

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the study

In Indonesia, English is officially acknowledged as the first foreign language. It is not used as a means of daily oral communication but mostly functions as a vehicle of a body of scientific and technological information. This is needed for developing the country (PPPB, 1977, Mackey, 1979: 107). In the academic life of Indonesian students, English is a learning aid, a means for the acquisition of knowledge from English printed materials. Therefore good reading skill in English is essential.

Since one of the objectives of Senior High School (SMU) program is to prepare students to continue their study in Universities or Institutes (Kurikulum SMA 1975: 1984) English teaching in this program is called upon to provide them with basic ability to use the language functionally, that is to comprehend the content of textbooks and reference materials for the success of specialized studies. It is, therefore, imperative that English instructional program help the students to become proficient in reading in English.

Realizing the importance of English, the Decree of the Indonesian Ministerial of Education and Culture no 096/1967 dated 12 December 1967

(Ngadiman, 1990; 2 in Halim, 1977; 144) stipulates that the objective of the teaching of English “working knowledge of English” which consists of: (1) effective reading ability; (2) ability to understand spoken English; (3) writing ability, and (4) speaking ability. The order of the listing of these objectives expresses the primary emphasis on reading ability (Nababan, 1984).

With 2 (two) credits of English in MKU (Mata Kuliah Umum) or as a compulsory subject, the students of the third or the fourth semester of the engineering faculty and the economics faculty must take this subject.

The materials of English given consist of reading, listening, speaking and writing. All of them are given in general. But the biggest portion is on reading. Which are consisting of some subjects correlated with their major program, in this study, their program is English for specific purpose. It has the same opinion with Tjandra (1998; 1) that reading has the biggest portion in the teaching and learning activity. Most people read without giving much thought to how they do it. The questions come up, what is reading? Although there is no singular, acceptable definition of reading instruction, there are some basic aspects of reading with which most authorities are in agreement (Heilman, Blair, Rupley, 1981; 4) that 1. Reading is an active and ongoing process that is affected directly by an individual’s interaction with its environment. 2. Reading is an interacting with language that has been coded into print. 3. The product of interacting with the printed language should be comprehension. Having the same opinion with Wallace (1993; 1) that reading in a first or any other

language, is an awareness of the way in which we use language. For reading is above all to do with language. Majority students who learn English as a foreign language may never speak English, but most of them still have to read English.

The success of reading can be achieved by having the ability to understand and comprehend the reading text. As Wood (1980: 4) says that in reading, the reader should know the explicit ideas, the detailed information, the implied meaning, and also the author's intention. For students in the college that have a lot of reading materials, it can support them to master their skill, such as, reports, journals, articles, essays, advertisements, and editorials. Because of such various reading materials, reading then demands more skills of students. It does not only consist of understanding and comprehending, but also includes prediction of upcoming ideas, generation of ideas, evaluation, judgement, and problem solution.

In correlation with the students' achievement in reading, the writer has some opinions that the learning style of each student is different. In Weiman (2003: 4) in (1995), Shaywitz et al. identified that learning style is the general, broad approaches used to learn a subject. According to Cornett (1983: 9) Learning style (is) a consistent pattern of behaviour but with a certain range of individual variability... Styles then are overall patterns that give general directions to learning behaviour. Learning styles include an array of cognitive, affective (emotional and attitudinal), and social aspects (Oxford, 1990c; Schmeck, 1988).

To conduct this study, the writer differentiates the students into two learning styles, they are field independent and field dependent (field-sensitivity). According to Oxford (1995: 37) field independent refers to the ability to separate easily the key details from an ambiguous context through the use of analysis. Research with people of all ages suggests that field-independent people are less sensitive to the social context, are more detached and more logical, and prefer more structured, analytical forms of learning. Perhaps field-independent people have a stronger spatial or kinesthetic sense than do field-sensitive individuals, because many of the tests used to assess field-independent involve figuring out the orientation of an object in a spatial relationship to other objects.

In contrast, according to Oxford (1995: 37) field dependent (or field-sensitivity) is the lesser ability to separate details from the background easily and the greater tendency toward forming global impressions. Field-dependent people tend to be more sensitive to the social context, are perceived as more outgoing and more considerate than their field-independent peers, who perform well with less structure in their learning. Field-dependent individuals typically like auditory learning that involves social interaction

Based on the phenomenon above, the writer tried to prove that the majority of learning style of each faculty is different in Surabaya University. And their learning style is influencing the way to solve the problems and activities.

Then, after showing the students' learning styles' tend, the writer's

purpose that there is no failure on the students to learning in reading. They just do not understand their learning style to acquire the reading material. The students can adapt and use the best way to develop their ability, without worrying reading's failure.

