptualized reading as an active process which the readers interact with the writers' idea on the written text in order to be able to interpret the meaning or message that the writer puts into it in the close meaning. It

needs the utilizing of the readers background knowledge and the linguistic knowledge of the text.

### **Problems in reading English texts.**

Reading in L2 (Second Language) is not as smooth reading in L1 (First Language). According to Vorhaus (1984), in L1 reading the readers can smoothly interact with the author' ideas because they use their own native language in order to develop the concept. They employ their language knowledge such as structure, grammar, and words, even if they might not understand what they are reading but they are capable to use their background knowledge to deal with the incomprehensible. However, in L2 reading the readers are limited by their knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary (linguistic knowledge), and must struggle to understand the content in order to obtain the writers ideas.

Moreover, vocabulary and sentence structure were declared as the main problems for students in reading a text. As Gunning (2002) stated that limited knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure is regarded as the main problems for students in reading text. The lack of knowledge of both vocabulary and sentence structure interferes with the students' success in reading a text. Therefore, in second or foreign language reading, the students need both vocabulary and linguistic knowledge (Day & Bamford, 1998). Vocabulary knowledge is extremely useful for reading comprehension since it is used to determine word meaning in a text. Likewise, sentence structure knowledge is necessary for comprehension. It is the

knowledge of syntax or word order, which used to determine the meaning of sentence and grammatical function of a word.

In relation to the vocabulary, the problems involve difficulties with words. These difficulties include technical vocabulary, super-ordinates, synonyms, antonyms, and words with several meanings (Nuttal, 2000). Technical vocabulary is made of words used for specific purpose and it can create reading problems because it is difficult to understand. Thus, the students should be taught with the concept of these words when they are reading. Then, super-ordinate is the word which has a very general meaning, for example the word *building* can mean a *house*, a *school*, a *hotel*, an *office* or others. The problem is the readers might conclude that these words have the same meaning because they cannot classify what differences the words *building* offers (Nuttal, 2000). In addition, synonym is used to provide the explanations with a simple and common word in a sentence. The problem is that when the writer uses different words or a similar meaning to refer to and to explain the meaning of a word in a sentence, the reader cannot understand this meaning because he has poor vocabulary knowledge. On the other way, antonym is the word use the opposite meaning to help the reader understand the meaning of words and sentences. However, the poor reading may fail to understand it. Furthermore, word with several meanings is also reported as the reading problems. It is difficult to be comprehended because the readers have to read and think carefully to find a close meaning or other possible meaning (Nuttal, 2000).

Additionally, the complex and very long sentences also cause problems in reading comprehension for EFL students learning. The complex sentences refer to

sentences that contain many clauses or reduced clauses and abstract concepts. Also sentences with cohesive words such as *however, because, thus, although, and furthermore* (Aebersold & Field, 1997). Moreover, the complex noun groups, nominalizations, coordinating conjunctions, participial phrases, and prepositional phrases are the main causes of problems in reading comprehension of the students because they are carried to the complex text which difficult to understand (Nuttall, 2000). Therefore, the readers are necessary to have the ability to understand how a text is organized and understand the relationship between sentences (O' Donnell & Wood, 2004).

All of the explanations above are the potential problems regarding to linguistic which the learners will face in reading. Other problem appears from the learners own self. Many readers often perceive vocabulary as the most important component in order to achieve comprehension and then they separate the whole content into isolated pieces. As Seliger (1972, p.50 cited in Chung, p.2) stated the readers often separate the whole content into isolated pieces, and focus their attention on the individual word units. Then, it would be the problems for the students to get the comprehensive understanding of the text; it can lead the readers to fail in attaining the message that the writer puts. As stated by Eskey (1986, p.10 as cited in Chung, p.3) that in L2 reading, the readers automatically separate the whole article into fragment sentences or words, thereby they acquire an isolated, divided meaning, lack of a continuity which is called "short-term memory". In this situation, the comprehension is not clear because the readers acquire a series of separate meaning so they have to reread in order to connect all of the individual meaning in the whole.

Therefore, the knowledge of the readers is an essential element in reading. According to Berhardt (1987 as cited in Chung, p.3) comprehension is the process of relating new information to the information already stored in memory (background knowledge). In other word, in the reading process the readers not only look at the words in the text, but also must activate their background knowledge, and then build all the elements into their comprehension (Rumelhard, 1980 as cited in Chung, p.3). Thereby, if the readers lack of background knowledge they will have difficulties in building the comprehension.

