

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This part discusses the previous study, reading, nature of reading, reading comprehension, difficulties in reading, the assessment of reading comprehension, level of reading comprehension, context clues, nature of context clues, principle in teaching reading using context clues, advantages and disadvantages of context clues.

A. Previous Study

The writer presents some previous studies that deal especially with related to this study. First of all, Bush, Renae M, “The Effectiveness of Context Clues and Isolated Words Lists in High School English Classes”. The result is a study was conducted to determine which approach for vocabulary development-- isolated word lists, context clues, or a combination of both--would yield the best results. One sample of 17 sophomores used isolated word lists. The second sample of 20 freshmen used context clues to determine word meaning. The third sample of 13 sophomores used a combination of the 2 methods. All three groups were given pre- and post-tests to determine their progress. Results indicated no significant difference in the mean gains among the sample thereby supporting the study's hypothesis that there would be no significant difference in teaching vocabulary

words to highschool students through isolated word lists, context clues, or a combination of both.¹

Second, Seyed Jalal Abdolmanafirokni, and Hamid Reza Niknaqsh, “The Effect of Context Clues on EFL Learners’ Reading Comprehension”. The result of this study is the experimental (context) group practiced different kinds of context clues as treatment for duration of eight sessions, while the control group received no training. At the end of the project, a posttest was administered to both groups in order to evaluate the effect of the clues on the learner’s reading comprehension. The findings displayed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the posttest.²

Third, Kiki Marlindawati, “The Use of Context Clues to improve the vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students of MTs Hasyim Asyari 2 kudas in the Academic year 2012/2013”. The result of this study The data of this research was taken from the result of observation sheet, achievement test and questionnaire of those three cycles conducted. In the result, the students’ vocabulary mastery improves from cycle I until cycle III. In cycle I, the average score of achievement test is 62.94 and the achievement category is insufficient. In cycle II, the average score of achievement test is 76.62 and the achievement category is good. The writer ends the action process in the cycle III because the students’ vocabulary mastery in cycle III improve from the students’ vocabulary mastery in cycle II that

¹Bush, Renae M, “*The Effectiveness of Context Clues and Isolated Words Lists in High School English Classes*”, Kean University, 1998.

²Seyed Jalal Abdolmanafirokni, and Hamid Reza Niknaqsh, “*The Effect of Context Clues on EFL Learners’ Reading Comprehension*”, ELT voice-India, 2013.

is the average score of achievement test is 76.62 becomes 85.15. It means the achievement category is excellent. Context Clues can improve the vocabulary mastery of the students, so it is suggested that the English teacher uses Context clues as the alternative teaching strategy in teaching English to improve the students' vocabulary mastery. Thus, the writer suggests that a teacher should be creative, active, and always gives motivation to the students in order to create enjoyable learning in teaching English to improve the vocabulary mastery.³

In conclusion, the differences between previous studies with the writer are related to the approach of the study used. This study used quasi experiment research; it was conducted in reading by using context clues. The purpose of the study was to measure the effect of context clues in reading comprehension of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Palangka Raya.

B. Reading

1. Nature of Reading

There are many skills in English which should be mastered and it is cannot denied that reading is one of the most important skills in English. "Reading is very important to the learners of English. Reading is an extremely complex process that no one can explain it satisfactorily."⁴

Reading is look at and understands the meaning of written or printed word or symbols, to discover or find out about something, to interpret

³ Kiki Marlindawati, "*The Use of Context Clues to improve the vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students of MTs Hasyim Asyari 2 kudu in the Academic year 2012/2013*", Kudus: University of Muria Kudus, 2013.

⁴ Bouchard, D. L. and Spaventa, L. J. *A TEFL ANTHOLOGY. Selected Articles from the English Teaching Forum*. Washington DC: English Language Program Division, 1984, P. 175.

something in particular way, a way in which something is interpreted or understood. Therefore, reading is not simple looking but involves deriving meaning from the printed words. And comprehension is the power of understanding, an exercise aimed at improving or testing one's understanding of a language (written or spoken).

