

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents: (1) background of the study; (2) problems of the study; (3) objectives of the study; and (4) significance of the study.

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

English as an international language requires students to be able to master English. Since English has four language skills, it means students also should be able to master all of them. One of language skills is reading skill. According to Misa (2014), reading is an activity to get information from a text. When we read, we must understand the implicit and explicit meaning from the text. Bryant (2007) states that reading is regarded as getting the main idea, identifying key details, making inferences, and interpreting meaning. While, According to Pang and Elizabeth (2003) argues that reading is a complex activity in understanding written text that involves both perception and thought, also consists of word recognition and comprehension process. To sum up, reading can be defined as an activity that involves vision, memory, intelligence, and skill to get the message or information submitted to reader through the media of writing.

Reading is in one package with comprehension. It is supported by Yemima (2014) who argues that one of the goals of reading is comprehension. Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences, and connected text. Lenz adds that reading comprehension is

the process of constructing meaning from text. In his theory, Lenz explains that the aim of all reading instruction is ultimately targeted at helping a reader comprehend a text. Reading comprehension involves at least two people that are the reader and the writer. The process of comprehension involves decoding the writer's words and then using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer message (as cited in Mita, 2015, p.13). In addition, according to Talal (2012), reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from text which is useful in gaining an overall understanding described in the text by developing mental models or representations of the meaning and ideas during the reading process. In reading, the readers should use their background knowledge; means the reader bring their knowledge, emotion, experience, and culture to what they read.

Reading is one of the main concerns in English language teaching to facilitate communication. According to Masduqi (2014), reading is one of the important skills among four skills to support the communicative competence. In the process of learning a new language, learners begin with reading the new language items and absorb the knowledge in their mind. Therefore, reading is important skill for students as it is also supported by Clark and Rumbold (2006) who explain that in addition to personal and mental developments, reading is critical for ensuring one's access to social, economic and civic life. Akanda (2013) explains that the benefits of reading are students can learn new skills, become more knowledge able

about the whole world, introduce to the new facts, and stimulate both thought and emotions.

In relation to the importance of reading, students are expected to have good reading skill. However, in fact, students have difficulties in reading comprehension. According to Sanford (2015), the difficulties in reading comprehension are that students have lack of decoding skill, and poor vocabulary, and poor working memory is also another factor that affects a student's ability to read proficiently and comprehend text. Swanson, Zheng, and Jerman (2009) add that students who struggle to read are unable to retain ordered information which is directly related to phonological retention processing. Moreover, according to Harvey (2008), students' difficulties in reading are that they feel difficult to know the meaning of the text, unable to remember what they read, and unable to retain ordered information from the text.

In Indonesia, the students' reading comprehension is unsatisfying especially their reading comprehension. Based on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015, Indonesian students showed poor reading ability which was in rank 69th out of 76 participating countries. The survey results showed that there are problems with students' reading comprehension.

In the university, reading is a course that is expected to help the reading comprehension of other courses. It means students should be able to read different texts in literature, science, social studies, etc. They have

to learn to read and have to read to learn. Learning to read relates to reading for meaning or comprehension. Hamra (2003) explains that reading for meaning is an important attempt to comprehend texts, and reading to learn refers to reading for remembering or studying.

Numerous studies have examined the influence of factors on students' reading achievement such as motivation (Baker & Wigfield, 2000; Wihfielf & Guthrie, 2007), attitudes (Mckenna, Kear & Ellsows, 2003), and self-efficacy (Shell et al., 2005). Typically, positive attitudes and high self-perception toward reading are linked to higher attainment in reading. In contrast, negatives attitudes and low self-perception toward reading are linked to lower attainment in reading. In relation to the description above, an important issue appears in which how the students find themselves motivated to read and how they reflect themselves toward reading. This issue is known as self-direction or more popular with the term of self-concept.

