

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Problem

In learning English as a second or foreign language, there are four skills that should be owned by the learners. The skills are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. One of the language skills that is very important is reading. Reading is an essential skill that requires many things including specification, ability, and certain skills. Reading is also classified as a receptive skill that helps us to gather information from written materials in order to increase our knowledge. Readers can emphasize that reading is a process of getting information from the texts that they read.<sup>1</sup> If there is no information after reading a written material, it means that reading ability of the readers is still questionable. Regarding with the previous ideas, Grabe and Rigg in Marianne Celce-Murcia say that the expectation for a reader after reading written text is to make meaning, and to comprehend what he reads.<sup>2</sup>

In reading a text, the goal of the reader is comprehension. Without comprehension, reading process will be useless. Comprehension can be told as the main objective of reading process.<sup>3</sup> Comprehension is the key that a reader can understand the text or he cannot understand it. In order to comprehend a text, reader should have knowledge about the text. It is very

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<sup>1</sup> Graves, et all. *teaching reading in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. (2001), P.2

<sup>2</sup> Marianne Celce-Murcia. *teaching English as a second or foreign language*. (Boston: Thomson Learning, 1991), P. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Bojovic. “*Reading Skills and Reading Comprehension in English for Specific Purposes*”. (Celje: University of Kragujevac, 2010).

important for the reader because without knowledge about the text, comprehensive understanding of the text will be not achieved and the text that is being read will be too difficult for the reader.<sup>4</sup>

There is much information that reader should have before reading a text. One of them is the information about the text. Information about the text is very helpful for the reader in comprehending a text. A text can be too difficult if the reader does not have prior knowledge about the text. Prior knowledge about the text can lead the readers to successful readers in comprehending a text. One of the prior knowledges is called by text structure awareness. The structure of the text is very important to be taught by the teacher to the students before reading a text. A consistent effort to guide them to see the ways that texts are structured can help them build their comprehension skills.<sup>5</sup> Text structure awareness plays an important role in order to comprehend a text. This ability can help them in comprehending a text.

SMAN 1 Bangko Pusako is one of the schools in Rokan Hilir regency. As an formal educational institution, this school provides English for their students especially reading skill. Based on the School-Based curriculum of senior high school, the purpose of teaching reading is to understand meaning and rhetorical steps in essay using a variety of text accurately, fluently and

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<sup>4</sup> Catherine Snow. *Reading for understanding*. (Santa Monica: RAND, 2002), P. 14

<sup>5</sup> Marianne Celce-Murcia. *Op. Cit.*, P. 194

acceptable in the context of daily life in the form of text: report, narrative, hortatory exposition and analytical exposition.<sup>6</sup>

Based on writer's preliminary study observation, it shows that most of the students still had problems and the difficulties in their English especially in reading expository text. They didn't know what they had read. It indicated that the students still had problems in reading comprehension on expository text. The reading ability of the students was far from the curriculum expectations. The writer can prove it from the passing grade (KKM) of the students.

The weaknesses mentioned above were caused by several factors. One of the factors that is considered as a problem when students read expository text is the structure awareness of the text. Talking about the structures of expository text, it is not too easy to be understood. Understanding the structure of expository text is more difficult than understanding narrative. According to Cook in Debra L. Cook, et all, he said that understanding the structure of expository text differs from narrative. Expository text presents facts, theories, and dates. The information is largely unfamiliar to the reader, and may not have a coherent "story line".<sup>7</sup> Because of the difficulties of understanding of structure expository, students still find difficulties in comprehending the text. Text structure awareness is an important thing in reading comprehension. Students should familiarize themselves about the

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<sup>6</sup> Depdiknas. *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP)*. (2006).

<sup>7</sup> Debra L. Cook, et all. *Academic Language/ Literacy Strategies for Adolescents: A "HOW TO" Manual for Educators*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), P. 82

structure of the text. In reading expository text, students are also asked to familiarize themselves about the structure of expository text. Familiarizing about the structure of the text in reading is considered as a key to get comprehension of the text. According to Bakken, et all in Debra L. Cook, et all, the lack of familiarity of text structure impacts on students' comprehension of the new information.<sup>8</sup> Regarding to that ideas, Murcia stated that being aware of the text structure helps the students to comprehend the texts during their reading for academic purposes.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it is clearly stated that text structure awareness has a positive impact in building comprehension skills of the students during their reading.

Another factor that is considered as cause of students' difficulties in reading is that the lack of learning strategies they implied in their reading. Learning strategies are very important in learning process because it will set students becoming independent learners.<sup>10</sup> Considering the importance of learning strategies in teaching and learning process, the teacher ideally helps students develop their awareness of learning strategies. But it was not done by the teacher. The teacher still used traditional teaching strategies that did not promote students' awareness about their learning strategies. There were no variations in teaching and learning process. The teacher only asked students to read materials, to find out difficult words, to translate the text, and to answer question. This is not an appropriate way to be done because ideally

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<sup>8</sup> Debra L. Cook, et all. Op.Cit., P. 81

<sup>9</sup> Marianne Celce-Murcia. Op. Cit., P. 194

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* P. 362

the teacher should lead learners to independent learners by using variety strategies.

In order to set students to become independent learners, the teacher is also demanded to create a classroom environment that supports students to become independent learners. Learning to be an independent learner requires risks taking. The classroom environment must encourage students' risk taking. The teacher should encourage students to be brave in the classroom. In this situation, the teacher who accept students' response without judgment and create respects among students will be success.<sup>11</sup> But, the writer could not find those things when conducting preliminary observation. This is a problem, and it should be fixed in order to help all sides that are involved in this educational institution.