1.2 Statement problems.

Having realize the influence of learning styles on the students' ability, the statement problems of the study are as follow:

General Questions.

1. Do economics faculty students who are Field Dependent have a better reading achievement than those who are Field Independent?
2. Do Engineering faculty students who are Field Independent have a better reading achievement than those who are Field Dependent?
3. Which learning style has a more dominant influence on the students' reading achievement?

From the three problems above, some minor problems could be formed:

- 1.1 Does field independent learning style of economics faculty students of Surabaya University influence their reading achievement?
- 1.2 Does field dependent learning style of economics faculty students of Surabaya University influence their reading achievement?
- 2.1 Does field independent learning style of engineering faculty students of

- Surabaya University influence their reading achievement?
- 2.2 Does field dependent learning style of engineering faculty students of Surabaya University influence their reading?
- 3.1 Which learning style has a more dominant influence on the reading achievement of engineering faculty students of Surabaya University?
- 3.2 Which learning style has a more dominant influence on the reading achievement of economics faculty students of Surabaya University?

1.3 Objectives of the study

Based on the above statements, the main objectives of the study are:

1. To see whether the economics faculty students who are field dependent have a better reading achievement than those who are field independent.
2. To see whether the engineering faculty students who are field independent have a better reading achievement than those who are field dependent.
3. To see whether one of the cognitive learning styles has a more dominant influence on the students' reading achievement.

The specific objectives are divided as follows:

- 1.1 To see whether field independent learning style of economics faculty students of Surabaya University influence their reading achievement.
- 1.2 To see whether field dependent learning style of economics faculty

students of Surabaya University influences their reading achievement.

2.1 To see whether field independent learning style of engineering faculty students of Surabaya University influences their reading achievement.

2.2 To see whether field dependent learning style of engineering faculty students of Surabaya University influences their reading achievement.

3.1 To see whether field independent or field dependent of learning styles has a more dominant influence on the reading achievement of engineering faculty students of Surabaya University.

3.2 To see whether field independent or field dependent of learning styles has a more dominant influence on the reading achievement of economics faculty students of Surabaya University.

1.4 Hypothesis

There are three hypotheses that can be drawn from the problems above.

1. The hypothesis for the first problems is;

HA/ Alternative hypothesis

It is said that economics faculty students who are field dependent have a better reading achievement than those who are field independent

H0/ Null Hypothesis

It is said that economics faculty students who are field dependent do not have a better reading achievement than those who are field independent.

2. The hypothesis of the second problem is;

HA/ Alternative Hypothesis

It is said that engineering faculty students who are field independent have a better reading achievement than those who are field dependent.

H0/ Null Hypothesis

It is said that engineering faculty students who are field independent do not have a better reading achievement than those who are field dependent.

3. The hypothesis of the third problem is;

HA/ Alternative Hypothesis

It is said that one of the cognitive learning style have a more dominant influence on the students' reading achievement.

H0/ Null Hypothesis

It is said that there is not one of the cognitive learning style has a more dominants influence on the students' reading achievement.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to find out the influence of the students learning style on their reading achievement. And, this study is to find out whether there are interactions of the learning styles of the students on the reading achievement. The population of these studies are the third semester of Engineering Faculty students and the third semester of economics faculty students of Surabaya University. The reason of choosing the third semester of this studies because those students have

to join the MKU (Mata Kuliah Umum) or compulsory subject of English during that semester. The students almost have the same background in English in their faculties. They are considered in intermediate level that have acquired enough vocabulary in English and are accustomed with the reading subject. Because during their free time, they join the English course, which takes by the university on the library and some of them, are joining private English course with their reason to broaden their prior knowledge of English.

There will be only two groups used for this study. The first group as the pilot group which used to measure the reliability and validity of the test items and the second group as the subject of this study whose students cognitive learning style are studied whether they have an effect on the students' reading achievement.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to give theoretical contribution to the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia. By getting the scientific results that learning style will influence the reading achievement, other researchers are expected to use these findings to conduct or support studies which investigate other language skills such as listening, writing or speaking. The ways students use their logical thinking, experiences, or ideas that may be related to their learning styles are later expected to become another theoretical support for other studies.

In this study, the writer expects to give practical contribution to the learning and teaching of English classes at classes of non-English faculty. For the students, the study is expected to be able to help them realize their own learning style, to understand their characteristics in reading that enable them to choose the best reading strategies without failure feeling because they feel weak according their learning styles, but to encourage them that there are different ways to develop their ability. In this way, students are expected to improve their ability in mastering reading texts and enable them to give response or judgements on author's opinions appropriately. For the teacher, this study can be used to improve his/her way of teaching reading by understanding that different students have different ways of learning without differentiating them, but to show that learning style is a unique ways to develop their ability.