Reading is a very complex process. It requires a high level of muscular coordination, sustained effort and concentration. But reading is more than just a visual task. Not only must the reader see and identify the symbol on front of him but also he must interpret what he reads in the light of his own background, associate with past experience, and project beyond this in terms of ideas, judgments, applications and conclusions.⁵

The definition of reading is a psycholinguistics guessing game. It involves an interaction between thought and language, which occupies skill in selecting the fewest and most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time. Thus, the ability to anticipate, that which has not been seen, is vital in reading.⁶

2. Reading Comprehension

The essence of the reading act is comprehension. It becomes a primary challenge in teaching or learning of reading skill. In order to learn or understand the message of the author, the students are hoped to have the ability to comprehend the written text book. Comprehension means understanding the meaning or the point of a topic, as Dearson and Johnson

⁵ Jonathan Anderson, *Efficient Reading; A practical Guide*, Sydney: Mcgraw-Hill Book Company, 1969, p. 5.

⁶ *Ibid*, p.6.

stated: “reading comprehension is one unitary process and a set of the discrete process”.⁷

While reading a text, a reader should maximize his or her experiences in order to gain the understanding on the text. But, it does not mean that the reader must manage every inch of the text. In the process of the comprehending, the reader should be able to relate the information in his or her mind to the information in text. Cooper supported: “. . . interaction between the reader and the text that is the process of comprehending.”

Moreover, Cooper claimed:

“To comprehend the written word, the reader must be able to (1) understand how an author has structured or organized the ideas and information presented text, and (2) relate the ideas and information from text to ideas or information stored in his or her mind. By doing these two things, the reader interacts with text to construct meaning.”⁸

In comprehending a text, a reader needs to master the technique of reading. Skimming and scanning are two very useful techniques that will help a reader.

1. Skimming

When the readers are skimming, they should move their eyes quickly over the text or passage. Look at the important parts of the passage: the beginning, the end, the titles and the first sentence in each paragraph (if there is more than one paragraph), which usually contains

⁷ Paul C, Burns and Friend Teaching Reading Today’s Elementary Schools, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. p.207

⁸Jonathan Anderson, et.al., *efficient Reading – A Practical Guide*, Australia: Mc – Hill Book Company, 1969, p. 4.

the main idea. Djiwandono said: “*skimming adalah untuk menentukan gagasan utama suatu bacaan.*”⁹

2. Scanning

When the readers are scanning, they should move their eyes quickly over the passage until they find the specific piece of information which they need. Djiwandono said: “*Scanning adalah untuk mendapatkan informasi yang lebih terperinci.*”¹⁰.

3. Difficulties in Reading

There are some difficulties that make reading difficult, which can be discussed:

- Decoding Difficulties

Decoding is the process by which a word is broken into individual phonemes and recognized based on those phonemes. *Signs of decoding difficulty*: trouble sounding out words and recognizing words out of context, confusion between letters and the sounds they represent, slow oral reading rate (reading word-by-word), reading without expression, ignoring punctuation while reading.

- Comprehension Difficulties

Comprehension relies on mastery of decoding; children who struggle to decode find it difficult to understand and remember what has been read. *Signs of comprehension difficulty*: confusion about the meaning of words and sentences, inability to connect ideas in a passage, omission of, or

⁹Djiwandono, P. I. STRATEGI MEMBACA BAHASA INGGRIS. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2002, p. 81.

¹⁰*Ibid*, p.81.

glossing over detail, difficulty distinguishing significant information from minor details, lack of concentration during reading.

- Retention Difficulties

Retention requires both decoding and comprehending what is written.