Thus, we can conclude that both the linguistic knowledge and the background knowledge are essential for the readers in order to comprehend the text in reading. If the students lack of linguistic knowledge in L2 they cannot guess the content of the text, thus they cannot relate it with their background knowledge.

### **Reading Strategies.**

According to Cohen (1990) strategies includes both general approaches and specific actions or techniques to learn a second language. In reading, a reader will employs strategies in order to overcome reading problems. Reading strategy is a mental process that reader consciously chooses in accomplishing reading task (Cohen, 1990, p. 83). According to this definition, generally the readers are aware of the strategies that they use.

There are many possible strategies can be chosen. Oxford (1990) divided strategy into two categories. They are direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are the strategies that directly involve the target language, whereas indirect strategies

are not directly involved the target language but they support and manage the language learning. There are three types of direct strategies; they are *memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies* and three types included in indirect strategies namely metacognitive, affective and social strategies. The following are the types of strategies proposed by Oxford (1990):

**Memory strategies.** The function of memory strategies are to storage and retrieve of new information. Memory strategies help the learners store new knowledge in memory and enable the learners to retrieve information from memory when they need to use it for comprehension. Memory strategies are divided into four; they are *creating mental linkages, applying images and sound, reviewing well and employing action.*

**Creating mental linkages.** There are three types of strategies that useful for creating mental linkages, they are *grouping, associating or elaborating and placing new words into context.*

Grouping involves classifying or reclassifying what is read or heard into meaningful group. The using of these strategies is to reduce number of unrelated elements. Sometimes, it involves labeling the groups, as well. When the readers use this strategy, they involve the other strategies too such as paying attention and taking notes.

Associating or elaborating involves associating new language information with familiar concepts already in memory. Naturally, association is likely to strengthen comprehension, as well as making the material easier to remember.

Everyone has their own way in associating something; any associations must have meaning to one learner, even though it might not make a sense to someone else.

Placing a new word into a context involves placing new words or expressions that have been heard or read into a meaningful context, such as a spoken or written sentence, as a way of remember it.

*Applying images and sounds.* There are four strategies for applying images and sounds are useful for remembering new expressions that have been heard or read. These strategies include *using imagery, semantic mapping, using keywords, and representing sounds in memory.*

Oxford (1990) stated that good way to remember what has been heard or read in the new language is to create the mental image of it. One kind of imaging has special value in reading, and it involves remembering a written item by picturing the place where it is located.

According to Oxford (1990), semantic mapping is making an arrangement of words into a picture, which has a key concept at the center or at the top, and related words and the concepts linked by the key concept by a lines or arrows. This strategy involves grouping, using imagery, and associating or elaborating. This strategy is valuable for improving both memory and comprehension of new expressions. It can be used for pre-listening or pre-reading activities in order to help the learners to understand and remember vocabulary that will be hear or read. Moreover, it can be used as the basis of listening and reading activity by giving the main concept or expression and asking to listen and fill in the rest. In semantic mapping, there is no



single "right answer" because every student will have different approaches to clustering their idea.

Using keyword combines sounds and images so that the learners can easily remember what they hear or read in the new languages. There are two steps in making keywords. Firstly, identify a familiar word in one's language or another language that sound like a new words. Secondly, generate a visual image of the new word and the familiar one interacting in some way

Representing sound in memory helps learners remember what they hear by making auditory rather than visual representations of sounds. This involves linking the new word with familiar word or sounds from any language whether the new language, ones' own language, or any language.

**Reviewing well.** This strategy is especially useful for remembering new materials in target language. This strategy contains of *structure reviewing* strategy. It entails reviewing at different intervals, at the first close together and then increasingly far apart.

**Employing action.** Employing action is divided into using *physical response or sensation and using mechanical techniques*.

Using physical response or sensation involves physically acting out a new expression that have been heard. This strategy can be applied both for response to command expression orally and for remembering written material. Learners can act out what they read or associate physical sensations with specific words found in reading passages.

Using mechanical techniques are helpful to remember what new target language information has been heard or read, it involve moving or changing something that is concrete. For example, the use of flashcards with the new words written on one side and the definition written on the other side.

**Cognitive strategies.** Cognitive strategies are divided into four strategies, they are *practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output.*

**Practicing.** There are three practicing strategies that can be used in reading, they are; *repeating, recognizing and using formulas and pattern, and practicing naturalistically.*

Repeating refers to saying or doing something over. This strategy is important for the four skills. In reading, repeating might mean reading a passage more than one to understand it more completely. The techniques could be applied for the learners to read a passage in several times for different purposes. For example, to get the general drift of the main ideas, to predict, to read for details, to write down questions and so on. The learners might also take notes about the reading passages then review them in several times.

