CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter shows an overview of the study. It includes background, research question, research objectives, significances of research, rationale and previous study.

A. Background

This study aims to investigate the use of THIEVES strategy to enable prior knowledge of students in reading comprehension skills in EFL settings. This research aims to raise awareness of English teachers in building prior knowledge of students through pre-reading activities to improve understanding of the text to be read. Most of the categories of learning involve interactions between prior knowledge and basic associative learning. A prior knowledge will help in understanding the text to be read.

In EFL settings like Indonesia reading English text is a challenging activity for students. This is due to lack of experiences of the topic of text. A study of Indonesian EFL learners' motivation in reading concluded that the EFL learners' experience affects the motivation of reading English texts. The learners who have more experiences are more willing to read English texts (Salikin, Bin-Tahir, Kusumaningputri, & Yuliandari, 2017). Therefore, activating the prior knowledge of students will affect their motivation in reading. Obviously, this will also affect their understanding of the text, which ultimately will increase their reading skills.

This research was implemented at Junior High School. According to the researcher's preliminary observation, problem that appear at this level was the students were difficult to understand the English texts. When students were asked by the teacher about what the text told about, some students answered it but most of them looked confused. This may be due to their less vocabulary and less experience in this case is prior knowledge. The vocabulary of language has always been a major indicator of text's difficulty (Sidek & Rahim, 2015). Moreover, prior knowledge indirectly influences the understanding of what students' read (Fisher & Frey, 2009). THIEVES strategy can be used as a means of activating the prior knowledge of students so that students' understanding will increase.

There are several previous study in this research. One study was conducted by Caillies, Denhière and Kintsch (2002) who studied fifty-four participants in Montpellier, France. The results show that prior knowledge is fundamental for a theoretical account of text comprehension. It can provide a framework during reading a text. Research was also conducted by Aaron, Harlan and Gregory (2008) to fifty-six New York University students. This study results that prior knowledge causes more features when a single feature is presented and prior knowledge magnifies the dimensionality effect in a model. Research was also conducted by Sandra, Liesbeth and Jeroen (2010) to sixty-three students in the Netherlands. The study concluded that the effectiveness of mobilization strategy and perspective taking in learning is influenced by prior knowledge domain of students.

From some of the above research, it is clear that activating prior knowledge of students can be considered in improving reading comprehension. This can be implemented in the classroom activity by the teacher. THIEVES strategy needs to be adapted to make easier for students to understand English texts in their teaching and learning activities. The previous research show that prior knowledge makes some improvements in students' comprehension. Thus, this research is different from the previous research. This research studies how to activate student's prior knowledge and their response in using THIEVES strategy.

Considering the importance of building prior knowledge of students in improving reading ability, this research brings a strategy of activating prior knowledge in pre-reading activity of a chapter in an English textbook. Finally, the researcher titles this research "ACTIVATING STUDENTS' PRIOR KNOWLEDGE THROUGH "THIEVES" STRATEGY IN TEACHING READING".

B. Research Question

This study is intended to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the process of activating students' prior knowledge by using THIEVES strategy in teaching reading?

2. What is the improvement of students' comprehension in reading using THIEVES strategy?

3. What is students' response in using THIEVES strategy?

C. Research Objectives

From the research questions above, this study aims to obtain the following purposes:

1. To know the process of activating students' prior knowledge by using THIEVES strategy in teaching reading.

2. To know the improvement of students' comprehension in reading using THIEVES strategy.

3. To find out students' response in using THIEVES strategy.

D. Significances of Research

This research is significant in at least three aspects: theory, practice and professional aspects. Theoretically, the results of this study will increase the knowledge of the readers, especially teachers and students. Practically, this research will add an alternative strategy in teaching reading, its relation to the activation of students' prior knowledge. Professionally, this research is expected to bring up creative teachers especially in choosing the materials and strategy that will be applied at the time of reading learning.

E. Rationale

Prior knowledge is defined as some life experiences, either real or vicarious; previous works read; and experience with language (Yuksel, 2012). Prior knowledge is knowledge, skills, or ability that students bring in learning process. On the other hand, a more comprehensive definition, prior knowledge is dynamic in nature; available before a certain learning task; structured; available in multiple states [i.e. procedural or declarative]; both explicit and

tacit in nature; contains conceptual and metacognitive knowledge components (Yuksel, 2012).

Prior knowledge can be distinguished into two types as declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge mostly relates to "knowing about" that a person having the knowledge remembers many facts and details. This is also known as surface knowledge. On the other hand, procedural knowledge is kind of more advance knowledge that includes integration of knowledge, understanding of the relationship between concepts and problem-solving skill. Mostly, the procedural knowledge relates to "knowing how" (Kirby, 2007).

THIEVES is a strategy for previewing a textbook, created by Suzanne Liff Manz, an educational therapist and instructor at Nassau Community College in Garden City, NY. It was published in The Reading Teacher in February, 2002. This activity helps students to preview the text structure in an organized manner. This pre-reading strategy will allow students to get information before they actually begin reading the chapter of the textbook. The acronym of THIEVES stands for:

[**T**]itle – Students sometimes skip the title, but it provides valuable information by establishing the topic and the context of the chapter.

[**H**]eadings – Headings indicate the important sections of the chapter. They help students identify the specific topics covered.

[**I**]ntroduction -The introduction provides an overview of the chapter. It may come after the title and before the first heading.

[**E**]very first sentence in a paragraph – First sentences are often the topic sentences of the paragraph, and by reading these a student can get an idea of the information that will be contained in the chapter.

[**V**]isuals and [**V**]ocabulary – Students should look at all pictures, charts, tables, maps and graphs contained in the chapter. They need to read the captions and labels on each. This enables students to learn a little about the topic before they begin to read.

[**E**]nd-of-Chapter Questions – Contains important points and concepts from the chapter. Reading these questions will help students to target important information and establish purposes of reading.

[**S**]ummary – Many texts contain a summary at the end of the chapter. Students can read the summary to activate prior knowledge and give them an idea of the important concepts contained in the chapter.

F. Previous Study

There are several researches on prior knowledge implementation in improving student comprehension. One study was conducted by Caillies, Denhière and Kintsch (2002) who studied fifty-four participants in Montpellier, France. The results show that prior knowledge is fundamental for a theoretical account of text comprehension. It can provide a framework during reading a text. Research was also conducted by Aaron, Harlan and Gregory (2008) to

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From some of the above research, it is clear that activating prior knowledge of students can be considered in improving reading comprehension. This can be implemented in the classroom activity by the teacher. THIEVES strategy needs to be adapted to make easier for students to understand English texts in their teaching and learning activities. The previous research show that prior knowledge makes some improvements in students' comprehension. Thus, this research is different from the previous research. This research studies how to activate student's prior knowledge and its effect on student's comprehension in teaching reading