

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Language is very important for human life. It stands at the center of human affairs, from the most prosaic to the most profound. Language is used to convey our ideas, feelings, and thoughts to the listeners or other people. English is one of languages in this world. There are about a billion people in the world today learning English as a foreign language. It continues to spread, not only as the global language but also as the language of science, technology, and advanced research. It shows that English is so important nowadays especially for students.

There are four language proficiencies that must be achieved in learning English language namely listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Reading is one important skill that must be taught. Grabe & Stoller (2002) elaborate that reading is a way to get information from the printed page and interpret the information appropriately. Burns (1984) also quotes that reading is a thinking process. The process of recognizing words requires interpretation of graphic symbols; it is called as comprehension. From the quotations above, it can be defined that reading comprehension is the process to draw meaning of the text. Through reading, each individual can get information which is available in written or printed form. It means that being a good reader is so crucial for students.

In Indonesia, students' reading comprehension in English language is very low. It was found that most Indonesian students are still difficult in comprehending the text. The result of Program for International Student

Assessment (PISA) shows that Indonesian students just got the 39th rank from 42 surveyed countries in Asia, slightly above Albania and Peru. It shows us that reading comprehension is still a problem for Indonesian students.

This problem is affected by many factors. One is the problem from students themselves (internal factor). Indeed, many students are still poor interest in reading. While doing practice teaching in SMA N 1 Bangun Purba, the researcher asked the students' view about reading class. Of 30 students as the sample, 24 students state that they hate reading class. They said that reading is a boring activity which takes a long time. They must translate all unknown words in order to understand the text.

Besides the internal factor, the problem in reading is also influenced by teacher (external factor). Most English teachers still use the conventional method such as lecturing method which is teacher's oriented. The researcher found the same case when she observed how English teacher taught reading in SMA N 1 Bangun Purba. Reading class there seems like translation class. The students are asked to read the whole text, underline the difficult words, translate it into Indonesia language and then answer the question related to the text without using their prior knowledge nor predicting the content of the text nor summarizing the important events in the text.

In fact, the using of conventional method makes the students more bored and have no interest at all in reading a text. Students cannot grasp the main idea of the text although they try to translate it. It is supported by the result of Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) which shows that Indonesian

students commonly can absorb 30 % of reading material. Students have wrong perception about reading text. They assume that reading comprehension is understanding the meaning of the words; however, reading comprehension is actually the process in drawing or reconstructing meaning of the text.

Students who are not interested in reading cannot gain information and improve their knowledge. Actually without reading, the opportunity for improving one's life is limited. People especially students are expected to increase their interest in reading activities and try to develop their reading comprehension. Reading ability can be developed as much as reading interest increased too.

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) states that the students do activities in reading 89 % because of teachers, only 11 % of students read as self- awareness. It supports that the teacher has a big role to solve this problem. Teachers are needed to provide various technique and strategy in teaching reading. Teachers need to encourage students' interest in reading. Explaining the aim of reading in human's life and applying good strategy will be helpful to solve the problem. Teacher must motivate the students to love reading class so they will be good readers whenever and wherever they are. Indeed, the teachers must build the interest by applying a good strategy.

TSI is a flexible approach which contains numerous strategies namely predicting, questioning and answering, visualizing, seeking clarification, responding to text based on prior knowledge, and summarizing. Applying TSI makes the students more active in reading class; however, teacher still has a big role to give clear instruction and being facilitator for students.

TSI was conducted by many researchers on their experimental and action research. An experimental research was done by Collin in 1991 and also by Brown & others in 1996. Collin applied TSI on teaching reading comprehension for sixth graders and limited the material to narrative text. However, Brown & others applied it for second graders and limited the material to narrative text. The reading comprehension of students receiving instruction or applying TSI (experimental group), as measured by an objective test of understanding, was compared to reading comprehension of students not receiving such instruction (control group). Both of these experimental researches showed that students in experimental group gained greater improvement than the students in the control group.

An action research was conducted by Anderson (1992) and Rut Ginting (2009). Anderson applied TSI on teaching reading comprehension for sixth graders and limited the material to expository text. However, Rut Ginting applied it for eleventh graders and limited the material to narrative text. Both these action researches showed students' achievement in reading comprehension, which was measured through literal and interpretive comprehension test, was higher by applying TSI than by applying conventional method. It can be concluded that the students' achievement was improved by applying TSI.

Such strategies inspire the writer to apply it in teaching reading in the tenth grader or first year students of senior high school. The levels of comprehension that will be measured are literal and interpretive or inferential comprehension, and the material of reading that will be taught is descriptive text.

The writer intentionally chooses different graders and different genre since the readers' comprehension is influenced by the nature of reader, the readers' purpose, and the type of material. For this study, the writer is eager to find out whether TSI also has significant effect if it is applied for different level of learners through different material. To prove the effectiveness empirically, a research especially an experiment needs to be conducted.

B. The Problem of the Study

In line with the background of the study, the research problem can be formulated as follows:

“Is there any significant effect of applying Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) on Students' Reading Comprehension?”

C. The Scope of the Study

This study is limited to the use of Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) on the tenth graders' reading comprehension. The genre is limited to descriptive text. There are four levels of reading comprehension, namely: literal, interpretive or inferential, critical, and creative comprehension. However, this study is limited to literal and interpretive or inferential comprehension. Critical and creative are considered as the levels of comprehension for high learners; they are not appropriate to be tested on the tenth graders. On the other hand, the students' achievement on these levels is also difficult to be measured through multiple-choice test.

D. The Objective of the Study

This study is aimed to find out the effect of applying Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) on the students' reading comprehension.

E. The Significance of the Study

This research, which is focused on the application of Transactional Strategies Instruction on students' reading comprehension, is expected to give some benefits theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study is expected to enhance the literature for those who are interested in the further research related to the study and also to enrich the horizon in theories on language learning.

In addition, the study is practically expected to give contribution on the effectiveness of reading comprehension, both for the students and the English teacher. This study is useful for the students who want to develop their reading skills by applying TSI. It is also useful for the teachers to improve their ability in teaching reading by adopting Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI).