

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the background of the study, the research questions, the theoretical framework, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and the limitation of the study, and the definition of the key terms used in this study.

1.1. The Background of the Study

As globalization develops, the need for students to learn languages aside from their first language is getting more necessary than ever. Nowadays, schools, especially in Indonesia, have provided many kinds of language lessons such as Chinese, Japanese, and especially English. Known as the international language, English has been taught to students throughout the world with a purpose to make communication easier.

Reading is one of those important language skills taught in every grade, and it could be done through many resources, such as newspaper, articles, and especially English textbooks. According to Longan (2001), reading is like any other skills; the more the students practice, the better they get. When the students want to improve their English, they need to read a lot (p. 537).

Reading is a beneficial activity. Every time the students read, unconsciously they also improve their reading ability. According to Longan (2001), regular reading is a habit with many rewards. Research has shown that frequent reading improves vocabulary, spelling, reading speed, reading comprehension, as well as grammar and writing style (p. 537).

In other words, students who like reading have more chances to improve their language skills rather than those who rarely do.

In senior high schools, the students are usually given a textbook with various reading texts to help them improve their reading ability. They are expected to comprehend the texts. However, there are still some senior high school students who still have difficulties in comprehending the texts. During the writer's experience in classrooms, students often made mistakes in reading. It was found that some of the students do not comprehend the texts. When they independently answer some questions related to the text, the students like to copy the answers from the texts, using exactly the same sentences. If there are questions that are implicitly stated in the text, the students often give wrong answers. Based on these cases, it can be said that their reading comprehension is low.

During the English lesson, reading texts that are read by the students to develop their reading ability are given with some reading comprehension questions in their English textbooks with the main purpose to develop the students' reading comprehension. Using reading comprehension questions given, the English teachers can check the students' comprehension about the text since reading comprehension questions function as media to stimulate the students' thinking about the matters related with the text. Aside from the comprehension of the text, reading comprehension questions can also be used as media to stimulate the students' thinking about the matters related with the text and stimulate the students to construct new questions based on their thinking. Vacca (as cited in Widyanata, 2005, p. 2) said that questions are important when used effectively in

lessons that require reading. Oral or written questions stimulate thinking and light the way to productive learning and retention of written material.

To support those functions, the reading comprehension questions should be suitable. To make suitable questions, the reading comprehension questions should be organized based on taxonomy. There are two popular comprehension taxonomies used for educational purpose, they are Bloom taxonomy and Barrett's Taxonomy.

Barrett's taxonomy is a taxonomy made by Thomas C. Barrett in 1968; it is used for reading. As stated by Blair, Helman and Rupley (1981), Barrett's taxonomy is representative of a comprehension taxonomy that can be used when developing instructional activities, identifying questions and specifying reading comprehension instruction (p. 242). It consists of four levels: (1) literal recognition or recall, (2) inferential, (3) evaluation, and (4) appreciation. These levels are divided based on their difficulties. If the reading comprehension questions are made based on Barrett's taxonomy, the students can enhance their reading ability because they can train themselves to comprehend the text by answering questions that are made based on appropriate levels of thinking skills.

To improve their reading ability, their English textbooks have an important role as media to support their reading comprehension. According to Dupuis and Askov (1982), students should be given questions of four levels of Barrett's taxonomy. By having a good textbook as their media to learn, the senior high school students can surely improve their learning, especially with a textbook that has many reading passages and appropriate numbers of reading

comprehension questions of each level of questions made based on comprehension taxonomy. To know whether the English textbook used in senior high school can support the students' reading ability by having various levels and appropriate numbers of reading comprehension questions, this study entitled "The Classification of Reading Comprehension Questions in English Textbook Entitled "English" Based on Barrett's Taxonomy" is conducted.

