

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the study

Language is a medium of communication, and the fundamental function of a language is communication. Language is needed to make sense of the world we live in. By putting words to what is seen, felt and heard, a new experience can be understood. Language enables people not only to talk about and ask for the things, but also to think and plan, regulate the behavior, and express the emotion. There is no human community without language, and a good and strong community needs a good information system.

There are four skills to be mastered in the study of a language, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. From all these aspects, reading is the most complex communication process which requires effort, concentration, and attention. People read to gain information. Nowadays, scientific and Information Technology (IT) written in English and it is available in large number of media. To get access to such information, people need to be able to read and understand written sources from the internet, books, journals, magazines, newspapers, etc.

The 21st Century which is also known as the era of knowledge and information forces every individual to read in order to develop their horizons and to get varieties of information. In today's world, reading becomes a valuable experience. It is often said "You are what you read. It is said that if you read nothing, than your mind withers, and your ideals lose their vitality and sway".

Reading is one of language skills that should be mastered by language learners. It is the most essential skills. Reading is not easy as people think. Maybe one can read the

words but he can't understand it. People read without giving much thought on how they do it since they assume reading as common and take it for granted. Someone whose primary task is teaching reading should consider the concept of reading.

Teaching reading gets more emphasis than do any other skills, because it needs more time to spend than other skills. To be able to access the world's scientific and technological information, the teaching of English in Indonesia has been started by giving much more attention to the implementation of developing reading comprehension. A research report from Badan Litbang Depdikbud RI in 2000 concludes that the reading competence of High School and University Students was regarded low. The failure is caused by the teachers who emphasize the teaching on emphasis on language structure rather than language skills, particularly reading skill. It also implies that the instructional system of reading in Indonesia has failed to literate Indonesians Students. The system emphasizes more on the letter recognition rather than decoding meaning from text.

In the Competency-Based Curriculum 2004 (Department of Education, 2005), the general objective of teaching reading comprehension to students is that students are expected to be able to comprehend the text in the form of narration, description, dialogue, etc., by having the reading skills, such as : (a) finding the specific information, (b) getting the general information, (c) finding the explicit meaning of the main idea, (d) finding the implicit meaning of the main idea, (e) finding the detail information, (f) getting the implicit information, and (g) interpreting the meaning of the words, phrases, and sentences based on the context. The level of students' comprehension of the text as well as the uses of reading text across curriculum is part of the procedures in teaching reading comprehension.

Based on the writer's experience in teaching and learning practice in the Senior High School where it was found that many students could read the words in a passage

fluently but were unable to answer questions in interpreting or identifying the main idea. The fact shows that students failed to master Interpretive or Inferential Comprehension. Since Inferential Comprehension seems more difficult for students, teachers have to find out a method that will help them in solving the difficulties.

In line with this background, this study will be carried out in two major types of teaching reading methods. The first is Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) and the second type is Context Clues method and their effects on Reading Comprehension particularly on Inferential Comprehension.

The writer proposes DRTA and Context Clues as the alternative methods in this study because both of these methods come from different areas of reading. DRTA is one of the general method for content area reading, while Context Clues is a reading method focuses on word recognition (Burns, 1984:310). It is hoped that these methods would give significant contribution to the mastery of reading comprehension.

1.2 Research Problem

In relation to the background of the study, the problems are formulated in a form of questions below:

1. Do teaching method with DRTA and Context Clues give significant effect to Reading Comprehension?
2. Which of these method gives the most significant effect to Reading Comprehension?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In connection with the above research problem , this study attempts to investigate whether:

1. teaching methods with DRTA and Context Clues give significant effect to Reading Comprehension.
2. one of these methods gives the most significant effect to Reading Comprehension.

1.4 Hypothesis

The hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

H_{o1} : Teaching methods with DRTA and Context Clues do not give significant effect to Reading Comprehension.

H_{o2} : None of these methods gives more significant effect to Reading Comprehension.

H_{a1} : Teaching methods with DRTA and Context Clues give significant effect to Reading Comprehension.

H_{a2} : One of these methods gives more significant effect to Reading Comprehension.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to provide useful information on the using of the DRTA and Context Clues methods, where these methods could facilitate and lead the students in comprehending English text. The description and the findings would be very useful for teachers of English in selecting appropriate method, material, and approach for the students in teaching reading comprehension, and in overcoming the students' problem in reading comprehension.

Furthermore, this study is also expected to be useful for other researchers in getting sources of information and as a trigger in conducting further in-depth research related to the improvement of the students' reading comprehension.

I.6 Scope of the Study

Reading comprehension is usually difficult for students whose first language is not English. The reading methods are badly needed by teachers to help students in reading comprehension. There are many methods of teaching reading comprehension proposed by some experts, such as: Casale, Stauffer, Manzo, Heller, Stetson, Robinson, etc. In this case, the writer focuses on DRTA and Context Clues methods, considering that these methods comes from different area of reading where DRTA focuses on the content and Context Clues on the word recognition. The writer assumed that both methods would give significant contribution on reading comprehension.

Since comprehension covers a large scope, it is not possible for the writer to carry them largely. She makes a limitation. There are three taxonomic levels of comprehension, namely: Literal Comprehension, Inferential Comprehension, and Critical Comprehension, the writer considers that it is not possible for her to touch all the levels in this study. First, because it will take too much time as well as too many samples if these three levels of comprehension are applied in this study, and second is that the levels of difficulties of comprehension should be considered too. According to the writer, literal comprehension has been applied mostly by teachers and students in reading comprehension class, where the teachers tend to give exercise mainly in literal questions, so it is not necessary for the writer to apply this in her study. In inferential comprehension, the writer considers that the level of difficulty is high enough and it is believed that the students of the second year will face much problems in doing the task. Thus, the scope of the study is limited to the Inferential Comprehension. The reason is because the difficulties is in the middle level between Literal and Critical comprehension, so the students will not get frustrate in understanding and doing the task. Furthermore, she has examined that most of the

questions in reading text found in the National Examination as well as in SPMB from 1996-2004 were generally given inferentially, and studies have shown that the students mostly failed in finding the right answer.

