

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Overview on Reading Academic Text in EFL Context

According to McKeown (2019), reading academic texts in a foreign language is different from reading in a first language. Reading academic texts display complex discourse organization, as the majority use expository or argumentative structures (Schleppegrell, 2004; Snow & Uccelli, 2009). In Latin America, a region facing a relevant educational gap in reading comprehension, the debate about text complexity and reading comprehension performance by genre, topic, and type of lexical-grammatical resource is still emerging. A study in the United States (McKeown et al., 2009) reveals the importance of discussions in providing the scaffolding necessary for readers to confront the challenges of reading academic texts.

In the context of EFL reading academic text in Indonesian universities, Cahyono and Widiati (2006) found that the issue becomes more complicated since reading in tertiary level demands flexible and independent learning requiring students to read English texts from different sources independently and effectively. For Indonesian students who are generally influenced by their cultural background and lack motivation in reading English texts (Lamb & Coleman, 2008; Setiono, 2004), the demand of the EFL reading is not easy to accomplish. In the realm of second language reading, it is generally hypothesised that students who have

difficulties in reading L1 academic texts will highly likely find L2 academic texts difficult to comprehend (Alderson, 2000). A difficult text is not only a matter of its challenging linguistic features, but might also due to its unfamiliar topic or unusual text organization.

B. Previous Research on Reading Academic Text

The challenges in reading academic text are obviously known by the readers. Factors difficulties that faced by students divided into external and internal. Internal factor includes physics, intellectual, and psychological. The external factors include family and school environments (Rahim, 2006). There are some internal factors that influence the students in reading that are generally found by the reader during reading, namely; challenges in understanding long sentence and text, challenges that is caused by limited background knowledge, challenges in using reading strategies and challenges in concentration (Fajar, 2009).

1. Challenges in understanding long sentence

In a common problem that most of students find difficulty in understanding the long sentence with complicated structure. It is supported by report of Barfield (1999) that shows almost 12 percent of students had difficulty in understanding long sentences in graded story and 20 percents in academic text. Therefore, the effect of this problem is the students who cannot comprehend long sentence they fail to understand the main idea presented in the text.

2. Challenges in Using Reading Strategies

The students who lack of reading strategies often fail in understanding the text. The students who are not familiar with reading strategies such as skimming and scanning will feel down and frustrated because they lack of tool necessary to succeed in reading comprehension test (Duarte, 2005). There are characteristics of the students who lack in use of reading strategy. First, the students read word by word within the text, relying too heavily on their visual information, which greatly impedes their reading speed and hampers their reading comprehension. Second, 15 the students spent a lot attention on detail with the result they often miss the main idea of the text. Third, they just focused too much attention on form of the expense meaning. Furthermore, the students who do not possess effective reading strategies may be difficulty to deal with reading comprehension test. (Mei-yu, 1998 as cited by Fajar, 2009).

3. Challenges in Concentration

Difficulty in concentration during reading can be caused by a psychological factor. Bad concentration will lead the students fail to comprehend the text. It can be worse when the students do reading test. Difficulty in concentration is another reason for students' poor reading because concentration is an important factor for a good and effective

reading. Shaw (1959) states that comprehension of a text results from reading with concentration. But students, in most cases, cannot or do not concentrate properly while reading.