CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language for elementary school students to university level students. Reading is one of the important skills that students have to master. Because by reading, students gain information, broaden their horizons and build creativity which can help them to develop other skills, such as writing. The primary goal of reading is comprehension or extracting meaning from what is being read. According to Nunan (2003) reading is a coherent process between information that is integrated from a text and the readers' background knowledge to create meaning. Readers usually make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text (Mc Worther, 1994).

In the process of language learning, comprehending reading texts is certainly a difficult task for students. Available information is written in English, which becomes a problem for students from non-English speaking countries. The lack of vocabulary, understanding of grammar, differences in background knowledge and culture between students and target language make it difficult for students to equate their perceptions with the ideas conveyed by the writer of the text. As Indonesian students in general are bilingual, the translation seems can be naturally used for this case. For most bilinguals, a regular part of the communicative repertoire is to explain

something in another language. Logic suggests that this kind of natural translation and interpreting skill learnt without formal study is a macro function practiced by the majority of humanity (Campbell, 2002). Reading and translation can be correlated based on the process of translation stated by Newmark (1988), the work of translation is started by reading the original text in order to get understanding and ends with re-writing it in the target language. Moreover, he explained that translation involves four processes: comprehension of the vocabulary of the original source language text; comprehension of the meaning of the original source language message; reformulation of the message in target language; and judgement of the adequacy of the target language text.

In practice, translation plays role both in the process of language teaching and learning, especially for forming student understanding in language learning. In carrying out their role in the teaching-learning process, teachers can help students in language classes by using mother tongue by applying Grammar Translation Method. Malmkjær (2010) states that translation emerged as an instructional approach that aimed to enhance language learners' academic performance in reading and help them clear strong links between their first language and the native language. Translation is not the end product of education but a means (strategies) to reach the goal of teaching comprehension, we propose 'translation' as one of a series of reading strategies for teachers to teach and learners to learn and practice, if learning itself is a mirror image of teaching and teaching a

mirror image of learning (Yoshida, 2013). This underlies that translation is not only used as the method and strategy to share information from foreign languages into the students' native language, but also shapes the students' knowledge about the identity from different languages.

However, by the development of various language teaching-learning methods, since the end of the 19th century translation was prohibited in the process of foreign language learning (Nourinezhad & Kashefian-Naeeini, 2020). It is reputed to have bad impacts on the students' ability in the learning process and make the students rely on translation (Putrawan, 2019). Although the application of translation of GTM in foreign language teaching-learning has been neglected by most of language teachers, translation is believed to be widely used throughout students' learning process. It is because language learning is not merely a translation from the foreign language to the native language but translation is used by language learners as a learning strategy. Furthermore, the success of students in language learning is also determined by the strategies and ways of learning that students have. When students feel uncomfortable or fearful in the learning process, they will not be able to engage well (Nourinezhad & Kashefian-Naeeini, 2020). Hence, the application of a learning strategy such as translation in language learning has a big role to build students' engagement into the learning process in order for them to have intrinsic motivation to learn the language. According to Nolasco and Arther (1995), when students use translation, they become independent from the teacher,

so it can be considered as a scaffolding tool and it is used to transfer meaning, explain grammar, and organize the class. Moreover, with the advancement of technology today that provides many options of convenience for students in helping their learning process, the use of artificial intelligence in the current education system is believed to make students more creative and engaged in the learning process. AI assisted learning tools available such as various translator websites such as Google translate, chatGPT, DeepL, and others seem to be a popular alternative for students in helping them learn English, in this context understanding English text reading.

Due to the debatable issue previously described, however, background knowledge and experience of the students themselves in using translation are needed in order to get a better understanding of reading texts. At the university education level, students find reading comprehension tasks with longer texts and more difficult vocabulary. Therefore, the researcher is interested in exploring experience related to the ways, the difficulties, and the effect they feel of using translation as a strategy in reading comprehension for students who study English as a foreign language at the university level.

1.2. Research Question

Considering factors mentioned in the previous subsection, this research is aimed to answer the following question:

How do students in the university utilize translation strategy in reading comprehension?

1.3. The Objective of the Research

This research aims to uncover important aspects in the use of translation as a strategy in reading comprehension among university students. Despite common perception about ineffectiveness of translation as an English learning strategy, the strategy is believed still widely used by English students. Thus, information from this research is expected to give an insight on how students actually use the strategy to gain comprehension in reading tasks. Recommendation for the better and more effective use of translation strategy can be drawn in the end of this study.

1.4. Limitation of the Research

Although students' success in learning languages is influenced by various aspects such as motivation, aptitude, learning strategies and age (Sadeghi & Attar, 2013), this research only focuses on exploring translation strategies, especially at the university level. In particular, regarding the experience related to the difficulties, the ways, and the effect they feel of using translation as a strategy, especially in reading comprehension.

1.5. Significance of the Research

When conducting the research, the researcher expects that this research will bring some benefits;

First, it gives information about students' experience related to the difficulties, the ways, and the effect they feel of using translation for their reading comprehension that is needed for lecturers to lead their students to apply appropriate language learning strategies based on their level.

Second, reflecting back on their experience using translation strategy, especially in reading skills, is needed for students to be more aware of things that need to be developed in the learning process.

Third, this research can provide and expand the knowledge and literacy for researchers who carry out research on related topics in the future.