

# **CHAPTER I**

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As we enter a new century, productive and educated citizens will require even stronger literacy abilities (including both reading and writing) in increasingly larger number of social settings. Likewise, the age of technology growth is likely to make greater than lesser, demands on people's reading abilities. The role of reading in society is actually quite complex, so a few comments are needed to situate the role of reading.

This study investigates metacognitive strategies used by Institut Teknologi 10 November Surabaya (ITS) students on reading comprehension in learning English as a foreign language. The motivation of the study came from the fact that some of the ITS students failed to meet the university proficiency level of English (TOEFL) in order to pass undergraduate at the last semester (Jawa Post Feb 15, 2005). Moreover, at the post – secondary level the nation has experienced a similarly large increase in the numbers of Indonesian students who must pass TOEFL tests and functions in the university system. Since most Indonesian teachers of English at the high school, when teaching reading, spend a great deal of effort focusing on detailed language forms rather than their functions, it is not surprising that such teaching methods resulted in slow reading speeds, a narrow scope of knowledge, and a limited command of vocabulary. This section starts with a background of the problems, which then leads to the formulation of research problems, followed by a theoretical framework which underlies the study, and a number of theories to be tested.

### **1.1 Background**

Reading experts tell us that to be good readers, we must be aware of the specific steps and strategies we use to understand what we are reading and what works best for us, especially as we study college text books. Reading experts call this awareness metacognition (Hennings, 2002,

p.20). The Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning is based on an extensive research on learning strategies in which data were collected on the strategy use of effective foreign and second language learners ranging from elementary through university levels (See Chamot & Kupper, 1989, Chamot et al., 1993; Chamot et al., 1996; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; O'Malley et al., 1985a). Learning strategies were chosen for inclusion in the model based on their usefulness and applicability to a broad range of learning tasks. Students can use these metacognitive strategies for all of the modalities: reading, listening, writing, and speaking, as well as for the retention of vocabulary and content information. These are the metacognitive strategies used by good learners; all have been successfully incorporated by teachers into second language instruction.(Chamot, et al., 1999, p11). After the first year of second language instruction, curricular expectations about language learning change while the current impetus to use the target language in the classroom remains high in courses for beginners, that impetus is often lost as students continue their studies a second year and beyond. For example, the traditional examinations of language depends largely on knowledge of surface language rules, sentence – level or discrete vocabulary items. This is also experienced by ITS students especially when they were at the high school. The difference was really between acquisition of discrete skills rather than acquisition of functional language use. Consequently, methodological comparison focused on replication of form alone, excluding context. The criteria for accuracy were idealized norms for speech in the abstract rather than real world situations. Classes with a strong reading component tend to resort to English when discussing meaning or implications of texts, particularly if students are reading literature (Swaffar, et. al.1991, p.1). The ability to comprehend texts is crucial to academic success. The teacher can aid students in this process by focusing on the reader-the reader's individual needs, valuing systems, existing knowledge, and culturally determined schemata, all in relation to the content. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding students to become increasingly independent readers (Richard, et al 2005, p.248).

Richard's statement should be in accordance with the recent trends in foreign language teaching research. More and more investigation are focused on how to revise the reading model so that it would specify a reader focus on textual meaning, text based approaches to linguistic rules, and a cognitive sequence that linked L2 reading and language acquisition. So, there must be a strong commitment to classroom teaching at all levels that respect the intelligence of learners and challenges them to involve themselves in their language learning. When they write they rarely encourage students to think about the content of what they read, and to access the implications and significance of the content. Most L2 classes do one of two things: they focus on practice with well formed sentences or they replicate the factual content of the reading. In the beginning the emphasis is, naturally enough, on linguistic items. Swaffar et al (1991) stated that adult students give considerably in excess of their L2 linguistic capabilities. They argued that linguistic difficulties provide all the more reason for activating metacognitive strategies for efficient decoding and encoding. Metacognition, defined as "individuals awareness of strategies and mental activities while carrying out various cognitive process such as memory, comprehension, learning, and attention" (Van Kleeck vi) is learnable. Learners who are metacognitively aware know what to do, when they do not know what to do, that is, they have strategies for finding out what they need to do. The use of metacognitive strategies ignites one's thinking and can lead to more profound learning and improve performance, especially learners who are struggling. Understanding and controlling cognitive process may be one of the most essential skills that classroom teachers can help second language learners to develop. It is important that they teach their students metacognitive skills in addition to cognitive skills. Second language teachers can help students learn to think about what happens during the language learning process, which will lead them to develop stronger learning skills. To develop stronger learning skills, second language teachers can help students to think about what happens during the language learning process.