Using formulas and pattern refers to being aware of using routine formulas, such as "hello, how are you? This strategy can enhance the learner's comprehension and production.

Practicing naturalistically refers to practicing the new language in natural or in realistic settings. Such as participating in conversation, reading a book, or article, listening to a lecture, or writing a letter in a new language. In reading, practicing

naturalistically means using the language in authentic way for reading comprehension. The common medium for reading materials is print. There many of sources in reading material such as *magazines, newspaper, book, advertisements, brochures, store catalogs, timetables* and so on.

***Receiving and sending messages.*** There are two strategies under receiving and sending the message. They are *getting the idea quickly and using resources for receiving and sending messages.*

Getting the idea quickly includes skimming and scanning. Skimming and scanning can help the students in comprehending the text. Skimming involves searching the main ideas that the writers want to deliver and scanning involves searching for specific detail of interest to the learners. This strategy helps the learners understand rapidly what they hear or read in a target language. Preview questions technique is useful to assist it.

Using resources for receiving and sending messages refers to use print or non-print resources to understand incoming messages or to produces out-coming messages. It involves using resources to find out the meaning of what is heard and read. The printed resources such as *dictionary, grammar book, word list and phrase book* may be useful for better understand incoming message (reading and listening).

***Analyzing and reasoning.*** This strategy can help learners to use logical thinking to understand and use of the grammar rules and vocabulary of the new language. This strategy divided into five strategies namely reasoning deductively, analyzing expression, analyzing contrastively, unslating, and transferring.

Reasoning deductively provides us to use general rules and applying them into the new target language situations. This is a top-down strategy which involves deriving hypotheses about the meaning of what is heard or read by general rules that the learners already knows.

Analyzing expressions strategy used to understand something spoken in the new language by determining the meaning of a new expression and breaking it down into parts. This strategy helpful for listening but it more useful for reading because the reader have more time to go back and analyze complicated expressions when reading than listening.

Analyzing contrastively is the strategy that most learners use naturally. It involves comparing elements (sounds, vocabulary, and grammar) of the new language with elements of one's own native language to determine the similarities and differences. It is used at the early stages of language learning to understand the meaning of what is heard or read.

Translating allows the learners to use their own language as the basis for understanding what he heard or read in the new language. It also helps the learners produce the new language in speech or writing. However, word-for-word (verbatim) translation can provide wrong interpretation of the target language materials.

Transferring is the last strategy of analyzing and reasoning, which directly applying previous knowledge to facilitate new knowledge in target language. It involves applying linguistic knowledge of or conceptual knowledge from one field to another as long as the language concepts are parallel but most of them are not.

Transferring can lead into inaccuracy if the learners transfer irrelevant knowledge to other language.

***Creating structure for input and output.*** There are three strategies to create structure. The strategies are necessary for both comprehension and production in the new language. They are *Taking notes, Summarizing and Highlighting*.

Taking notes is a very important strategy for listening and reading, but learners are not thought to use it well. The focus of taking notes actually is on understanding not on the writing, note taking is often thought as an advance tool to be used at higher level proficiency, such as when listening to lectures. However, developing note taking can begin at very early stages of learning.

Summarizing is making a shorter version of the original passage. This strategy can be more challenging and useful than taking notes, because it often requires greater condensation of thought.

Highlighting emphasize the major points through *color, underlining, capital letters, initial capitals, big writing, bold writing, \*stars\*, boxes, circles* and so on.

**Compensation Strategies.** According to Oxford (1990), compensation helps learners to overcome knowledge limitations in the four skills. Compensation strategies are intended to make up inadequate repertoire of grammar especially in vocabulary.

***Guessing intelligently in Listening and reading.*** Guessing is important for reading. Learners can understand a lot through systematic guessing without comprehend all details. Guessing intelligently include first, using linguistic clues. Learners' previous knowledge of the target language can provide linguistic clues to

the meaning of what is read. *Suffixes, prefix, and word order* are useful linguistic clues for guessing meaning (Oxford, 1990). Second is using other clues. Other clues come from other sources that are not related to the language. According to Oxford (1990) *forms of address* such as *title or nicknames* help the learners guess what they are read. For example: the term “my pet, “dear husband”. It is imply the close relationship between two characters. It is also possible to get many clues by noticing text’.