Signs of retention difficulty: trouble remembering or summarizing what is read, difficulty connecting what is read to prior knowledge, difficulty applying content of a text to personal experiences.¹¹

4. The Assessment of Reading Comprehension

The assessment of reading comprehension has been controversial. At the center of this controversy rests incongruence between the insights provided by theory and empirical evidence concerning the nature of this construct and the manner in which it commonly is assessed.¹² Theory and empirical evidence have demonstrated that reading comprehension is variable and multi-dimensional. Yet, the traditional reliance has been on tests with little variation in the material read and relatively little variation in the response formats used within tests¹³.

a. Kind of Questions in Reading Comprehension

According Loughed and TOEFL Information Bulletin in Djwandono, usually the questions in reading comprehension tests are about:

¹¹<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/readingdiffs.html> (online on 28 May 2015)

¹²Pearson, P. D., & Hamm, D. N, *Children's reading comprehension and assessment*, Mahwah, NJ: ErlbaumAssociates Publishers.2005, p.13.

¹³ Sweet, A. P.). *Assessment of reading comprehension: The RAND reading study group vision*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.2005, p.3.

- 1) Main idea
- 2) Supporting details
- 3) Inferring meaning
- 4) Passage structure
- 5) Author's aim
- 6) Knowledge about certain vocabulary
- 7) Defining vocabulary based on the context¹⁴

Furthermore, the followings are the descriptions for some of kinds question above:

1) Main Ideas

The question about main idea asks the reader to determine the main idea or topic from a reading text, and commonly it is signed by word such as: *main point; mainly discussed; main idea; best title; main purpose; mainly concerned; main topic.*

Here are some examples of questions about main idea:

- a) What is the main idea of the passage?
- b) With which of the following is the passage mainly concerned?
- c) What is the main part of the passage?
- d) Which of the following does the author mainly discuss?
- e) Which of the following would be the best title?¹⁵

¹⁴Djiwandono, P. I. *STRATEGI MEMBACA BAHASA INGGRIS*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2002, p. 97.

¹⁵*Ibid*, p. 98.

2) Supporting Details

The question about supporting details asks the reader to find detail information that is printed explicitly in the text. It is commonly signed by words such as: *according to author...*; *according to the passage...*; *who, what, when, where, why, how, which*. Some questions in supporting details also can be called as Factual Negative Questions. It is commonly signed by words such as: NOT; EXCEPT; LEAST; MOST.

Here are some examples of question about supporting details:

- a) Which of the following question does passage answer?
- b) According to the passage, which statement is true?
- c) When did 'something' happen?
- d) Who did 'something'?
- e) The author discusses all of the following in the passage EXCEPT. . .
- f) Which of the following is NOT mentioned in the passage?¹⁶

3) Inferring Meaning

The question about inferring meaning asks the reader to find the implicit meaning of the written words. Implicit meaning is not printed explicitly in text, but its meaning can be got from the explicit word. It is commonly signed by words such as: *it can be*

¹⁶*Ibid.* p.98.

inferred that...; the author implied that...; likely agree with...; most likely to.

Here are some examples of questions about inferring meaning:

- a) Which of the following does the author imply?
- b) Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?
- c) Which the following statements would be author most likely to agree with?
- d) Which of the following is most likely to be true?¹⁷

4) Passage Structure

Every kind of text is arranged based on certain rhetoric pattern, such as problem-solving problem, general-specific, and other. The question about passage structure asks the reader to determine how author arranges his/her idea writtenly. It is commonly signed by word such as: *which details; present this discussion; in which ways.*

Here are some examples of questions about passage structure:

- a) Which of the following details does the author use support this opinion?
- b) How does the author present his discussion?¹⁸

¹⁷*Ibid*, p.100.

¹⁸*Ibid*, p. 101.

5) Defining Vocabulary Based on the Context

The question about defining vocabulary based on the context asks the reader to determine the meaning of a word in the text. Commonly, this word is used in the context of the sentence, when the reader is asked to determine the meaning of the word. It is commonly signed by words such as: *refers to; means in this context.*

Here are some examples of questions about defining vocabulary based on the context:

- a) The word “this” in this last sentence refers to...
- b) What does the word “indelible” mean in this context?¹⁹

b. Reading Scoring Rubric

Indicator	Assessment		
	Technique	Instrument	Example
Students read narrative text properly	Written test	Multiple choice (question and answer)	Answer the questions based on the narrative text given!

