

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This part presents the review of related literature. Which covers seven major sections. They consists of previous studies, reading, recount text, the teaching of English in MTs level.

#### A. The Previous Studies

The writer presented some previous studies that were the study related to this study as follows: First, the study conducted by Alfianti entitle:” *The Ability of Reading Recount Text of the Eighth Grade Students MTsN Kudus in Academic Year 2011/2012 Taught by Quantum Reading*”. Alfianti conducted this study in Kudus, Central Java, to measure the students’ ability of reading recount text includes good category. The mean of the ability of reading recount text is 76.26, and the standard deviation is 11.749. There is a significant difference between the ability of reading recount text of the eighth grade students of MTs N Kudus in academic year 2011/2012 before and after being taught by using quantum reading. From the data, the researcher found the rxy is 0.58. Based on the result above, the researcher suggests that to improve the students’ ability of reading recount text, they have to read books or essay a lot and often practice their reading. For the teacher, it will be better if the eighth grade students of MTs. Negeri Kudus in academic year 2011/2012 are given much reading activities, so that the teacher can make the students improve their ability by reading books a lot.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Alfianti “*The Ability of Reading Recount Text of the Eighth Grade Students of MTs N Kudus in Academic Year 2011/2012 Taught by Quantum Reading*”. Skripsi Sarjana thesis, Universitas Muria Kudus, 2012.

Second, the research done by Anik entitled "*The Reading Comprehension of Recount Text of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara in Academic Year 2011/2012 Taught by Using Team Teaching Strategy*". The objective of this research is to find out whether there is a significant difference of the reading comprehension of recount text of the eighth grade students of SMP N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara in academic year 2011/2012 before and after being taught by using the team teaching strategy. The subjects of the research were the eighth grade students of SMP N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara in academic year 2011/2012 with the number of students 37 from the population students 218. In choosing the sample of the research, the writer used cluster random sampling. The design of this research was experimental research because it is to find out whether there is effect relation to the variable or not. There was one experimental group. The result showed that the reading comprehension of recount text of the eighth grade students of SMP N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara in academic year 2011/2012 before being taught by using the team teaching strategy was categorized sufficient. The score of mean and deviation standard are 59.92 and 10.6. Meanwhile, the reading comprehension of recount text of the eighth grade students of SMP N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara in academic year 2011/2012 after being taught by using the team teaching strategy was categorized good. The score of mean and deviation standard are 75.02 and 11.6. The calculation of t-test gets result 8.4 and in the level of significant 0.05 and the degree of freedom (df) 35 which is gained N1-1 t-table is 2.04. It is concluded that there is any significant differences of the reading comprehension of recount text of the eighth grade students of SMP N 1

Kalinyamatan Jepara in academic year 2011/2012 before and after being taught by using the team teaching strategy.<sup>8</sup>

Comparing the studies above, this study has some similarities and differences. The similarities were the writer discussed about reading, the text was recount text, and the subjects of research were eight grade of junior high school. The differences were: first, the writer took a topic about the students' ability in reading and comprehending recount text at eight grade of MTs Islamiyah Palangka Raya. Second, the writer focused to discuss about literal and inferential comprehension.

Third, the subjects in this study were the eighth grade of MTs Islamiyah Palangka Raya. Fourth, the study was conducted in 2013-2014 academic years. Fifth, this study used descriptive quantitative approach and used purposive sampling.

The writer conducted this study because based on preliminary study by doing interview for teacher and test to identify the problem in the reading. It meant that the writer was able to do a research about the students' ability in reading and comprehending recount text with differences subjects, objects and method from the previous studies about reading comprehension recount text.

## **B. Ability**

Ability is a characteristic that is indicative of competence in a field.<sup>9</sup>

Then, in Encyclopedia Americana, the definitions of ability are:<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Anik, "*The Reading Comprehension of Recount Text of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP N 1*". Jepara: Skripsi Sarjana thesis, Universitas Muria Kudus.2012.

1. A general term used to refer to any characteristic of a person that makes it possible to him for carry out some sort of activity successfully. The term covers board traits such as manual dexterity.
2. Determined in complex ways. Heredity always plays a part, but practice and training usually seem to be involved as well. The structure and condition of various parts of the body help to determine the level functioning of some abilities, but mental qualities are even more important.

Based on the statement above, it can summarize that ability is the power of capacity to do something in mentally or physically. The ability here refers to comprehending recount text.

