

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

In daily activities, reading becomes one of the crucial parts for all people in their life. Reading makes people easy to verify knowledge of writing form. Nunan said that reading is a fluent process of the readers, combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning.¹ Through reading, people can improve their own knowledge, experience and enlarge their main set of thinking. Thus, Reading helps the people to gain information or verify existing knowledge and it can be used to criticize the ideas of the writer in texts.

Furthermore, in teaching and learning process, reading is an important skill that should be mastered by the students in order to improve their general language skills in English. Reading also helps students to enlarge their vocabulary and makes students easy to find new ideas, facts, and experiences. In other words, the students can get opportunities to explore and expand their knowledge by understanding the information got from the books or other written form sources.

¹ David Nunan. *Practical English Language Teaching*. (New York : McGraw Hill, 2003),

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The purpose of reading is to inform the students about something they are interested in, or challenges of their knowledge on certain matters.² In other words, reading activity can give much information and can expand knowledge about something that the students want to know more about it. However, even though reading is something that is very crucial for students, reading is not an easy matter. Reading requires a deep understanding of the reading passages in order to get the content of the text. There are many factors that influence the students' reading ability such as an ability to activate prior knowledge and connect the applicable prior experiences to the reading, set purposes, predict, decode text (identify words and sentence meanings), visualize (see characters, settings, situations, ideas, mental models) etc.³

In writing a text, especially in the English language, the authors use grammars and structures that are arranged well in creating an interesting text such as the use of tenses, conjunctions, punctuations, and so forth. Students should be able to grasp and understand all these aspects in comprehending a passage. Besides, understanding transition words is also very important in the process of comprehending the texts. Roloff & Brosseit said that transitional words show the relationships between the parts of a sentence, between the sentences in a paragraph, or between the paragraphs in a longer piece of

² KalayoHasibuan and Muhammad Fauzan A. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)*. (Pekanbaru: Alaf Riau Graha Press, 2007), p. 114

³ Jeff Wilhelm. *Understanding Reading Comprehension: What It Really Means to Comprehend Text and Why Reading Comprehension and Teaching It are More Complicated Than Most of Us Think!*, (Retrieved on February 24, 2014), <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/understanding-reading-comprehension>

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writing and the writers use those transitional words in their writing in order to make their story stay in sequence.⁴ In relation, Hoggat also said that Understanding an author's use of signal/transition words will help guide reading and the ability to locate signal/transition words will also aid the readers' ability to comprehend written material.⁵ Thus, by mastering transitional words, students will be easier in comprehending the contents of the texts.

Based on the statement above, it shows that reading is a complex cognitive process. It is because reading is not only reading written texts, but willing a serious comprehension in order to get the messages from the writers and understanding the contents of the text itself. On the other hand, students should be able to master all of the aspects that can help them to improve their reading comprehension ability.

In School Based Curriculum (KTSP), it is stated that one of the objectives of the English subject that includes in Senior High School is Reading. Based on the school-Based Curriculum of the Eleventh grade of Senior high school, students are required to be able to comprehend meaning short text and simple essay of report, narrative, and analytical exposition in daily life that are useful for communication purpose.⁶ Islamic Boarding Senior High School Bahrul 'Ulum is one of the Senior High Schools in

⁴ Roloff & Brosseit. *Transitional Words and Phrase*. (Retrieved on February 24, 2014), <http://www.csun.edu/~hcpas003/transwords.html>

⁵ Michael J. Hoggat. *Signal and transitional Words*. (Retrieved on February 24, 2014), www.saddlebackdps.com

⁶ Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, *Silabus Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 2006



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Kampar Regency. This school uses School Based Curriculum as its learning guide of English. It means that, according the curriculum, narrative text and its characteristics such as language use (past tense, transitional words, adjective, etc.) has been taught by English teachers in Islamic Boarding Senior High School Bahrul 'Ulum to the students.

In this islamic boarding senior high school, all structures of narrative text and its language features especially for transitional words have been taught not only through teachers' manual explanation, but also the materials available in their text books. Those things are very helpfull for the students to comprehend and understand the contents of narrative text. Not only the forms of transitional words, but they are also taught kinds of transitional words and how to identify transitional words that occur on narrative text. By learning about transitional words, students are strongly expected to be able to use transitional words when they are in a process of reading narrative text. In narrative text, the writers always use transitional words to connect an event to others. Thus, understanding transitional words makes students easy to comprehend and understand the sequences of events happend in the story.

From the explanation above, ideally the students of the eleventh grade of Islamic Boarding Senior High School Bahrul 'Ulum should be able to understand all of the aspects of reading subject. In short, they have no problems in reading activity, especially on narrative text. Unfortunately, after researcher conducted an interview with Mrs. Tetti Erliana Siregar, S.Pd. as the English teacher and did direct observations at 7th and 8th May 2013, the

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researcher found that some of the students still had problems in comprehending reading text especially for narrative. It means that the students' reading comprehension was still far away from the expectation of curriculum and it can be seen from the following symptoms:

1. Some of the students are able to recognize transitional words, but they still have difficulties in recognizing generic structures of narrative text.
2. Some of the students are able to identify kinds of transitional words, but they are still confused in determining the order of events on narrative text.
3. Some of the students are able to identify the function of transitional words, but they are still not able to recall the details of setting on narrative text.
4. Some of the students are able to use transitional word in reading narrative text, but they still make mistakes in making inference regarding events, outcome and moral lessons in narrative text.
5. Some of the students still get low scores on tests of reading comprehension on narrative text even though they understand about all transitional words.