Note:

Maximal score = 100

Result	=	$\frac{\text{Maximal score X correct answer}}{\text{Number of items}}$
	=	$\frac{100 \times 30}{30}$
	=	100

¹⁹*Ibid*, p. 102.

c. Aspect of scoring

In connection with the score of students test, the writer used the following table as scoring.²⁰

No.	Categories	Scoring
1	Excellent	85-100
2.	Good	70-84
3.	Enough	60-69
4	Less	50-59

5. Levels of Reading Comprehension

The following are levels of reading comprehension according to Smith and Carnine :²¹

- a. Level of reading comprehension according to Smith and Wayne are:
 1. Literal comprehension; that is the skill of getting primary direct literal meaning of a word, idea, or sentence in context.
 2. Interpretation; that is to identify ideal and meaning that are not explicitly stated in the written text.
 3. Critical reading; that is to evaluate what is read, and examines critically the thought of the writer.

²⁰Craig A. Mertler, *Designing Scoring Rubrics for Your Classroom, Practical Assessment, research & evaluation*, 7(25).2005 Retrived July 8, 2005, p.4-5

²¹Paul C. Burns and Friends, *Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary Schools*, Boston: Mifflin Company, 2004. p.255

4. Creative reading; that is to apply ideas from the text to new situations and to recombine author's ideas with other ideas to from new concepts or to expand old ones.
- b. Level of reading comprehension according to Carnine are:
1. Comprehension skill for the primary level consists of:
 - a. Literal comprehension; that is to receive information stated in a passage.
 - b. Sequencing comprehension; that is to under several from a passage according to when they happened.
 - c. Summarization; that is to receive information stated in a passage.
 2. Comprehension skill for the intermediate level consist of:
 - a. Inferential comprehension; that is to reveal relationship between two objects or averts (stated on not stated).
 - b. Critical reading; that is to identify the author's conclusion to determine what evidence is presented, and to identify family argument.
 - c. Comprehension skill for the advanced level that is the appreciation of the author' work.²²

²²*Ibid*,p.256

C. Context Clues

1. Nature of Context Clues

The reader uses familiar word in a sentence of paragraph to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Context clues are information in the text, which can be used to help deduce the meaning of an unknown vocabulary word within the text. Context clues are words, pictures, graphs, tables, and side notes, all of which might be included in the text.²³

When read a sentence and text, it is often that readers find unknown word and it is considered as problem in reading. Most of them believe that without knowing the unknown word, they cannot understand what the text about. Also, most of them suppose that the best way to find the unknown words meaning is by using dictionary or asking the other people who knows the meaning of the unknown words. No one denies dictionary is the most helpful thing to find the unknown word meaning, but what if the dictionary that is needed is not available? Of course, the readers will be in trouble.

Then, how to solve this problem effectively and efficiently? There are various strategies that can be used and one of the strategies is by using context clues. Carter and McCarthy said: “Guessing vocabulary from context is the most frequent way we discover the meaning of new words, and to do it, we have learned to look for a number of clues”.²⁴

²³Kerynda Tope Reardon, *To What Degree Will Learning To Use Context Clues Impact Students' Reading Comprehension Scores?*, University of Wisconsin – River Falls, 2011.

²⁴Carter, R. and McCarthy, M. 1988. *Vocabulary and Language Teaching*. London and New York: Longman, p. 63.