### **C. Reading**

#### **1. The Nature of Reading Comprehension**

Reading is a process which starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which a reader construct. The meaning is constructed continuously, and to carry out this process the reader relies, particularly, on his brain .<sup>11</sup>This means that a reader follows some steps in processing information to figure out the established meaning in the text. Experts divide the steps in the establishment of meaning in reading into *decoding* and *comprehension*.<sup>12</sup> for example, define decoding as the translation of printed words into a representation similar to oral language, and comprehension as the attempt in understanding the representation. Similarly, Alderson believes that decoding activities refer to word recognition activities, whereas comprehension activities consist of activities to parse sentences, to understand sentences in discourse, to

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<sup>9</sup> The Wrightslaw Way, *Glossary of assessment Terms*, in <http://www.wrightslaw.com> (online on September 19<sup>th</sup> 2007)

<sup>10</sup> Library of Congress in Publication Data, *Encyclopedia Americana Internasional Edition*, Danbury: Scholastic Library Publishing, 2004, p.40.

<sup>11</sup> K. Goodman, The Reading Process. In Carrell, PL., Devine, J., & Eskey, D. E. *Interactive Approaches to Second....* P. 12.

<sup>12</sup>D, Carnine., Silbert, J., & Kameenui, E. J. *Direct Instruction Reading (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)*. Columbus: Merrill.1990.

build a discourse structure, and to integrate what is understood from the discourse with what a reader already knows.<sup>13</sup> From this, we can infer that a reader starts his/her reading by comparing what is written in the text with when it is used in conversation (decode), then to find the logical meaning of the written words in where the sentence exist (comprehension). So, the main objective of reading activity is the understanding of the message trying to be delivered by the writer and to transfer what is written into our mind and resulting in the form of idea.

However, to read and to comprehend a text is not as easy as it seems. Burnsstate that it takes more than sounding out the printed materials to comprehend a text; “the reader must construct meaning while interacting with the printed material”.<sup>14</sup> The construction of meaning in order to achieve comprehension will be impossible to happen without the presence of what the reader know of the printed material. The importance of previously acquired knowledge – known as *schemata*, is closely related with *schema* theory: a theory about how knowledge is represented and about how that representation facilitates the use of knowledge in particular way.<sup>15</sup> So merely rely on the written text does not make the comprehension take place because text, any text, either spoken or written, does not itself carry meaning. Rather, “a text only provides directions for

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<sup>13</sup>Alderson, J.C. *Assessing Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.. 2000.

<sup>14</sup>Burns, P. C., Roe, B. D., & Ross, E. P. *Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary School*. (Sixth Edition). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1996.P. 7.

<sup>15</sup>Rumelhart, D.E. Schemata: the Building Blocks of Cognition. In R. J. Spiro, B. C. Bruce, & W. E. Brewer (Eds.).*Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum. 1980.

listeners or readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own schemata”.<sup>16</sup>

The importance of schemata is closely related to schema theory. Nunan compares schema theory to frame theory where we organize our knowledge carried around in our head into interrelated patterns those constructed our previous experience of the experiential world and guide us as we make sense of new experiences. He further states that it is schema that enables us to make predictions about what we might expect to experience in given context.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Anderson finds out that it is a reader’s schemata that affect the recall of information in a text and explains that “a reader comprehends a message when he is able to bring to mind a schema that gives account of the objects and events described in the message”.<sup>18</sup> So, one will be able to comprehend a text when he is able to connect what he has known about the text with the new knowledge he finds in the text.

Besides schemata, comprehension also takes the use of strategies in reading. Strategies are defined as learning techniques, behaviors, and problem solving or study skills, which make learning more effective and efficient.<sup>19</sup> Stahl states that strategies in reading can be tools in the assimilation, refinement, and use of content, and it is believed as the reader is actively engage in particular cognitive strategies (activating prior knowledge, predicting, organizing,

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<sup>16</sup>Carrell, P. L. &Eisterhold, J. C. Schema Theory and ESL Reading Pedagogy. In Carrell, P.L., Devine, J., &Eskey, D. E. *Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1988. P. 76.

<sup>17</sup>Nunan, D. *Language Teaching Methodology: A Textbook for Teachers*. New York: Prentice Hall. 1991.P. 68.

<sup>18</sup> Anderson, N. J.1994. Developing ACTIVE readers: A pedagogical framework for the second language reading class.*System* 22: 177-194. P. 469.