**Metacognitive Strategies.** Metacognitive strategies are the first strategies of the direct strategies. Oxford (1990) stated that metacognitive strategies provide a way for the learners to coordinate their learning process. Metacognitive strategies are essentials for successful language reading, since the learners are often overwhelmed by the unfamiliar vocabulary, confusing rules, different writing systems, which can be overcome by the conscious use of metacognitive strategies such as paying attention and linking with already familiar materials.

Metacognitive strategy is divided into eleven strategies that is classified into three sections namely *centering the learning, arranging and planning, and evaluating the learning*. However, only ten of them which can be used in reading namely overviewing and linking with already known material, paying attention, finding out about language learning, organizing, setting goals and objectives, identifying the purpose of language task, planning for a language task, seeking practice opportunities, self-monitoring and self evaluating.

**Affective strategies.** The term affective refers to emotions, attitudes, motivation, and values. The effective side of the learners is probably one of the most

influencing the success or failure on the language learning. Negative feeling can stunt progress of learning, while positive emotions and attitudes can make the learning more effective and enjoyable. Thus, affective strategies is the strategies that can be used by the learners in order to overcome the over anxiety, anxiousness nervous, anger, and any other feeling. This strategy is divided into three classifications namely lowering your anxiety, encourage yourself, taking your emotional temperature.

***Lowering anxiety.*** There are three types of strategies that can be used by the learners to overcome their anxiety. The first is using *progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation*. The learners can relaxing all of the major muscle of the body such as on the neck and face, or the technique of the breathing deeply from the diaphragm, or the technique of mediating by focusing on the mental image and sound. The second is using music, listening to the soothing music such as classical music or concert. The last is using laughter to relax by watching a funny movie, reading a humorous book, listening to a joke and other.

***Encouraging yourself.*** This type of strategies is used to encourage the learners by *making positive statement, taking risks wisely, and rewarding themselves*. The language learners are often forgetting this strategy; they often expect encouragement from other people and do not realize that they can provide their own. Furthermore, the potential encouragement may come from inside the learners because it is available in many learning situations. Students can make positive statement by saying or writing positive statement in order to feel more confident in learning the new language. This is the example of positive statement in reading "I enjoy understanding the new language, I can get the general meaning without knowing

every word, I'm reading faster than I was a month ago" (Oxford, 1990, p.165). Besides, the learners also can take risk wisely. This strategy involves a conscious decision to take reasonable risks by neglect the possibility to make a mistake or encounter difficulties. This is the example of using risk taking in reading: Ali decides to guess the meaning in the article, even though his guessing might not always be right. The last strategy is rewarding. Learners can give a valuable reward for a particularly good performance in new language. Learners often expect to be rewarded by the external source such as praise from the teachers, certificate of accomplishment or other. However, learners need more reward than they get externally, but they need it more regularly and more often. Some of the potential reward comes from the learners themselves. Therefore, the learners need to discover how to reward themselves for each good work in language learning. Each person need a different reward, thus it must be meaningful to the person.

***Taking your personal temperature.*** This strategy helps learners to assess their feelings, motivations, and attitudes in order to differentiate negative attitudes and emotions that impede language-learning progress. The learners will be able to control their affective, when the learners know how they are feeling and why they are feeling that way. There are four strategies can be used by the learners. The first, *listening to your body*, it means to pay attention to the signal given by the body. The signal maybe reflect negative feelings such as stress, tension, worry, fear, angers or it can also reflect the positive feeling such as happiness, interest, calmness, and pleasure. Learners need to learn to pay attention to these physical signals frequently. Second, *using checklist*, a checklist help the learners to ask them questions about their own



emotional condition in more structured. For example, Lisa uses a checklist each night to note her changing attitudes about her intensive English course, her teachers and her own progress in learning English. The third, *writing a language learning diary* to describe learners feeling attitudes and perceptions about the language learning process. They can also include specific information about specific information like strategies which the learners find effective or ineffective for the language learning. and the last, the learners can *discussing their feeling with someone*. Language learning is difficult and learners need to discuss this process with other people. Learners can give benefit from discussing their feeling to a teacher, her friend, parent, and counselor.

**Social Strategies.** This strategy is essentials for the four language skills. This strategy is divided into three part namely *asking question, cooperating, and empathizing*.