1.7 Assumptions

Learning from many related researches and literatures that study about reading skill, in their learning styles, a basic assumption can be drawn for this study. The students' reading achievement seemed to be directly influenced by the individual learner's characteristics. Learners' characteristic that has become a style in learning will influence their way of doing something; in this case it is reading.

Since every individual is different, his/her way in facing something also unique in some ways. The same technique that we introduce to them is not

adopted exactly the same way. This is because each learner has a learning style that characterizes his/her, in ways to do something. In reading, each learner has his/her own strategies to understand the passage that result differently. The assumption that learners use different strategies in reading due to the learning style they have are stated by some authors as found in chapter two.

Learning from the characteristics according to the learners' learning style, Field Independent (FI) learners believed to have different strategies from Field Dependent (FD) learners. Among various reading strategies introduced by many authors, metacognitive and social strategies are closely associated by the cognitive learning style (FI and FD). Metacognitive strategies seem to be mostly adopted by FI learners while social strategies appear to be owned by FD learners. However to have scientific and trustworthy proof on this assumption, the writer needs to conduct the study to see whether the cognitive learning styles influences their reading achievement.

1.8 Theoretical Framework.

In completing this study, the writer uses some major theories; they are theories of reading, schema, and cognitive learning style. The writer chooses reading as the underlying theory because reading is the main language skill discussed in this study. Reading as supported by many authors is mainly an interacting process between the reader's understanding on the written text and the author's stated idea. Enable readers comprehend what the author means therefore

readers should not just translate and construct meaning of it. By reading students should derive its constructed and reconstructed meaning which include the author's intended messages, their intentions, and inferences.

Besides reading the other basic theory that will be used in this study is schema theory. It's a theory that has the main role in reading comprehension process. A schema is structured prior knowledge in the brain that has roles in reading comprehension. It has function to activate appropriate memories of past experiences and relate them to the new information in the text. The opinion of some authors such as Pirozzolo and Wittroct (1981) stated that there are two important role of schema in reading comprehension. The first is to provide some organization to the past experience or information that will be used in understanding the text. This organization enables readers to retrieve stored information easily and place it into the new text information. The second important role of schema is to provide incoming information that is not given by a text. This means that the readers should make inferences by getting the information that is not given by a text. This means that the readers should make inferences by getting the information from memory and try to have an understanding that goes beyond the text itself.

Learning styles are also the basic theories that need to be discussed in this study. It is an individual characteristic of responding to and processing learning events as he/ she experiences them. It reflects on one's mode of perceiving, remembering and thinking, which is originally adopted when he/she brought up.

Based on a certain research learning style, Reid (1995) purposed an interpretation that there are two dimensions of learners, they are field Independent and Field Dependent. Those two dimensions reflect to different characteristics of each learner. Field Independent learners tend to approach things analytically. They are likely to either analyse a field when the field is organised or imposed structured on a field when the field lacks of organizations on its own. They are prone to be impersonal and have self-defined goals reinforcement. These kinds of learners have more intrinsic motivation in learning and learn concepts more rapidly when the salient cue is irrelevant to the definition of the concepts. Field Dependent learners tend to approach things globally or holistically. They are more likely to go along with the field as it is without using process of analysing or structuring. However this kind of learners are more attentive to social cues and interested in interacting, socializing with other people. They tend to be better at learning and remembering social material but really uninterested in learning complicated structures. Since the two styles above have become ones' characteristics in learning, they also become a factor on the way ones read and comprehend differently from others.

1.9 Definition of the key terms.

There are some important key terms used to understand this study:

1. Reading comprehension is reading with deep understanding to obtain thorough comprehension about the ideas stated and unstated on the text.

To show understanding, the readers should be able to express and to give response to the content of the text... (Smith and Robinson, 1980: 205)

2. Schema or schemata are function in the brain that store, infer, interpret, organize and retrieve information in the past and connect it to the present information exist in order to get an overall understanding... (Swaby, 1989: 186)
3. Cognitive learning style is an individual's characteristic method of responding to a processing learning event as he/she experiences them. It reflects on one's mode of perceiving, remembering and thinking. There are two main types of learning styles, they are: Field Independent and Field Dependent.

Field Independent (FI) is a style of learning which tends to approach tasks analytically.

Field Dependent (FD) is a style of learning which tends to approach tasks holistically or globally. (Reid, 1995: 8)

1.10 **Organization of the study**

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter discuss the background of the study. The second chapter deals with some related literatures that support the writer's study. And the third chapter discuss about the research methodology to conduct this study. While in the fourth chapter, the writer elaborates the data analysis and findings. And as the last chapter, in chapter five the writer gives conclusion and suggestions of the study.