The value of concentrating on process in research and teaching is that if a process can be characterized it may contain elements that are general across different texts. The basic rationale behind attempts to describe process is that an understanding should lead to the possibility of distinguishing the processing of successful and unsuccessful readers. This in turn should lead to the possibility of teaching the strategies, or process components, of successful readers to unsuccessful ones, or at least making the latter aware of the existence of other strategies, which they might then wish to try for themselves. This is the rationale behind the papers of Hosenfeld, Harri-Augstein and Thomas, Fransson, and possibly Bransford et al (Alderson, et al, 1992, p. xix). Researchers such as Oxford (1990a), Chohen (1987), and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have stressed that effective learners use a variety of different strategies and techniques in order to solve problems that they face while acquiring or producing the language. One focus of the research in the area of EFL has been on the identification of how the learners process new information and that of strategies employed to understand, the information.

The ultimate goal of the researcher is providing a basis for developing independent readers. The readers are to be shaped into persons who can assume more active and participatory role in their own reading. This entails setting up their-own reading goals, learning pace, materials, activities, and evaluation. This study explores the use of metacognitive strategies as an important factor in the success of EFL learners. The scarcity of research on the metacognitive strategies of ITS students has encouraged the researcher to investigate this strategy.

## **1.2 Statement of the problems**

This study is an attempt to describe metacognitive strategies used by ITS students on reading comprehension. The study thus addressed to the following questions:

- (a) What type of metacognitive strategies is used by ITS students?
- (b) Which type of metacognitive strategies is used more frequently and appropriately by ITS students?

### **1.3 The Objectives**

Derived directly from the above formulated questions, the objective of the present study is to describe metacognitive strategies used and the type of metacognitive strategies used more frequently and appropriately by ITS students on reading comprehension.

### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

This study applies cognitive theory as a framework, which deals with the complex cognitive skills that must engage in to comprehend. Alderson and Urguhart (1992) urged that people must engage in cognitive activities to comprehend and remember information that is communicated through language. Language comprehension depends on the activation of relevant knowledge; and people may differ in the degree to which they spontaneously activate knowledge that provides a basis for comprehension. This analysis has implications for understanding why people learn more effectively than others and for creating programs designed to help people learn to learn (p.28).

Moreover, Alderson and Urguhart quoted from Yorio as follows:

Yorio(1971) claims that the reading problems of foreign language learners are due largely to imperfect knowledge of the language, and to native language interference in the reading process. He subscribes to Goodman's view of the reading process as involving the reader, 'guided by his knowledge of the native language', picking up graphic cues and relating them to syntactic, semantics and phonological cues. In Yorio's view, reading involves four factors: knowledge of the language, ability to predict or guess in order to make the correct choices, ability to remember the previous cues, and ability to make the necessary associations between the different cues that have been selected. According to Yorio, the process is made considerably more complex for the foreign language learner because of new elements:

The reader knowledge of the foreign language is not like that the native speaker; the guessing or predicting ability necessary to pick up the correct cues is hindered by the imperfect knowledge of the language; the wrong choice of cues or the uncertainty of the choice makes

associations more difficult; due to unfamiliarity with the material and the lack of training, the memory span in a foreign language in the early stages of its acquisition is usually shorter than in our native language : recollection of previous cues then is more difficult in a foreign language than in the mother tongue; and at all levels, and at all times, there is interference of the native language (p. 108).

