

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Education in our country can be said left behind than other countries. This problem is caused by our careless with it. And most important factors are parents and teachers. A mother or a father in the house is an advisor and a teacher for their children. In generally, they get moral, cultural, and religious knowledge. A teacher in the school is an educational actor to give some educations for the learners from unknown to be known, and they (learners) should master some skills in learning. One of these skills is English as foreign language in Indonesian schools. Learning English language is very important for all people especially students that helps people make communication among individuals or nations. As the target language, English should be mastered by the students because it is very important to enrich their knowledge that develops fast today. English is an international language and a skill in linguistics that we have to master. In every school in Indonesia, English is given to equip students with English ability. And one of the abilities is comprehension of reading texts. So, we must understand what we read to get our comprehension of reading skill to clarify a misunderstanding.

As a stated by Shaleh Abdul Majid and Abdul Aziz Majid, on the book of *Attarbiyah Waturuqu Attadris*:

إِنَّ التَّعْلَمَ هُوَ تَغْيِيرٌ فِي ذَهْنِ الْمُتَعَلِّمِ يُطْرَأُ عَلَى حُبْرَةٍ سَابِقَةٍ فَيَحْدُثُ فِيهَا  
تَغْيِيرًا جَدِيدًا

“Actually learning is a change in their own who learn because of an experience ago, and then become a new experience”.<sup>1</sup>

In learning English, the students have to master four language skills. They are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Unfortunately, teaching

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<sup>1</sup>Shaleh Abdul Majid and Abdul Aziz Majid, *Attarbiyah Waturuqu Attadris*, juz 1, Kairo: Darul Ma'arif, 1978, pg. 69

reading especially in Senior High School has not been successful. In fact, the students still have many difficulties to comprehend English reading texts, like on the newspaper, journals, or magazines. In a second or foreign language, reading carries even greater potential importance than in the first language since it is often the only readily available exposure to the target of language. A learner of another language will be able to retain some of the knowledge gained in course of study. And for anyone learning language, reading opens up a world literature and culture presenting on the text. This is a serious problem for the students. This problem is disability of reading text to the students perhaps caused by the students or the teachers themselves.

Students may be weak in vocabularies, so, there are many unfamiliar words making them hard to comprehend the reading text. The mastering of vocabularies is limited and automatic. When they read English text, they focus on the word rather than on the entire text, and they try to look for the difficult words on their dictionary, therefore it takes time too much. On the other hand, teacher uses various methods in teaching reading. They often use some ways to teach reading.

Much of the current thinking on reading tends to focus primarily on the purpose of the activity; even if reading is done for pleasure, it is still purposeful. There are many purposes for reading, they are:

- a. Reading to search for simple information is a common reading ability through a text either to search for a specific piece of information or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for a given purposes.
- b. Reading to skim quickly is combination of strategies for guessing where important information might be in the text and then using basic reading comprehension skill on those segments of the text until a general idea is formed.

- c. Reading to learn from texts is usually occurs in academic and professional context in which a person needs to learn a considerable amount of information from a text.
- d. Reading to integrate information requires critical evaluation of the information being read so that the reader can decide what information to integrate and how to integrate it for reader's goal.
- e. Reading for general comprehension is the process of understanding and constructing meaning from a piece of connected text is any written material involving multiple words that forms coherent thought.<sup>2</sup>

Every human being in society needs language to communicate with each other. This means that human being will always be dealing with sound symbol in their daily life. By language, people can enlarge their words, idea, opinion, and feelings. Brown states that as human beings learn to use second language they also develop a new mode of thinking, feeling and acting.<sup>3</sup>

From the phenomenon above, it is clear that teachers have important role in making success on understanding reading texts, in this case ambiguous sentences. This is one of the roles of their position as a guide in classroom. Teacher should be able to teach by contextual meaning formulation in facilitating to identify ambiguous sentences to the students.

This thesis entitled "Facilitating Students' Ability to Identify the Meaning of Ambiguous Sentences through Contextual Meaning Formulation (A Classroom Action Research with 1<sup>st</sup> Year Students of MAN Kendal in the Academic Year of 2009/2010)" is the improvement of students' ability to identify the meaning of ambiguous sentences after being taught using contextual meaning formulation. The researcher chooses this title because the students still have many difficulties to comprehend English reading text and the way of application of contextual meaning formulation is not easy enough.

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<sup>2</sup> William Grabe and Fredericka L. Stoller, *Teaching and Researching Reading*, United Kingdom: Licensing agency Ltd., 2002, pg. 13-14

<sup>3</sup> H. Douglas Brown, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1994, pg. 22-23

## **1.2. Reason for Choosing the Topic**

At this time, students' mind-theory in reading texts is usually only based on meaning in every word in sentences that can cause multiple meaning or ambiguity. And the ambiguous sentence emerges because the context is limited. They translate from one language to another language without understand the essential meaning according to context of reading texts and linguistics and it can make misunderstand in reading texts comprehension. Their weakness to understand is usually in phonetic, pronunciation, grammatical, understanding in signs of sentences, or more specific in semantic and vocabulary.