1.2. The Research Questions

Based on the background and the title of the study, the research questions are formulated as follow:

- What levels of reading comprehension questions based on the Barrett's taxonomy are found in the English textbook entitled "English"?
- What is the percentage of the occurrence of each of the levels of reading comprehension questions based on the Barrett's taxonomy in the English textbook entitled "English"?

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

In line with the research questions on the previous page, the objectives of this study are to find out:

- The levels of reading comprehension questions based on Barrett's taxonomy in the English textbook entitled "English"., and
- The percentage of the occurrence of each of the levels of reading comprehension questions based on Barrett's taxonomy in the English textbook entitled "English".

1.4.The Theoretical Framework

To classify the reading comprehension questions in English textbook entitled “English” the writer used some theoretical frameworks. The first theoretical framework is the nature of reading. According to Fisher and Peters (1981), reading is a complex of mental processes that a student uses when interacting meaningfully with printed discourse. When the students read a text, it means that at the same time, the students interact with the text. ‘Interact’ here means the students comprehend the text using their thinking skill including their prior knowledge, interpretation and assumptions. To check whether the students really comprehend the text, reading comprehension questions are made based on comprehension taxonomy and given for the students. By giving reading comprehension questions, students can improve their reading comprehension by answering the questions. According to Dupuis and Askov (1982), students should be given questions of four levels of Barrett’s taxonomy. To help the researcher in analyzing the level of the questions, Barrett’s taxonomy is used. Barrett’s Taxonomy is one of popular comprehension taxonomies used for reading aside from Bloom’s Taxonomy. Barrett’s Taxonomy consists of four levels, they are: (1) literal recognition or recall, (2) inference, (3) evaluation, and (4) appreciation. Barrett’s taxonomy is chosen as the parameter in analyzing the levels of questions because Barrett’s taxonomy is made for reading purpose and is usually used in classifying questions.

1.5.The Significance of the Study

The findings and information from this study are expected to:

- Encourage English teachers to choose and use a textbook with reading comprehension questions which cover all levels of questions so the students can improve their reading ability.
- Motivate the teachers in constructing reading comprehension questions which cover all levels of questions.

1.6.The Scope and Limitation of the Study

As the parameter in classifying the levels of reading comprehension questions in senior high school textbook entitled “English”, the writer uses Barrett’s Taxonomy. The reading comprehension questions are classified based on four categories of reading comprehension questions in Barrett’s Taxonomy: (1) literal recognition or recall, (2) inference, (3) evaluation and (4) appreciation.

There are eight lessons available in English textbook entitled “English”. However, there are six lessons classified as the representatives from the English textbook. Those lessons are lesson one, two, four, five, seven and eight. In this textbook, it is expected that the reading comprehension questions covered four levels of reading comprehension questions based on Barrett’s taxonomy.

1.7. The Definition of Key Terms

The terms used in this study may be unfamiliar. The following descriptions are presented to give the description of the terms:

Barrett's Taxonomy

Barrett's Taxonomy is a taxonomy made by Thomas C. Barrett in 1968 special for reading. It categorizes reading comprehension questions into four levels: (1) Literal recognition or recall, (2) inference, (3) evaluation, and (4) appreciation.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a process of gaining understanding from printed material (Dupuis and Askov, 1982, p. 17).

Reading Comprehension Questions

Reading comprehension questions are questions used to check the students' reading comprehension.

1.8. The Organization of the Study

In this study, there are five chapters: (1) introduction, (2) literature review, (3) research design, (4) data analysis and interpretation of the findings, and (5) conclusions and suggestions.

The first chapter covers the background study of the thesis, the research questions, the objectives of the study, some brief explanations of theoretical frameworks used, the significance, the scope and limitation, along with the definition of the key terms and the organization of the study.

In the second chapter, related literatures are reviewed and the research design of how this study is conducted is explained in the third chapter. In the fourth chapter, the results of the data analysis are described, including the interpretation of the findings and the discussion about the study. Lastly, the conclusion and suggestions of this study are in the fifth chapter.