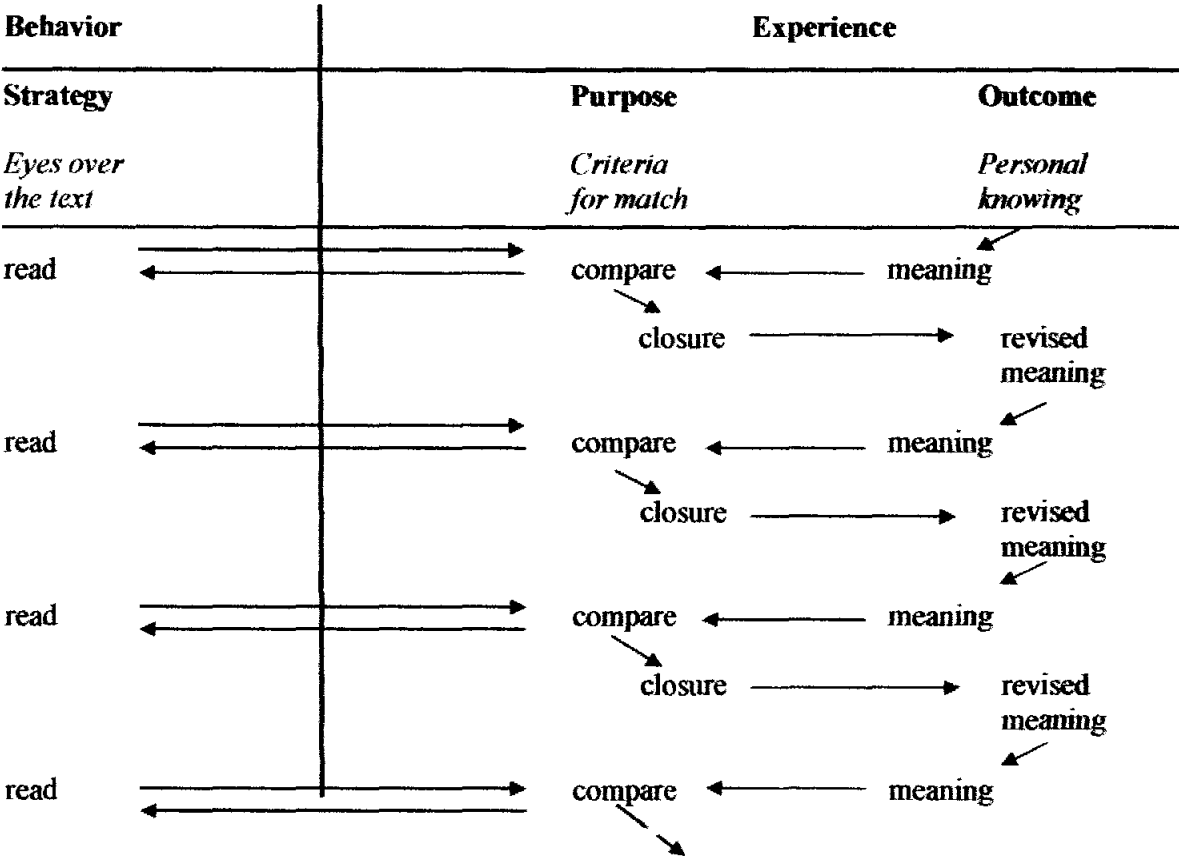
These new elements can be summarized as interference from the native language and inadequate knowledge of the target language. Furthermore Alderson and Urquhart describe the model of the usefulness of the reading process as follows:

1. The complexity and the variety of structure in the reader's purposes, strategies and outcomes;
2. The hierarchical nature of purpose strategy and outcomes;
3. The uniquely personal relationship which can exist between these within an individual's system of attributing meaning to a text;
4. The mechanism by which the system is (or is not) brought under review;
5. The active and interactive aspects of the ongoing relationship between the reader and the text.