<sup>19</sup>Oxford, R.L. *Language Learning Strategies*. New York: Newbury House.1990.

questioning, summarizing, and creating a mental image), he/she will be likely to understand and recall more of what they read.<sup>20</sup> Kamil defines strategies in reading as those directed and intended by the students in order to build independence in reading.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, Alderson believes that “the use of reading strategies is regarded as being conducive to successful reading comprehension despite the complex nature of the reading process, which invokes both the L2 reader’s language ability and reading ability”.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Blachowicz & Ogle state that using strategies for constructing meaning before, during and after reading will help students connect what they read now with what they have learned in the past.<sup>23</sup> They range from simple fix-up strategies such as simply rereading difficult segments and guessing the meaning of an unknown word from context, to more comprehensive strategies such as summarizing and relating what is being read to the reader's background knowledge.<sup>24</sup> Hence, using reading strategies indicates how readers conceive a task, what they do to make meaning from texts, and what they do when comprehension breaks down.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Stahl, K. A. D. 2004. Proof, Practice and Promise: Comprehension Strategy Instruction in Primary Grades. *The Reading Teacher*, 57 (7): 598-609. P. 598.

<sup>21</sup> Kamil, M. L. 2003. *Adolescents and Literacy: Reading for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Alliance for Excellent Education. (online), (<http://www.all4ed.org> accessed on April 18<sup>th</sup> 2009). P. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Alderson, J. C. Reading in a Foreign Language: A reading Problem or a Language Problem? In J. C. Alderson & A. H. Urquhart (Eds.), *Reading in a Foreign Language*. London: Longman. 1984.

<sup>23</sup> Blachowicz, C. & Ogle, D. *Reading Comprehension: Strategies for Independent Learners (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. London: The Guilford. 2008. P. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Janzen, J. Teaching Strategic Reading. In Richard, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (Eds.), *Methodology in Language Teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2002. P. 287.

<sup>25</sup> Zhang, L.J. Awareness in Reading: EFL Students’ Metacognitive Knowledge of Reading Strategies Acquisition-Poor Environment. *Language Awareness*, 10, 268-288. 2001.

From this, the researcher concludes that there should be a synchronization between the *who* (reader), the *what* (text), and the *which* (background knowledge) in reading comprehension process. The harmonization is in line with Anderson that “the meaning (comprehension) does not reside on the printed page, nor is it only in the head of the reader. A synergy occurs in reading which combines the words on the printed page with the reader’s background knowledge and experiences.”<sup>26</sup> Block et al. support this statement as they define reading comprehension as “an interactive process involving the reader, the text and the context”.<sup>27</sup> As stated by Grabe that reading is not just extracting meaning from a text but a process of connecting information in the text with the knowledge the reader brings to the act of reading. Reading is “a dialogue between the reader and the text”.<sup>28</sup> So, comprehension will occur when the relationship between the reader, the text, and the context are established.

Furthermore, we can say that reading is not a passive activity although it is a receptive skill. As stated by Anderson that “reading is an active, fluent process which involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning.” In order to comprehend a text a reader must be active in constructing the meaning.<sup>29</sup> “Reading comprehension is a meaning-making process; a process

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<sup>26</sup> Anderson, N. J. *Exploring Second Language Reading: Issues and strategies*. Boston: Heinle&Heinle. 1999. P. 1.

<sup>27</sup>Block, C.C., Gambrell, L.B., Pressley, M. *Improving Comprehension Instruction: Rethinking Research, Theory, and Classroom Practice*. San Fransisco: John Wiley. 2002. P. 4.

<sup>28</sup>Grabe, W. Reassessing the Term “Interactive”.In Carrell, P.L., Devine, J., &Eskey, D. E. *Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1988. P. 56.

<sup>29</sup>Anderson, N. J. *Exploring Second ...*.P. 1.



where a reader is involved in making sense of the message by acquiring meaning, confirming meaning, and creating meaning”.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, there are three elements determine the process of comprehension in reading: (1) a reader needs knowledge of the world to understand each new things; (2) a reader needs to be familiar with the variety of text/structure he/she is likely to encounter; and (3) a reader needs to seek meaning and not passively for it to rise up from the page.<sup>31</sup> Then, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is an action in where we compare the interpretation of the written material with its representation in spoken, and then we try to comprehend the representation by connecting what we have known with the topic discussed, to comprehend the text structure, and to be actively involved in reading by utilizing reading strategies. However to get a good comprehension is a problematic process. In the following section the processes of reading is discussed.