From the students' background of the study, they are still various in comprehensions meaning skill; it means there are many reasons that influence their skill. Such as:

### **1.2.1. Background of the School**

Their schools' quality influence students' ability because in there, of course having the good quality teachers. And they have the better-supported facilities than other schools for improvement of students.

MAN Kendal is one of the best quality schools that have been supported by Korean educational, e.g. in technological skill. It is located in Islamic Centre Street, Kendal. Supporting place from many facilities, as transportation and public service which helping in fulfill anything that is needed by students.

### **1.2.2. Background of the Environment**

Family is one of environment factors to improve students' ability. If they come from a rich family, of course they will study to the

best school, one of them is this school has supported facilities are enough for teaching and learning process.

### **1.2.3. Background of the Students**

A clever student has high spirit and willingness to get better appreciation than other students do. These influence students' ability in understanding every lesson in the school.

And in this research can be hoped facilitating students in comprehending teaching and learning activity, and able to improve students' ability in understand reading texts or sentences, firstly, the essential meaning of reading texts through contextual meaning formulation in identification of ambiguous sentences.

### **1.3. Definitions of the Key Terms**

The title of this research is "Facilitating Students' Ability to Identify the Meaning of Ambiguous Sentences through Contextual Meaning Formulation (A Classroom Action Research with 1<sup>st</sup> Year Students of MAN Kendal in the Academic Year of 2009/2010)". Before discussing this research deeply, in order to be clear, the researcher wants to explain some words in the title so that the readers who want to read this research will not misunderstand it. Based on the title, there are five words to be defined. They are presented as follows:

#### **1. Ambiguous Sentences**

The phenomenon when a sentence has multiple meanings. The aim of this event was to identify those brain areas, which are involved in contextually driven ambiguity resolution. Ambiguous sentences were

selected which have a most frequent, dominant, and less frequent, subordinate meaning.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Contextual Meaning

The meaning a sentence can have only when in context. This is same as functional value. The concept of value is important, because it is quite possible to understand the signification of an utterance without interpreting its value correctly. You may like to take a sentence and see how many contexts you can think of for it, in each of which it will take on a different value. It should be clear that to understand a text properly involves understanding the value of each utterance that composes it: if you interpret as a conclusion something, the writer intended as a hypothesis, you are not likely to understand his argument. The difference between signification and value corresponds to the difference between a sentence in isolation and the same sentence in use. Until a sentence is used in a certain context, it has only signification. It acquires value when it is used.<sup>5</sup>

## 3. Formulation

We have seen that the initial stage of conceptualization is so far removed from the words we actually speak and write that it is difficult to delineate this phase of production. But at the second stage of speech production, formulation, we move close enough to the eventual output of the process to allow us to be more precise in our terminology and more convincing in our use of empirical data. Conceptualization is hard to conceptualize, but formulation is much easier to formulate. Well over three decades ago, the psychologist Karl Lashley published one of the first attempts to account for the way speakers sequence strings of sounds, words, and phrases together so rapidly and accurately, and his essay was influential enough to be included in the first book ever published in English which focused exclusively on the very new field of the

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science>. Accessed on 5 June 2009

<sup>5</sup> Christine Nutall, *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language*, London: Heinemann, 1982, pg. 12-14

psychology of language. His essay was first presented as an oral address, and it is intriguing to see how Lashley organized it to demonstrate some of the very concepts about speech production which he was writing about.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4. A Classroom Action Research

Action research indicates the basic unity of theoretical and practical knowledge. It means that in action research, a researcher not only needs the theories that support research but also needs to practice and to act with the subject of research. Furthermore, classroom action research is a reflective study done by teacher in a classroom for getting solution about the problem until it can be solved.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.4. Questions of the Research

Based on the background of the research, the researcher states the research problems as follows:

1. How is the implementation of contextual meaning formulation in teaching ambiguous sentences in the 1<sup>st</sup> year students of MAN Kendal in the academic year of 2009/2010?
2. How is the improvement of students' ability to identify the meaning of ambiguous sentences after being taught using contextual meaning formulation in the 1<sup>st</sup> year students of MAN Kendal in the academic year of 2009/2010?

### 1.5. Objectives of the Research

According to the research problem above, the objective of the research are:

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Scovel, *Psycholinguistics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, pg. 29-30

<sup>7</sup> Jack C. Richards and David Nunan, *Second Language Teacher Education*, Cambridge University, 1990, pg. 63

1. To describe the implementation of contextual meaning formulation in teaching ambiguous sentences in the 1<sup>st</sup> year students of MAN Kendal in the academic year of 2009/2010.
2. To describe the improvement of students' ability to identify the meaning of ambiguous sentences after being taught using contextual meaning formulation in the 1<sup>st</sup> year students of MAN Kendal in the academic year of 2009/2010.

#### **1.6. Limitation of the Study**

In this research, the researcher limits the problem as follow: the research only concerns in the implementation of contextual meaning formulation in teaching ambiguous sentences.