Reading is an active generative process whereby meaning is attributed to the words on the page (Goodman 1967 and 1974). This process represents the core of the eyeball-to-print interaction. The sophisticated reader to samples, searches, selects and relates the items of the meaning in a text, in ways which make sense to him or her depending on self-defined purposes. Figure 1.1 illustrates that as person reads, he or she is predicting meaning that will be symbolized by the words on the page. The reader's eyes scan the words to discover whether they are compatible with the meaning he or she expects. When they are, closure is achieved and the meaning generating, comparing, scanning process proceeds. When comparison reveals mismatch between expected meaning and what is being read, the process of attributing meaning to the text falters. If the reader has a strategy, the hesitations or searching lead to revised meaning. If not, meaning is no longer attributed to the text. Match leads to closure, so that the meaning generated

becomes incorporated into the long term store to form part of the individual's "personal knowing". This is perhaps best illustrated by reference to reading poetry. In the short term, meaning depends on the immediate specific purpose and that part of the text being processed. In the long term it relates to a complex set of purposes and to the text as a whole. Thus purpose forms the basis against which comparisons are made and match is achieved (p. 274).

**Figure 1-1: A Model of the Reading Process**



In term of empirical supports, Oxford (1986:4) states that research findings in the field of cognitive psychology have so far espoused the above notion. They jointly point out that language learning necessitates the active assimilation of new information into the learner's exiting mental structures.



In short, cognitive theory can be used as a framework to explain learners' use of learning strategies, which in turn to language acquisition.

So far, the foregoing discussion actually embodies a merge of two distinct disciplines, namely second language acquisition and cognitive psychology. The two bodies of theories have actually been developing quite independently of each other in terms of cross-referencing of concepts and different focus in methodologies. What the two have in common, as O'Malley and Chamot (1990) suggest is that they explore the mental processes of advanced learners compared with beginners, and attempt to describe their respective strategies or how the strategies influence their learning. More importantly, many researchers study in the area of cognitive learning divide strategies according to an information-processing model, and distinguish between cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies. The former is designated to cover those that operate directly on the learning materials, while the latter include strategies that regulate the planning, monitoring, and revising of the thinking process itself. The model also identifies the two additional types of strategies, namely, social and effective to account for the social interactions between learners and the people around them, and their control over their feelings. Some other theorists such as Rubin (1975), Naiman et al. (1978), Stern (1983), and Oxford (1986) have also proposed their strategies taxonomies. Yet the model that covers metacognitive, cognitive, social, and effective by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) above has a stronger theoretical basic as it "Emerged from research in cognitive psychology based on interviews with expert and novices on psychological tasks and from theoretical analyses of reading comprehension and problem solving" (35)

Furthermore, Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes, (1991:52) added that learning theory and comprehension theory, while not interchangeable, share many features. A major feature they share is a concern with cognitive processing. The difference between the concerns is that learning models look at what the mind does to learn input. Comprehension models at what the mind does

to modify input. In other words, comprehension research attempts to look at how the mind treats input and how that treatment modifies what is learned. Potentially, interactive reading can involve both learning comprehension. Since this study intends to explore the use of metacognitive strategies on reading comprehension by ITS students, the researchers have pointed out that: Studies of their immersion programs reveal that, although adults often fail to acquire phonological capabilities, and the mastery of the formal features of which children under fourteen are capable, they acquire conceptual and discursive capabilities in the second language at a faster rate than children (Sternfeld, 1988:11). Swain's work (1985:21) suggests that adults learn discursive and conceptual aspects of language more successfully than children do. Whereas early studies looked only at sentence level correctness expansion of the focus from sentential to supertentential discourse necessarily includes the grasp of complex ideas and the use of discursive features to connect these ideas in longer texts. As a result, today we think that cognitive maturity maybe an advantage because adults can more easily acquire relatively complex ideas and the language of these ideas. Disadvantages in learning formal features are therefore offset by advantages in conceptualization. (Swaffar, et.al.1991) that we redefined second language learning as the ability to perceive and operate within real world situations, in order to perform real world tasks. Therefore, the taxonomy by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990a), and Swaffar, et al. (1991), are preferred as points of reference in this study because they seem to be the most comprehensive and reflect the best combination of second language acquisition theories and cognitive psychology theories. This constitutes a theoretical support for this study, which intends to deal with a similar issue in Indonesian context.