The meaning of an unfamiliar word often can be guessed by analyzing the sentences around it. This is because authors often provide clues in text that enable reader to understand the meaning of an unfamiliar word without having looked up the dictionary. Cooper said: “When readers use the familiar words around and an unknown word in a sentence, paragraph, or longer text to figure out either the pronunciation or meaning of the unknown word, they are using context clues.”²⁵

Using context to aid in word recognition is the common technique that used by many readers, even mature reader frequently uses the same skill with the beginning reader to guess at the meaning of a new word, that is to make use the clues available in context. Harry and Smith said: “Using context to aid recognition is a necessary and valuable technique for both beginning and mature reader.”²⁶

2. Types of Context Clues

There are several types of context clues, as follows:

- Definition

The author provides a direct definition of an unfamiliar word right in the sentence. Signal words: “*is, are, means, and refers to*”.

Example: A *conga* is a barrel-shaped drum.

²⁵ Cooper, J. D. *Improving Reading Comprehension*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986, P. 166.

²⁶ Haris, L. A. and Smith, C. B. *Reading Instructional. Diagnostic Teaching in the Classroom. Fourth Edition*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986, P. 196.

- Synonym

The author uses another word or phrase that has a similar meaning to the unfamiliar word. Signal words: “*also, as, like, similarly*”.

Example: My dog Buck travels everywhere with me. My friends *canine*, Buddy, travels everywhere with himtoo.

- Antonym

The author uses another word or phrase that means the opposite of the unfamiliar word. Signal words: “*however, whereas, unlike, in contrast, instead of*”.

Example: Unlike Jamaal’s room, which was *immaculate*, Jeffrey’s room was very messy.

- Example

The author provides several words or ideas that are examples of unfamiliar words. Signal words: “*like, such as, for example, for instance, including*”.

Example: In science we were studying marine *mammals* such as whales, dolphins, and porpoises.

- Inference

Word meanings are not directly described, but need to be inferred from the context. Signal words: “*Look for clues over several words or sentences*”.

Example: Tim’s *pugnacious* behavior made his opponent back down.

3. Principle in Teaching Reading Using Context Clues

As teachers of English as a foreign language, we are often tempted to teach reading in order to improve the student's mastery of English, to enable them to develop their reading skill. The teacher should know the rationale of the nature of reading and its implication in teaching techniques. They should also be able to employ certain techniques to improve the student's reading ability.

Comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. As the psycholinguistic views that reading is "a psycholinguistic guessing game" which involves interaction between thought and language. By guessing readers predict the content of the text. This means that their background knowledge is important to help understand the text.

Classroom reading activities, therefore, should be handled in such a way that learners are able to improve their text-based information processing as well as their knowledge-based information processing. The former concerns with the activities which can develop the learner's skill on the language, whereas the latter provides activities to improve the knowledge background which helps them understand the text.²⁷

Yuen stated the use of context clues to gain knowledge of new words during reading. Context clues strategies taught during intervention included locating appositives, searching for explicit

²⁷Endang Fauziaty, Teaching of English, p. 144-145.

definitions, and using prior knowledge. The study occurred in a self-contained third grade classroom at a public school. The twenty students in the experimental group were taught the above-mentioned strategies for three weeks. His research findings suggested that teaching students how to use context clues while reading improves their understanding of new vocabulary words²⁸.

The importance steps of teaching reading comprehension as follows:

1. The ability to read a wide range of texts in English. This is the long-range goal most teachers seek to develop through independent readers outside EFL/ESL classroom.
2. Building knowledge of language which will facilitate reading ability.
3. Building schematic knowledge.
4. The ability to adapt the reading style according to reading purpose (skimming, scanning).
5. Developing an awareness of the structure of written texts in English.
6. Taking a critical stance to the contents of the texts.²⁹

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Context Clues

There are several advantages and disadvantages of context clues:

a. Advantages of context clues

- The intention of vocabulary acquisition

²⁸Yuen J. *Context clue detectives: Empowering students with a self-learning device through the teaching of context clues*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of California, 2009.

²⁹Hesham Suleiman Alyousef. *Teaching Reading Comprehension to ESL/EFL Learners*. The read matrix, 2005.