The reality of teaching and learning process in SMAN 1 Bangko Pusako showed that there were gaps between the theories of the experts and the practice. Therefore, based on writer's observation at second grade of SMAN 1 Bangko Pusako, the writer found the following phenomena:

1. Some of the students were not able to comprehend expository paragraph
2. Some of the students were not able to identify main idea of the text
3. Some of the students were not able to identify supporting idea of the text.

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<sup>11</sup> Anna Uhl Chamot, et all. *The Learning Strategies Handbook*. (NY: Longman, 1999), P.

4. Some of the students were not aware of the structure of the text.
5. Some of the students were not able to identify signal words of the text.

Based on the problems above, the writer was interested in investigating the problems stated above into a research which is entitled **“THE CONTRIBUTION OF TEXT STRUCTURE AWARENESS TOWARD STUDENTS’ READING COMPREHENSION IN EXPOSITORY TEXT AT SMAN 1 BANGKO PUSAKO”**.

## **B. Definition of the Key Terms**

There are so many terms involved in this research, thus to avoid misunderstanding toward the terms used in this research, the following terms are defined as follows:

### 1. Text structure

Every text that has been written by the writers has structure. Ornstein in Heydari and Mustapha defined the structure of the text as the main ideas of the text, how information is organized, as well as the verbal and textual cues that organize and bring unity to the text.<sup>12</sup> With this definition, the importance of being aware of the structure of the text is very helpful and very crucial for the students in reading a text.

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<sup>12</sup> Heydari and Mustapha. *“Text Structure Awareness: Another Look at Reading Comprehension Strategy in L2 Classes”*. (UPM: Unpublished, 2009), P. 255

## 2. Awareness

Awareness can be defined as the ability of someone to perceive, to feel, or to be conscious of events, or object. Awareness may also refer to public or common knowledge or understanding about a social, scientific, or political issue.<sup>13</sup> It means, the term of awareness can be used in many aspects. It can be in social, science, political, or psychology.

## 3. Text structure awareness

According to Bradley, text structure awareness can be defined as the readers 'understanding of how the texts are structured and the ways of the readers use their knowledge of text structure to construct meaning from the text.'<sup>14</sup> Regarding to the ideas above, text structure awareness is the use of knowledge about text structure that is implied by the readers during their reading.

## 4. Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.<sup>15</sup> It consists of three elements: the reader, the text and the activity or purpose for reading. Comprehension involves constructing meaning that is reasonable and accurate by connecting

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<sup>13</sup> Wikipedia.org. en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/awareness.

<sup>14</sup> Michelle L Bradley. "*The Impact of Intermediate Students' Awareness and Use of Text Structure in Comprehending Expository Text and Its Implication for Classroom Instruction*". (Northern Michigan University : Unpublished, 2010), P. 32

<sup>15</sup> Catherine Snow. Op. Cit., P. xiii

what has been read to what the reader already knows and thinking about all of this information until it is understood.

#### 5. Expository text

In teaching and learning process, students face many kinds of the text. One of them is expository text. A. Graddy et al in Heydari and Mustapha defined expository text as a text that is used by the author to give information, to explain, to describe, or to persuade.<sup>16</sup> Regarding with the following definition of expository text, it is known that expository text is used in classroom. Most of the texts that are read by the students are expository.

### **C. Problem**

Based on the writer's preliminary observation at SMAN 1 Bangko Pusako, it is clear that most of the students are still getting difficulties, especially in term of reading. To make the problems of this research clearer, the problems of this research are identified as follows:

#### **1. Identification of the Problem**

- a) Why were some of the students not able to comprehend expository paragraph?
- b) Why were some of the students not able to identify main idea of the text?

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<sup>16</sup> Heydari and Mustapha. Op.Cit., P.255



- c) What were the factors that make some of the students not able to identify supporting idea of the text?
- d) Why were some of the students not aware with the structure of the text?
- e) Why were some of the students not able to identify signal words of the text?

## **2. Limitation of the Problem**

Based on the identification of the problem above, the problems of this research are focused on finding out the contribution of students' text structure awareness toward their reading comprehension on expository text of the second grade at SMAN 1 Bangko Pusako.

## **3. Formulation of the Problem**

The problems in this research are formulated in the following research questions:

- a. What is the students' awareness on the structure of expository text at second grade of SMAN 1 Bangko Pusako?
- b. What is the students' reading comprehension on expository text at second grade of SMAN 1 Bangko Pusako?
- c. Is there any significant contribution of students' text structure awareness toward their reading comprehension on expository text at second grade of SMAN 1 Bangko Pusako?

## **D. Objectives and Significance of the Research**

### **1. Objective of the Research**

- a) To find out how the students' awareness on the structure of expository text is.
- b) To find out how the students' reading comprehension on expository text is.
- c) To find out whether or not there is a significant contribution of students' text structure awareness toward their reading comprehension on expository text.

### **2. Significance of the Research**

- a) Hopefully this research is able to benefit the writer as a novice researcher, especially in learning how to conduct a research.
- b) These research findings are also hopefully useful and valuable especially for students and teachers of English of the second grade students at SMAN 1 Bangko Pusako to be consideration in their teaching and learning process in the future.
- c) Besides, these research findings are also expected to be valuable information especially for those who are concerned in the field of teaching and learning English as a foreign or second language and those who are concerned with the field of language teaching in general.

- d) Finally these research questions are also expected to be the practical and theoretical information to the developments of the theories on language teaching.