## **2. The Process of Reading**

As stated previously, it is not easy to achieve the *comprehension* level since reading is a complex process. According to Birch, the process of reading seems simple—just like other mental activities—but in fact it is complex and complicated because it involves a great deal of precise knowledge which must be acquired or learned and many processing strategies which must be practiced until they are automatic.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, in order to describe the complexity of reading process, Burns et al list nine aspects of reading covered by children when they

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<sup>30</sup>Block, C.C., Gambrell, L.B., Pressley, M. *Improving Comprehension...* p. 4.

<sup>31</sup>McNeil, J. D. *Reading Comprehension: New Direction for Classroom Practice (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*. New York: HarperCollins. 1992. P. 13.

<sup>32</sup>Birch, B. M. *English L2 Reading : Getting to the Bottom*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum. 2002. P. 2.

read: sensory, perceptual, sequential, experiential, thinking, learning, associational, affective, and constructive.<sup>33</sup> Grabe & Stoller support this and describe the way how reading comprehension processes to work for skilled readers text by dividing the processes into lower-level processes—represent the more automatic linguistic processes and are typically as more skills orientated, and high-level processes—represent comprehension processes that make much more use of the reader’s background knowledge and inferencing skills.<sup>34</sup> Their division of lower-level and high-level process in reading comprises three models of reading process that have been developed: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models.<sup>35</sup>

Bottom-up model is the lower-level processes depend primarily on the information presented in the text. The information is processed from letter features to letters to words for meaning. Nunan states the central concept behind the bottom-up approach is that reading is basically a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their auditory correspondent.<sup>36</sup> In line with it, Nuttal believes that the reader builds up a meaning from the black marks on the page, recognizing letters and words, working out sentence structure.<sup>37</sup> She emphasizes the appropriate time to use bottom-up processing is as a learner is in uncertainty whether the apparent message is actually the writer’s intention or not due to the learner’s own limited world knowledge, or if the writer’s point of view is very

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<sup>33</sup>Bruns, P. C., Roe, B. D., & Ross, E, P. *teaching Reading in Today’s Elementary School. (Sixth Edition)*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1996. P. 9.

<sup>34</sup>Grabe&Stoller.*Teaching and....* P. 19

<sup>35</sup>Bruns, P. C., Roe, B. D., & Ross, E, P. *teaching Reading...P.20.*

<sup>36</sup>Nunan, D. *Language Teaching Methodology:...*p.64.

<sup>37</sup>Nuttal, *Teaching Reading in Foreign Language. (second Language)*. London: Heinemann. 1996. P. 17.

different from the learner's that encourage the learner to scrutinize the vocabulary and the syntax to make sure he has taken hold of the basic sense correctly. However, just merely sounding out sounds is not enough to support comprehension. Further development of research reveal the need of an alternative to the bottom-up: the top-down or psycholinguistics approach to reading.

In contrast to bottom-up models, top-down models are diametrically opposed to the lower-level processes. It emphasizes the reconstruction of meaning rather than the decoding of form. The interaction of the reader and the text is central to the process, and readers bring to this interaction their knowledge of the subject at hand, knowledge of and expectations about how language works, motivation, interest and attitudes toward the content of the text.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Nuttall states that in top-down processing we draw on our intelligence and experience – the predictions we can make, based on the schemata we acquired – to understand the text. She compared the top-down process to an eagle's view of the landscape.<sup>39</sup> From a great high, the eagle can see a wide area spread out below; it understands the nature of the whole land, its general pattern and the relationships between various parts of it, far better than an observer on the ground.

As in the top-down, Nuttall compares the bottom-up processing to a scientist with magnifying glass examining the ecology of a transect – a tiny part of the landscape the eagle surveys.<sup>40</sup> The scientist develops a detailed understanding of that one little area (which might represent a sentence in the text). However, without knowing nearby areas and the wider terrain he will not get fully

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<sup>38</sup>Nunan, Nunan, D. *Language Teaching Methodology*:...p.66.

<sup>39</sup>Nuttall, *Teaching Reading in...* P. 16.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.* P. 17.

understand of what is occurring within objects under investigation—the effect of areas and landscapes on the ecology of the transect. So, both bottom-up and top-down processing are important for comprehension since they are used to complement each other (in spite of the shortcomings of each of them). This consideration, then lead to the interaction of bottom-up and top-down processing: the interactive model.