Moreover, Badib (2006) stated that "It is important to clarify in what way the concept of the Gestalt psychology can be transferred to the concept of reading comprehension in which it is centered round the essences or the theme of a text. It requires a critical thinking of the differences of the mental process of acquiring the overall impression of an object and a text in which it is

composed of syntactical arrangement consisting of words. The building up and the understanding of the idea fully derived from the text can only be obtained after the reading is completed. After the completion of the first reading the content of text may still be blurred even if during the reading there is also an interactive process. The second reading may be required to ensure that the reader can get an accurate understanding of the content of the text. Generally speaking reading, according to Gray (1960), can be divided into three levels, namely reading along the lines'-refers to the literal meaning of a text, 'reading between the lines'-refers to the inferred meaning and lastly reading 'beyond the lines'-refers the readers' critical evaluation of a text (Alderson,2000:7-8). The three levels of reading in practice are translated into different kind of questions in reading comprehension. Out of the reading beyond the lines occupy the highest level of ability in reading in which the readers' critical and analytical mental processes, crystallizes, develops and formulates the main idea of the text (p.3)."

More should be said the psychology and reading comprehension chiefly, metacognitive strategies. However, that should be reserved for the review of literature in the following chapter. Meanwhile, suffice it here to address the relevance of the theory to the notion of learning strategies. It rests on the assumption that language learners, at their respective levels of proficiency, must apply various kinds of strategies in order to turn their declarative knowledge about rules of a language into a procedural knowledge of using the language fluently and appropriately. Since individual learners vary greatly in their cognitive style and also in their proficiency levels, it is expected that they would accordingly reveal different patterns of strategy use in their learning tasks. It is likely that more advanced learners use a range of strategies that in a number of respects differ significantly from the elementary-level learners. Besides, in view of the opinion that strategies may vary across learning tasks, it is also necessary to explore their strategies in two different learning orientations –i-e fluency and accuracy. In fact, as Richards

(1990) suggests, accuracy, with its focus on the correctness of the language, should complement fluency in every communicative-oriented classroom.

### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

The results of this study will give ITS students and English learners valuable information of the classroom-related metacognitive strategies use on reading comprehension.

Theoretically, the results are expected to give theoretical contribution to the teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesia. In getting scientific results that deal with reading strategies and learning styles, further researchers are expected to use these findings to conduct or support studies which investigate other language skills such as listening, writing, or speaking. The students use their logical thinking, experiences, or ideas which maybe related to their learning styles. The results of the study are also expected to give practical contribution to the learning teaching practice for reading classes in colleges. For the students, the findings are expected to help them realize their own learning styles, understand their characteristics in reading that enable them to choose the best reading strategies. In doing this, students are expected to improve their ability in mastering reading texts and enable them to give response or judgment on author's opinion appropriately. While for the teachers, the results of the this study can be used to improve her / his way with teaching reading by understanding that different students have difference ways of learning. Teachers are also expected to apply the best approach to learning and help students to readjust themselves to the best learning condition.

### **1.6 The Assumption**

This study is conducted in the basis of certain theoretical and methodological assumptions. In line with the theoretical framework, this study assumes that language reading process necessarily incorporates some strategy acts, which include metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective type. These strategies can be subject to elicitation and description. The methodological

assumption is that a descriptive qualitative and quantitative survey research can be used to reveal the metacognitive strategies patterns of the subjects whether successful students or unsuccessful students.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

The subject of this study is the sixth semester of ITS students learning English as a foreign language. Research investigation of the study explores the metacognitive strategies employed by ITS students on reading comprehension. The study itself is limited to metacognitive strategy to achieve classroom related reading comprehension, such as: the interaction of particular reader and a given text, predicated syntactic complexity, lexical density or infrequency and, rhetorical anomaly on opacity.

### **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

It is necessary to define the following and concepts that are used in this study.

**Learning Strategies.** Learning strategy is defined as some special ways-either observable or covert-of processing information that enhances comprehension, learning, or retention of the information (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990:1).

**Cognitive strategy.** Cognitive strategy refers to a range of strategies that involve mental manipulation or transformation of materials of tasks and is intended to enhance comprehension, acquisition, or retention (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990:229).