**Asking questions.** The learners can use *asking for clarification or verification* in listening and reading, and *asking for correction* for speaking and writing. Learners can ask someone who more proficient in the target language

**Cooperating,** The learners can *cooperate with peers* and the *more proficient users* of the language in order to improve their language skills. The first strategy is cooperating with peers. This strategy can involve learning with partners either in pair or in a small group regularly or temporary.

**Empathizing.** There are two strategies in this section. First, developing Cultural Understanding, this strategy means the effort of understand the relation of the other person toward the culture and trying to empathize with another person

through learning about the culture. The second is becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings. This strategy provides the learners to observe the behaviors of other as a possible expression of their thoughts and feelings, asking about their thought and feelings when appropriate.

### **Review of Related Studies**

There are some previous researches about reading problems and reading strategies. To begin with, the study was conducted by Chawwang (2008) entitled "*An Investigation of English Reading Problems of Thai 12Th-Grade Students in Nakhonratchasima Educational Regions 1, 2, 3, and 7*". This research aimed to investigate English reading problems of Thai students in educational regions at Nakhonratchasima in the academic year 2006. The participants were composed of 840 students studying in grade 12, 420 students were from science program and 420 students were from arts program. This research was quantitative research with reading test as the instrument. In this research the participant were asked to take a reading test to test their English reading ability. It divided into three parts, they were sentence structure, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. The test was consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions to be answered within two hours. The percentage of the test result was used to determine the participants' reading ability.

The research reported that the reading ability of the participants in the three areas of sentence structure, vocabulary, and reading comprehension was at a low level. Most of them (over 70% of all participants) were unable to give the correct answers on the test. Moreover, there were no differences in reading ability between

students in the science and the arts groups. Chawwang concluded that science students and arts students had similar problems in reading.

Other research about reading problem and strategies was conducted by Chung entitled "A study of reading comprehension problems in English encountered by first year students of faculty of Vietnamese studies at HUE". This research investigated the main reading comprehension problems encountered by first year of non-major English students at HUE and the strategies students used in processing a text and solving their comprehension problems. This research was a survey research, it used questionnaire as the research instrument. The questionnaire was distributed randomly to 13 students of Vietnamese Studies faculty at HUE. The research was aimed to figure out what reading comprehension problems students encounter and how teachers teach English reading, as well as how students read in English. The result of the research showed that they face difficulties in vocabularies: they face the problems with unknown words, keeping the meaning in mind, background knowledge, structure, tenses, linking words, and pronoun. The researcher stated that to help the students to read, the teachers need to build knowledge of vocabulary by exposing the students more efficiently, and directly to read vocabulary. Thus, he stated that the students need to encourage guessing the meaning while reading.

Other research about reading strategy is conducted by Elmadwi and Stepherd (2014), entitled "A Critical Study of the Problems Faced by the Libyan Students in Reading and Comprehension of English as a Foreign Language". This study takes the students of the English Department at the University of Zawia, Libya as the participants and the setting. This research is quantitative research, which aims to

explore the reading strategy most often used among Libyan University students, and to show how male and females use learning strategies when they face a text in English, also to show the relationship between the learners' strategies use and their EFL proficiency. The results of the study report that the most frequently reading strategies used was metacognitive strategies, there is a statistically differences between male and female learners in their use of language learning strategies. Furthermore, the results also show differences between students' level of proficiency and their use of language learning strategies.

The previous studies above indicated that both the Thai students at Nakhonratchasima University and the Vietnamese students at HUE had the problems on the sentence structure, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Therefore, in this research, the researcher was interested to know reading comprehension problems encountered by EFL learners particularly the students of English Education Department in UMY. In addition, the researcher is also interested to explore the strategies used by the English Education Department UMY to overcome their reading comprehension problems.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Based on the literature review above, there are many potential problems in reading comprehension. The problems are dealing with the vocabularies, complex sentence structure, grammar, background knowledge, students' skill, and knowledge in the L2. Besides, the language learners can use many reading strategies to overcome those problems. These strategies are memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation

strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategies, and social strategies (Oxford, 1990).

Strategies can facilitate the learners to comprehend the text successfully. If the learners use appropriate strategies for reading task then it will help them in comprehending the text. On the contrary, if they use inappropriate strategies in reading task it might be confusing. A number variety and frequency of strategies employed is not an indicator of how successful they will be on the task. Whereas, some tasks may be require the use of various strategies repeatedly and the other tasks may require the use of various strategies once but successfully. Therefore, the students need to know the procedure of utilizing those strategies