As stated above, Sanchez and Roda (2013) state that self-concept is one of internal factors that can influence student's reading comprehension and it is one of the most influential factors that have a great impact on learning (Ghants, 2013) Self-concept is necessary to achieve the potential maximum. Meshkat and Hosseini (2015) state that self-concept refers to the individual's self-beliefs, hypotheses and assumptions. According to Ahmed and Bruinsma (2006), self-concept theory is a theory of self-evaluation. The theory describes that self-concept is a network of ideas about the self and that self-consistency (being consistent with

oneself) and self-enhancement (the tendency to maintain positive belief about oneself) are its important features. While, Awan and Noureen (2011) argue that self-concept is a person's self perception. It may be understood as individuals' feelings or confidence levels in accomplishing particular tasks.

Self concept has influence on someone's reading comprehension. Henk and Melnick explained that the relationship between students' self-concept and their reading comprehension achievement is the most important since students' self-concept clearly influences their subsequent reading behavior, habit and attitude" (as cited in Hidayad, 2004, p.7). Students who experience difficulty in reading especially in English and feeling bad about themselves as readers are less likely to want to read, and are more likely to avoid reading related activities. Chapman and Tunmer (2002) suggest once students have entered the "swamp" of negative expectations, lowered motivation, and limited practice, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to get back on the road to proficient reading.

In addition, Marsh (2002) states that self-concept and reading comprehension achievement are reciprocally related and mutually reinforcing (as cited in Hidayad, 2004, p. 7). We may say that self-concept in one way or another gives a positive contribution to someone to achieve better in any cases including reading achievement (Cotton, 2001; Diem, 2004&Pack, 2005). In other words, self-concept has function as a trigger to success in life especially in a global area where people with strong self-concept and people who are able to represent their knowledge and

capability can survive.

In relation to reading and self-concept, there were some problems found in UIN Raden Fatah Palembang especially in English Education Study Program. Based on interview results, it was found that some students had difficulty in the courses they took mainly reading and understanding English texts. They also lacked of vocabulary and their comprehension on the meaning of text was low. Most of students felt that it was difficult for them to understand textbooks courses. In the subject of language evaluation, for example, students felt that book was difficult to understand. They thought they were less competent in reading a text than other students. It can be inferred that they had low self-concept and reading comprehension.

Some researchers have tried to investigate the correlation between self-concept and academic success generally or specific achievement. Fitriani (2007) examined the self-concept and reading comprehension achievement of 422 students. The result showed that self-concept significantly and positively affected reading comprehension achievement. In addition, Surip (2015) examined self-concept and reading comprehension achievement of 183 students. The results of this study revealed that there was a positive correlation between students' self-concept and reading comprehension achievement. There was also significant correlation among self-concept, reading attitude and reading comprehension achievement. While, Supeni (2013) examined the self-concept and reading comprehension achievement of 148 students. The

result showed significant relationship was not found between self-concept and reading comprehension achievement.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a further study about **“The Correlation between Self-Concept and Reading Comprehension Achievement of English Education Study Program Students’ of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang”**.

### **1.2. The Problems of the Study**

Based on the background, the research problems are formulated in the following questions:

Is there any significant correlation between self-concept and reading comprehension achievement of English Education Study Program Students’ of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang?

Does self-concept significantly influence reading comprehension achievement of English Education Study Program Students’ of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang?

### **1.3. The Objectives of the Study**

In accordance with the problems above, the objectives of this study are:

To find out whether or not there is a significant correlation between self-concept and reading comprehension achievement of English Education Study Program Students’ of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang.

To know if academic self-concept significantly influences reading comprehension achievement of English Education Study Program Students' of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang.

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that this study will give good contribution for all participants. First, for college students, this research will hopefully help them increase their positive self-concept that eventually can motivate them to improve their reading comprehension achievement. Furthermore, by knowing the relation between self-concept and their reading comprehension achievement, they will pay attention, care, and increase their reading comprehension achievement. Second, For the lecturers, it is hoped that this study will give information about the importance of self-concept on students' reading comprehension achievement and hopefully they can support and help college students build positive self-concept. This study is also useful for the researcher to enlarge her knowledge about students' self-concept, reading comprehension and educational research. Finally, this research can be used as a reference for further research.