**Metacognitive strategies.** Metacognitive strategies are behaviors undertaken by the learners to plan, arrange, and evaluate their own learning. Such strategies include directed attention and self evaluation, organization, setting goals and objectives, seeking practice opportunities and so forth. In the context of reading, self monitoring and correction errors are further example of metacognitive strategies (Chamot, et al, 1999:14).

**Motivation.** Motivation means having a real purpose in learning English, or really wanting to learn English for a reason. Some people are very strongly motivated to learn a language. Others are not, and others are in between (Brown, 2002:17). Furthermore, O'Malley and Chamot (1990:160) stated that motivation is probably the most important characteristic that students bring to a learning task. Motivation, or the will to learn, can be considered a component of metacognition insofar as it plays a self regulatory role in learning (Jones et al. 1987).

**Constructivist models of reading.** Models of reading comprehension and interpretation that is derived from the perspective of the reader. Since readers actively construct the comprehension of the text, the text meaning is essentially what the reader determines the text to mean. These theories are useful for understanding how literary texts can be understood in multiple ways and at multiple levels by different readers. However, as theories of reading development, they offer no detailed explanation for the development of reading abilities; rather, they assume acceptable comprehension and interpretive levels from the outset. Nor do they offer explanations for how expository texts are used for learning new material or how procedural texts are to be understood appropriately (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:258).

**Extensive reading.** Approach to the teaching and learning of reading in which learners read large quantities of material that are within their linguistic competence (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:259).

**Fluency.** Fluency in reading involves a combination of speed, accuracy, and fluidity of processing. Fluency is a relative concept that must take into consideration reading task, reading topic, reader's age, and amount of L2 exposure (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:259).

**Genre.** Means for organizing formal aspects of a text to reflect specific functional intentions of a group, discipline or culture. Genres (e.g. poetry, mysteries, want ads, letters of recommendation academic journal articles, sermons) have specific aims, expectations, and defining characteristics (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:259).

**Language experience approach.** Approach to teaching reading whereby students and teacher prepare reading materials together. A typical sequence of activities is as follows: Students dictate a story to the teacher about a topic of interest, the teacher writes the story down, the students copy the story, and the students read the story (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:260).

**Language threshold.** General level of second language ability that allows a reader to understand a text fluently according to the reader's purpose. Above the threshold, a reader is able to call on strategic reading processes (both first language and second language) effectively. The threshold varies with specific tasks, topics and reader purposes, but at some point with continuous practice in reading, the reader is able to read most texts at a level above the language threshold (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:261).

**Metacognitive knowledge.** Conscious awareness of one's knowledge. More specifically, the ability to reflect on what one knows (e.g. language awareness). Such knowledge allows a reader to plan, regulate and monitor learning, and (in the context of this study) reading (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:261).

**Metalinguistic knowledge.** Conscious awareness of language that allows one to recognize and discuss linguistic categories such as nouns, verbs, subordinate clauses, word meanings, etc (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:262).

**Models of reading.** Theories of the component skills, processes and knowledge bases involved in reading. Formal models are based on the results of empirical evidence and are typically confirmed by additional independent studies. Descriptive models attempt to synthesize existing research comprehensively. Metaphorical models attempt to interpret more generally the reading processes involved in comprehension (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:262).

**Rauding.** A term that 'comes from the combination of two words: reading and auditing. It refers to the frequently occurring situation where individuals are reading or listening and understanding most of the thoughts that they are encountering as they read or aud the sentences involved.

functioning but is a network of currently active information and related processes being used at a given moment (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:268).

**Working memory activation.** Process in which information that is sufficiently excited (electrically and chemically in the brain) becomes part of the working network of information being used actively in cognitive processing (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:268).

## **1.9 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is introduction which deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, assumption, scope and limitation of the study, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, and the organization of the study.

The second chapter is the review of the related literature that discusses the underlying theory, some related literatures, and previous studies.

The third chapter is the research method, divided into research design, instrument, the questionnaire, interview, instrument try-out, data collection, and data analysis.

The fourth chapter deals with data procedure, results of data analysis, finding, and discussion of the findings.

The last chapter is conclusion and suggestion, it is divided into three parts: conclusion, suggestion, and recommendation.