Interactive is the most comprehensive description of the reading process.<sup>41</sup> Nuttal sees interactive process of approaching a text as the following: “as a reader read, he continually shifts from one focus to another. In one time he adopts the top-down approach to predict the probable meaning, then moves to the bottom-up approach to check whether that is really what the writer says.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, this third type combines elements of bottom-up and top-down models and assuming “that a pattern is synthesized based on information provided simultaneously from several knowledge sources.”<sup>43</sup>

To sum up, during the process of reading a reader does not only extract information from the text by simply decode the text, but also to activate a range of knowledge in his mind, which in turn, will be refined and extended by the new information supplied in the text. At the end of the reading process one’s comprehension will be assumed to be in a certain level of comprehension. The following section will discuss the level of reading comprehension.

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<sup>41</sup> Anderson, N. J. *Exploring Second ...* P. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Nuttal, *Teaching Reading in...* P. 17.

<sup>43</sup> Stanovich, Toward an Interactive Compensatory Model of Individual Differences in the Development of Reading Fluency, *Reading Research Quarterly*, 16, 32-71. 1980.

### 3. The Level of Reading Comprehension

Readers employ different types of comprehension in order to understand fully what they read. The types of comprehension depend on the level in which the comprehension process takes place. Regarding the process of reading comprehension, Burns et al. classify four types of comprehension: literal, interpretive, critical, and creative comprehension.<sup>44</sup>

*Literal* comprehension includes acquiring information which is directly stated in a selection. This level is very important since it is prerequisite for higher level understanding: *interpretive* or *inferential* comprehension. This higher level of comprehension involves making inferences and is the process of deriving implied rather than directly stated ideas. Skills for interpretive reading includes inferring main ideas of passages in which the main ideas are not directly stated; inferring cause and effect relationships when they are not directly stated, inferring referents of pronouns, adverbs; inferring omitted words; detecting mood, the author's purpose in writing and drawing conclusions.

*Critical* comprehension covers evaluating written materials; comparing the ideas discovered in the material with known standards; and drawing conclusions about their accuracy, appropriateness, and timeliness. In this comprehension level, the critical reader must be an active reader, questioning, searching for facts, and suspending judgment until she/he has considered all the materials. Finally, in the *creative* comprehension the reader are required to think as she/he reads, just in the critical reading, and it also requires the reader's

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<sup>44</sup>Burns, P. C., Roe, B. D., & Ross, E. P. *Teaching Reading* .... P. 255.

imaginations. In this level of comprehension, the creative reader must understand cause and effect relationship in a story so well that she/he knows why a character acts as she/he does at a particular time, determine whether actions of characters are reasonable or unreasonable, relate the things they read to their own personal problems, sometimes applying the solution of a problem encountered in a story, react to the events, draw conclusions, and see how a story could be improved in order to make it more interesting.

In this study the writer focus in literal and inferential level of reading. Literal and inferential levels are applied in MTs/SMP level. The writer limits the level to make this study more focused in literal and inferential not in higher level.

#### **4. The Definition of Comprehension**

According to Fauziati comprehension as comprehending a text, that is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text.<sup>45</sup> While, according to Cooper defines that comprehension is a language process and should be developed as a part of the total language arts-listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and it is a process by which the reader constructs meaning interaction with the next.<sup>46</sup> Then, according to Hornby comprehension means ability to understand something or exercise that trains students to understand a language.<sup>47</sup> In summary, comprehension is a language process of ability to

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<sup>45</sup> Endang Fauziati, *Teaching of English as a Foreign Language*, p. 138.

<sup>46</sup> David J. Cooper, *Improving Reading Comprehension*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986.P. 17.

<sup>47</sup> A S Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, New York, p. 83.

understand and comprehend something in which there are an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text.

#### **D. Recount Text**

Recount is a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the order in which they occurred.<sup>48</sup> According to Anderson a recount is speaking or writing about past events or a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the order which they happened.

Recount text has generic structure. Generic structure of recount text are orientation, events, and reorientation. Orientation is provides the setting and introduces participants. A series of events tells us what happened, in what sequence. Reorientation is optional closure of events.