Vocabulary mastery, of course, has a big point in understanding the sentence. Context clues are supporting sentences for providing information on the meaning of difficult words. Therefore, when we just have a little vocabulary mastery, of course will be directly proportional to the mastery of context clues. For example, when there is a sentence and we do not even understand the meaning of it. We do not know the meaning of each word or we know a little word only, context clues, of course, this approach will not be running, as it should. To overcome this problem at least should first increase our vocabulary mastery. By mastering vocabulary well, is expected there will creativity enhancement in word processing, especially relation to the ability to read. In reading, one must have an adequate vocabulary so that he can figure out the meaning of reading's content. Context clues are a combination of reading skills, vocabulary mastery, and creativity. Three of those should go together.

- Stimulate critical thinking of reader

Creativity is needed when we are dealing with context clue. Carefulness in reading the information, such as punctuation, and keywords will greatly affect the accuracy in guessing unfamiliar word. In deciphering punctuation for example, a dash (-) or mark (,) has a big share in applying context clues. They are

informations which is provided by the author to the reader or in the determination of key words.

- For critical reader, it does not need longer time than opening dictionary.

Context clues are hints found within a sentence, paragraph, or passage that a reader can use to understand the meanings of new or unfamiliar words. Learning the meaning of a word through its use in a sentence or paragraph is the most practical way to build vocabulary, since a dictionary is not always available when a reader encounters an unknown word. A reader must be aware that many words have several possible meanings. Only by being sensitive to the circumstances in which a word is used, the readers are able to decide upon an appropriate definition to fit the context.

- Can be useful to define word meaning for any polysemous word depend on the context.

A polyseme is a word or phrase with different, but related senses. Since the test for polysemy is the vague concept of relatedness, judgments of polysemy can be difficult to make. Because applying pre-existing words to new situations is a natural process of language change, looking at words' etymology is helpful in determining polysemy but not the only solution; as words become lost in etymology, what once was a useful distinction of meaning may no longer be so. Some apparently

unrelated words share a common historical origin, however, so etymology is not an infallible test for polysemy, and dictionary writers often defer to speakers' intuitions to judge polysemy in cases where it contradicts etymology.³⁰

b. Disadvantages of context clues

- For beginner reader, it needs more time

Context clues require extra creativity and flair course for beginners. Learning about the context clue is not easy. Novice readers tend to have mastered a lot of vocabulary. So it will be difficult for novices when they encounter unfamiliar words. Most will just skip it. Then continue reading until end. Nevertheless, for those readers who are critical they will be back on the words were and trying to find the meaning of those unfamiliar words. Context clue is the easiest way to guess of an unfamiliar word. However, for the beginner, this way will require a longer time. Process of identifying the problem and information are two big deals that make the beginner needs more time. More over the process of determining the meaning of the word, beginners are inclined not to mention in a single word. Most are still in descriptions or still in the form of phrases or sentences.

³⁰beddebah-haterulez.blogspot.com/2012/06/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-context-clues.html.(Accessed on april,02 2015).

- The context clues sometime does not sufficient and leads the reader in misguessing.

The contexts in which unknown words are presented in text are not always helpful and, in some cases, can mislead students into making false inferences about word meanings. Negative learning probabilities have been attributed to misleading contexts within the stories read aloud to young children, and lack of contextual support hindered high school students who tried to derive the meaning of rare words in naturally occurring text. Manipulating the text to increase word learning has had mixed results. Some studies indicate that text revised to be more considerate, or to provide more useful contextual information, can produce significantly higher scores on measures of word learning. A high density of unknown words in a text was found to obstruct incidental word learning.

- Depend from our background knowledge

Intelligence factor makes it especially needs to be considered in the use of context clues. In addition, the limitation of the information or information which is provided by the author is less adequate. The use of this approach also depends on our background knowledge. The more information we know, the

more information we can apply in information that already exist
on sentence or textbook that contains some unfamiliar words.³¹

³¹*Ibid.*

