

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Reading is one of the most important objects of the four skills in English as a second or foreign language. In the 2006 English Curriculum for Senior High School, reading is regarded as the backbone of other language skills. It is stated that through reading students can develop the other language skills such as writing and speaking. The students can also grasp information and improve their knowledge. They have to search information and knowledge which are available in books, newspapers, magazines, journals etc. giving the students a good reading, it means that we give them the chance to explore knowledge and to promote them life-long learning.

The basic goal of reading is enable readers to gain an understanding the text, to develop appreciations, interest and strategies. It means the readers comprehend the text that is read. In other words reading comprehension is an active thinking process in understanding the message of the text.

The research of the International Association for the Education (IAFA) in 1992 concluded Indonesian elementary students' reading comprehension is very low. Thus, Indonesian elementary students' ability in reading is ranked in 29 from 30 nations that used as the research sample (Bali Pos, September 22, 2002). The finding indicated the students have low ability in reading comprehension.

The reality in Senior High School of St. Thomas 2 Medan, it is difficult to the students to understand or to comprehend the reading text. Most of students fail in doing reading comprehension test because they have lack of vocabulary mastery and they do not know the step, strategy to do in order to gain an understanding the text.

Most of them just do guessing on the text so they lose the real message of the text and they fail to construct the meaning of the text.

The objective of English teaching is that the students can develop their communicative competence both in oral and written forms. This communicative competence involves four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four skills are important in communication; each of them must get sufficient emphasis for development. Therefore, Indonesian government has been always making an attempt to achieve the objective by continuously improving the English Curriculum: from Curriculum 2004 till the latest one used through out, namely Educational Unit Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pelajaran) as the latest one.

KTSP is actually the result of developing the former one i.e. Curriculum of 2004 or Competence-Based Curriculum. The target of language teaching expected by the curriculum is actually simple, that is to give the students ability to use the language.

Reading, one of the four skills can develop the other language skill such as writing and speaking and also improve the language components in vocabulary and grammar. The major goal of reading activity is comprehension. Comprehension is the essence of reading. Reading text is given by the writer to communicate message and the students' task is to comprehend the message or the real information.

It is said above that most senior high school students have difficulties in some of English test, especially in reading comprehension. They found difficulties to understand the reading text. The data is taken from the third and fourth semester of 2009/2010 school year in Senior High School of St. Thomas 2 Medan.

Table 1.1 Students' Reading Comprehension Average Scores

Science Class	XI ₁	XI ₂	XI ₃	XI ₄
School Year				
Semester	2009/2010	2009/2010	2009/2010	2009/2010
I	72	65	63	62
II	69	67	60	60

Based on the data, most of students of Senior High School of St. Thomas 2 Medan fail in reading comprehension. They are not able to understand and interpret the meaning in the text. They are not able to obtain information in the text. Students' reading comprehension in Senior High School of St. Thomas 2 Medan is not good, because the standard score for reading comprehension in the school is 70. It also means that the strategy which applied has not been satisfied especially in reading. So the researcher wants to apply the text-based strategy and text structure-based strategy in order to improve the students' reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is a complex process in which the students use his mental content to obtain meaning from written material. The students must be able to recognize and decode words, and be able to relate the ideas to his previous knowledge. We can try to analyze what the students do when they comprehend the text. The teachers play an important role in order to help the students comprehend the text.

Many students failed in reading because reading is not taught very well. Many teachers focus on teaching 'reading' but not 'understanding'. The aim of reading is to learn something or be entertained. Reading instruction in school tends to revolve around the mechanics of reading like syllables and prefixes. Learning how to decode

individual syllables is different than learning how to understand. Understanding is the reason we read. We read because we want to learn something or be entertained.

The teachers do not employ effective and efficient teaching reading strategies, as the consequence, the students seem hard to comprehend their reading texts comprehensively. So the teacher must be able to teach reading effectively, efficiently, and comprehensively.

In relation to the reading comprehension, many researchers have also suggested comprehension strategies in teaching reading to enhance students' reading comprehension. In this case the researcher plans to apply text-based and text structure-based strategies from the four comprehension strategies which is classified to their function and source by Block (1986:344).

Vocabulary mastery is also an important part because it is the basic need to understand the text. By giving them a vocabulary test, we can group students who have high or low vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary mastery also helps them to be easier to understand the text.

Therefore, in this study the researcher is interested to discover the effect of text-based strategy and text structure-based strategy in improving the students' reading comprehension for those who have high and low vocabulary mastery of Senior High School of St. Thomas 2 Medan where the researcher teaches English.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The problems of this research are formulated in questions as the following.

1. Is the students' reading comprehension taught by using text structure-based strategy significantly higher than that taught by using text-based strategy?
2. Is the students' reading comprehension with high vocabulary mastery significantly higher than with low vocabulary mastery?

3. Is there any significant interaction between comprehension strategies and vocabulary mastery on students' reading comprehension?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In the line with the problems, the objectives of the study are intended:

1. to investigate whether the students' reading comprehension taught by using text structure-based strategy is significantly higher than that taught by using text-based strategy..
2. to investigate whether students' reading comprehension with high vocabulary mastery is significantly higher than with low vocabulary mastery.
3. to derive whether there is a significant interaction between comprehension strategies and vocabulary mastery on the students' reading comprehension respectively.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The research specifies the intention to the students' reading comprehension. The researcher chose and applied text-based strategy and text structure-based strategy from the four reading comprehension strategies which are classified to their function and sources by Block (1986:344).

Vocabulary mastery influences the reading comprehension. That's why the writer chooses vocabulary mastery as the moderator variable. The students in the senior high school of St. Thomas 2 Medan, where the researcher teaches English have different vocabulary mastery. The students are those who have high and low vocabulary mastery because they have different background. The different background in their basic education in junior high school, interest, environment, etc. may affect the students' reading comprehension.

There are many kinds of genre due to its social function (purposes). They are: description, explanation, procedure, exposition, discussion, narrative, recounts, report, spoof, anecdote, academic text/ essay, newspaper texts/ news item, and scientific articles. Out of the various kind of genre, the research is focused on the genres of narrative and exposition. They are chosen because of the narrative and exposition texts are suitable to the strategies. Narrative and exposition texts also find in the materials of semester III and IV in the textbook grade XI of Senior High School.

1.5 The Significance of the Research

There are two kinds of finding of the research, they are theoretical and practical.

Theoretically:

- The result of this research will be enrich the theory of teaching how to comprehend the reading through text structure-based and text-based strategies
- The result of this research can be used as the references for those who want to conduct a research in improving reading comprehension.

Practically:

- Teaching comprehension strategies is expected to be able to motivate the students to be interested in reading comprehension.
- It can help teacher facilitate the students' reading comprehension
- the readers to compare to the future, previous research and those who want to conduct further in depth research in reading comprehension.