Recount usually include the following grammatical features :

1. Proper nouns to identify those involved in the text.
2. Descriptive words to give details about who, what, when, where, and how.
3. The use of the past tense to retell the events.
4. Words that show the order of the events (for example, first, next, then).

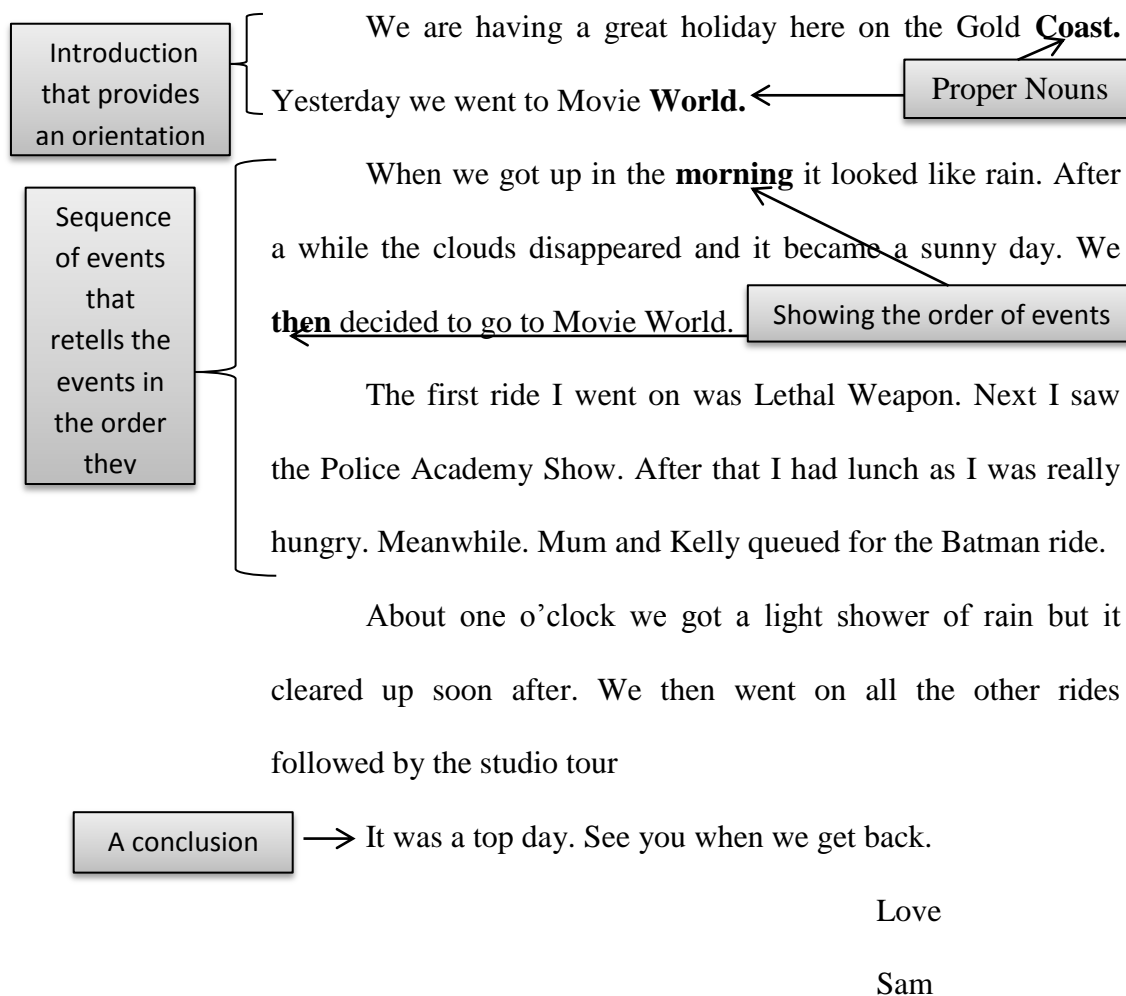
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<sup>48</sup> Mark Anderson and Kathy Anderson, *Text types in English 3*, Australia:1998. P. 24.

### Example of recount text

A postcard

Dear Nan,



### E. The Teaching of Reading in MTS Level

Teaching is contract between a student and a teacher. This implies that teachers and students have an agreement and some distinct obligations to each other. There is also an agreement to give the teaching obligation your best shot, and to expect the same from all the learners. Good teaching is hard work and



every class meeting is performance.<sup>49</sup> Teaching is process to give guidance or help the students to do learning process.<sup>50</sup> From the teaching learning process, a teacher is supposed to develop students' skill, change their attitudes, and guide them to do something and make them understand about knowledge that has been taught.