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Based on the explanations and the problems above, the researcher conducts a research entitled **“Correlation between Students’ Transitional Word Mastery and Their Reading Comprehension on Narrative Text of The Eleventh Grade at Islamic Boarding Senior High School Bahrul ‘Ulum”**

B. The Definition of the Terms

In order to simplify the process of designing and the application of research and to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation about the meaning of the terms used in this research, the researcher provides the following definitions:

1. Correlation

Correlational research is a research design involves the measurement of two or more relevant variables and an assessment of the relationship between or among those variables⁷. In other words, a correlation is a single number that describes the degree of relationship between two variables. Correlation meant in this case is the correlation between students’ transitional word mastery and their reading comprehension on narrative text of the eleventh grade at Islamic Boarding Senior High School Bahrul ‘Ulum.

⁷ Charles Stangor. *Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences, Fourth Edition*. (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning, 2011), p. 16

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2. Transitional Word Mastery

Transition words, sometimes also called signal words, are words or phrases use to link ideas in a logical progression from one to the other, make ideas flow together and to indicate important points.⁸ Mastery is great skillfulness and knowledge of some subject or full command or understanding of a subject or an activity.⁹ Thus, transitional word mastery meant in this research is students' knowledge about transitional words in reading narrative text of the eleventh grade at Islamic Senior High School Bahrul 'Ulum.

3. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.¹⁰ In other words, reading comprehension is the process that readers do in order to construct or understand the meanings of the texts through reading activity.

4. Narrative Text

Narrative writing presents a story of sequence events which involves the characters. According to Pratyasto in Akang Budi, narrative is a type of text that is proposed to amuse and to deal with

⁸ Christine Evans Carter. *Landscapes: Groundwork for College Reading*. (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning, 2013), p. 31

⁹ Audio English. What Does Mastery Means? (Retrieved on February 24, 2014), <http://www.audioenglish.org/dictionary/mastery.htm>

¹⁰ Catherine Snow, Chair. *Reading for Understanding toward an R&D Program in Reading Comprehension*. (Pittsburgh: RAND, 2002), p.11

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actual and vicarious experience in different ways; narrative also deals with problematic events which lead to a crisis or turning points of some kind, which in turn find a resolution.¹¹

C. The Problems

1. The Identification of the Problems

Based on the explanation above, the researcher identifies the problems as follow:

- a. How do some of the students still have difficulties in recognizing generic structures of narrative text if they are able to recognize transitional words?
- b. How are some of the students still confused in determining the order of events on narrative text if they are able to identify kinds of transitional words?
- c. How are some of the students still not able to recall the details of setting on narrative text but they are able to identify the function of transitional words?
- d. How do some of the students still make mistakes in making inference regarding events, outcome and moral lessons in narrative text if they are able to use transitional word in reading narrative text?

¹¹ Akang Budi. *The Definition of Narrative Text and types of Narrative Text*. (Retrieved on February 24, 2014), <http://dasarbahasainggris.blogspot.com/2013/09/the-definition-of-narrative-text-and.html>.

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- e. How do some of the students still get low scores on tests of reading comprehension on narrative text even though they understand all about transitional words?

2. The Limitation of the Problems

Based on the identification of the problems above, many problems happened to the students. The researcher needed to limit the problems of the research in order to focus on the topic. In this case, the problems were limited to the ability to use transitional word in reading comprehension on narrative text. Thus, in this research, the researcher only focused on investigating students' ability to use transitional word in reading comprehension on narrative text of the eleventh grade at Islamic Senior High School Bahrul 'Ulum.

3. The Formulation of the Problems

The problems of this research can be formulated in the following questions:

- a. How is students' transitional word mastery on narrative text of the Eleventh grade at Islamic Boarding Senior High School Bahrul 'Ulum?
- b. How is students' reading comprehension on narrative text of the Eleventh grade at Islamic Boarding Senior High School Bahrul 'Ulum?

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- c. Is there any significant correlation between students' transitional word mastery and their reading comprehension on narrative text of the Eleventh grade at Islamic Boarding Senior High School Bahrul 'Ulum

D. The Objectives and the Significance of the Research**1. The Objectives of the Research**

- a. To find out how the students' transitional words mastery on narrative text is.
- b. To find out how the students' reading comprehension on narrative text is.
- c. To find out whether there is a significant correlation between students' transitional word mastery and their reading comprehension on narrative text or not.

2. The Significance of the Research

- a. Theoretically, the writer can get a lot of information that can be very useful to enlarge knowledge, especially about transitional words in reading narrative text.
- b. To provide some information about the importance of mastering all of the important aspects in the process of reading comprehension in order to make the students improve their reading skills.
- c. For the students as well as English teachers about their weaknesses in reading comprehension, so they will find solutions in order to master it.