From the definition above, it can be known that teaching is the process of guiding and helping learners to learn something, giving instruction, and providing knowledge that all of them are given by a teacher. Teaching has three roles, namely planning for learning and instructional, facilitating or learning and evaluating of learning.<sup>51</sup> In teaching learning process the teacher must make the planning before they teach the students and they have a role facilitator for the students and also evaluate how the students ability in the lesson that have been given by teacher.

#### **F. Nature of Reading Assessment**

Reading assessment has great power to inform researchers, teachers, administrators, and policy makers. Assessment practices can significantly benefit the learning environment or they can inflict great harm. Reading assessment, therefore, needs to be treated with great care, attention, and respect. Teachers, especially, have a responsibility to understand the uses and the impacts of reading assessment and be mindful of the consequences of assessment.

Reading assessments are used for many purposes, but all appropriate uses begin from an understanding of the reading construct, an awareness of the

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<sup>49</sup> John A. Lott, *What is Teaching*.

<sup>50</sup> Syaiful Bahri Djamarah, *Strategi Belajar Mengajar*, Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2002. P. 45.

<sup>51</sup> Suryosubroto, *Proses Belajar Mengajar di Sekolah*, Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1997. P. 18.

development of reading abilities, and an effort to reflect the construct in assessment tasks. The first five chapters of this book, in effect, represent a reasonable interpretation of the construct of reading ability. Chapters 10 through 15 describe key aspects of the reading development process. The complexity of the construct of reading, as well as its development, also reveals the potential complexity of reading assessment.

Reading assessment can be intimidating and sometimes overwhelming for many teachers and administrators; thus, a first goal of this chapter is to present a straightforward framework that categorizes the many uses and purposes for assessment. A fairly simple, yet thorough framework should allow readers to sort through their own assessment experiences in a way that gives interpretive force to the framework. The chapter then outlines and describes a number of major options under each category in the assessment framework. These assessment options are equally applicable in both L1 and L2 contexts, though important L2 test and assessment practices are noted where relevant. No effort at comprehensiveness is intended for assessment practices and descriptions. A number of very good books provide detailed descriptions and discussions of the many options noted for assessment practices. The third section considers a number of innovations and challenges for reading assessment. The fourth section addresses a set of further issues for reading assessment.

Standardized assessment makes a serious effort to capture crucial aspects of the component abilities of comprehension. Drawing on these assumptions for standardized test construction, and considering the component abilities outlined in

this book, standardized reading assessment should seek to translate (aspects of) the reading construct listed. Major component abilities for reading comprehension:

1. Fluency and reading speed
2. Automaticity and rapid word recognition
3. Search processes
4. Vocabulary knowledge
5. Morphological knowledge
6. Syntactic knowledge
7. Text-structure awareness and discourse organization
8. Main-ideas comprehension
9. Recall of relevant details
10. Inferences about text information
11. Strategic-processing abilities
12. Summarization abilities
13. Synthesis skills
14. Evaluation and critical reading

There are six options for new reading assessment tasks. First, an option that has not been explored seriously in L2 reading assessment is to consider innovative ways to assess vocabulary knowledge. At present, vocabulary assessment and instruction have been rather static. But recent conceptualizations of vocabulary instruction in English L1 contexts raise new possibilities for vocabulary assessment as well. A comparable surge of research activity on

vocabulary instruction in L2 settings would be helpful in suggesting options and opportunities for vocabulary tasks as part of reading assessment. Just to suggest two possibilities, test takers could be asked to carry out sorting or classification tasks with large groups of words according to specified category labels, or they could be asked to take words from a list to fill in a relevant diagram. This latter task might be very useful with lower-proficiency students.

Second, another option for reading assessment is to develop tasks that encourage students to read longer texts (for advanced assessment, 700–1,200 words, assuming a rate of 120–150 wpm). There are currently some tests that require test takers to read over, or skim, longer texts in brief time periods and answer general questions. In contrast, this option would ask test takers actually to read for main ideas, key details, connections among sets of information, and integration of information. Such items would need to presume a minimum reading rate and level of vocabulary knowledge to allow such a task with a longer text. A test option might involve, with computers, reading a passage of 750 words (read at 150 wpm) that then disappears after 5 minutes. Test takers might then answer questions, fill in outlines, list major ideas, or click-and-drag 10 statements from a list of 20 statements about the text that are true. Alternatively, tests might have a passage of 750 words, and when students have finished reading it, they press a button; the text disappears and the questions appear (providing both rate and comprehension). These types of tasks also impose expectations about reading fluency as part of the subconstruct being measured.

Third, adding a time limit to the above tasks raises the more general topic of assessing reading fluency. Should fluency be assessed as part of a reading comprehension measure? Are there aspects of fluency that are supportable as part of the construct of reading and that are feasible as assessment tasks? Obvious candidates would include exploring word identification fluency skills and simple reading-rate skills (word lists, oral reading for 1 minute, silent reading on a computer, timed reading, assessment of rereading). These formats might be more useful at lower L2 proficiency levels. At higher levels, oral passage-reading measures might be relevant and fairly simple as a task type under the right conditions and scoring rubric. Such tests would ultimately place less emphasis on task authenticity and direct measurement of reading comprehension and more emphasis on prior extensive reading practice. Perhaps a task that directly supports extensive reading practice would be an entire test working with one or two long texts, with a variety of assessment tasks being produced around the text(s). The limitations of such a test format would also need to be addressed. Such a performance test would almost be like a professional or clinical performance assessment and would require a considerable amount of extensive reading as general preparation.

Fourth, assessment of discourse structure is another option that can be explored further. With respect to text factors, we need to know how reading-assessment difficulty can vary by text choice (genre, length, complexity, vocabulary, organization). Will literary texts vs. general narrative texts vs. informational texts vs. persuasive texts generate very different assessment

outcomes? Discourse-structure knowledge might also be assessed effectively through various types of discourse-awareness tasks, and especially through the use of extended graphic organizers. This use of graphic organizers is currently employed in some tests to a limited extent (as part of “information transfer”), but it should be explored further.

Fifth, strategies and metacognitive awareness have been interesting topics for the past decade as possibilities for reading assessment. However, this area has yet to become a major option in assessment practice (aside from summary practice and multiple-choice inference-based questions). At issue is how to assess these notions in useful ways. Some commonly assessed concepts, such as inferencing and monitoring, may be more basic cognitive processes than conscious reading strategies. Some promising strategies are amenable to individualized assessment (predicting, stating main ideas, summarizing, using context, forming questions) through student think-alouds in classroom contexts. However, in contexts other than one-on-one interviews, it is difficult to assess most strategy uses in reading. One assessment approach might be to have students self-report on strategy uses, but one of the limiting factors for this type of assessment is that questionnaires and self-reporting surveys only indicate strategic awareness and not actual strategy use while reading. An option for developing strategy use while reading could involve a multi-task decision-making process. In some cases, the decisions made can reflect strategic actions on the part of the student, particularly if students report the reasons for their decisions as they work through multiple tasks and decision points.

Sixth, a final option for assessment innovations is to consider ways in which to test reading to integrate information and evaluate information. Tests might include tasks that assess synthesis skills, evaluation skills, or content monitoring while reading. Computer-based tasks have been developed that allow for the rearrangement of information, using a click-and-drag interface. More elaborate versions of integration and evaluation could be developed in which students read competing sets of information and need to choose the better information for task completion. Versions of such tasks already exist as part of the ICT literacy instrument, *iskills*, developed by ETS for postsecondary technological literacy. These tasks deserve consideration for a range of more advanced L2 reading-assessment tasks.

It can be a fascinating exercise to consider possible “what if” assessment tasks related to reading abilities. I would just like to close by noting that the six exploratory ideas above are not meant to be seen as arbitrary options because of some loose connection to reading. They are all defensible to one extent or another as part of the reading construct described in this book. Ultimately, any ideas for new reading-assessment tasks must connect back to a coherent and plausible construct statement, and they need to provide additional information that better assesses the reading abilities relevant to a given set of students, in a specific situation, and for subsets of possible proficiency levels. But with the appropriate theoretical constraints set up at the outset, the potential development of new reading-assessment options can be interesting, challenging, and even, for an assessment specialist, fun.

**G. Scoring Guide for Reading****Table 2.1****Scoring Guide for Reading**

<b>Communicative skills</b>	<b>Reading</b>
	Correct/incorrect: <b>1</b> Correct response <b>0</b> Incorrect response