

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

It's not something novel that English has been globally applied in many countries around the world especially in Indonesia. In Indonesia, English plays a big role in the education for various levels. The levels come up from elementary, junior high, senior high, and college level. In Indonesian's education, English is divided into English components and English skills. There are three English components (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) and four English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) that should be mastered by every English learner.

This essay is more focus on explaining what reading is, why it is important, and how reading will be taught towards the student. Then, there will be a continuation until the main discussion of this essay about finding out the significant different between students who do their reading comprehension test using computer based will get better score than those who use paper-pencil one.

“Reading, is a very complex mental activity that contains vision, dubbing, thought, and rendition (Çelenk, 2001: p.77)”. It's true because while reading, our vision and thought play big role so that they need to be combined very well in order to get a good comprehension from it. Before getting good comprehension from the passage, we need to be able to infer what the passage is to form the same understanding between the writer and the reader. In addition, Akyol (2006: p.29)

asserted that “reading is a dynamic inferring process that makes communication between writer and reader essential”. “Furthermore reading skill means students’ reading texts they encountered in their daily lives properly and fluently by using right methods (Özbay, 2006: p.5)”. It is also said that reading as an active, receptive, and decoding language skill is the main source of meaningful input in the process of learning a foreign language. It means that while reading, there is an input of new knowledge in our mind which helps us to understand what the passage is. Moreover, reading has been defined as an active process in which readers shift between sources of information, elaborate meaning, monitor their comprehension, and use context to reflect their response (Walker, 2000). After getting an understanding of the information, meaning, and comprehension from the passage, it makes reading as a cognitive activity in which the reader takes part in a conversation with the author through the text. This conversation doesn’t happen orally, but it directly happens through reader’s thought and understanding towards the passage itself.

In Indonesia, English functions as a foreign language, however, the needs to be able to master English has increased day by day as a primary need. It can be observed from its use not only as a means of daily oral and written communication but also mostly functions in scientific and technological information. In the educational system of Indonesian students, English has become the learning assistance, a means for the acquisition of knowledge from English hardcopy materials (textbook) and softcopy materials. Therefore, good reading skill in English is crucially needed to understand written communication.

In order to be able to master our reading skill, the teaching, learning, and practicing reading should be exactly started since we were able to produce some words. This reading process will be developed continuously and more complicated as well as the development of the ability to read. Therefore, it is not a new issue that college students, English Department, still face the reading subject in some continuation levels. The English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University divides their reading level into 4 (Reading I, Reading II, Reading III, and Reading IV).

In this research the writer would like to talk more about Reading II students as the subject of the research. Furthermore this course introduces the students to topic of universal interest that develop their general comprehension of main ideas, specific information, understanding structural details, and specific vocabulary (Buku Pedoman Akademik FKIP; 2015). In addition, at the end of the Reading II course, the students are expected to be able to identify important pieces of information, summarize the overall content of the text, predict the topic of the discourse/text, identify or infer the main idea, predict probable outcomes of certain ideas, predict the application of certain ideas to real life situations, identify the organization of ideas: definition-explanation, cause-effect, problem-solution, opinion-argument, persuasion, and evaluate ideas presented in the texts (Buku Pedoman Akademik FKIP; 2015). The students are also demanded to master written texts with a high intermediate level of difficulty. For the students of English Departments, the ability to read English textbooks contributes and influences much to their future career as well as to the

success of their study. The S1 Curriculum of the English Departments, therefore, treats reading subject in the same position as SMA Curriculum does. Because of those expectations and demands, reading receives 3 credits with other language skill subjects like listening, speaking and writing.

With so many credits, later on the graduates of the English Departments will also be expected to be able to read English textbooks rapidly, effectively, accurately on their own. In order to be able to be a good reader, we have to be able to judge what particular information is wanted, what degree of comprehension is needed and how long the information will have to be retained.

According to Kim and Anderson, (2011: p. 30) “reading is essential for successfully completing all college-level courses. In other words, college students who are more proficient readers are most likely to experience more success in their courses”. It means that the higher level of reading we have passed the more improvement on knowledge and understanding of, reading, as one of the most crucial proficiencies in English. Thus, in this essay, the target of the examinees will be Reading II students who are seemed to have more experience and chance in solving some kind of reading matters.

While reading, sometimes the students will face difficulties in understanding what the passage is about. When this happens, the teacher’s role plays big part in order to make them more understand and enthusiastic in learning reading. Frank Smith (1979: p.137) states that “in order to understand the teacher’s role one must

look at the student's needs". Generally, students have to make sense of reading so teachers must make sure that reading and learning to read should make sense to students.

The teachers themselves need to notice and pay attention on the lack of reading efficiency. It is mostly not only a problem of language but also the problem of reading itself. We usually find a great number of students who have good proficiency in English and yet read very slowly with poor comprehension. What might make the students read poorly? The independent process model of reading may provide a sociable framework for considering various answers to this question. First, the students are never made aware that reading is for them. Second, students do not know how to make effective use of their cognitive resources. Many reading teachers have realized this and even have consciously stated their instructional objectives in their lesson plan, and yet only a few reading teachers are able to utilize them in their teaching activities. So, when the students learn to read, as a teacher, we have to help student to read by making reading easy not by making it difficult. In fact, learning to read does not begin in the classroom, nor can schools be held wholly responsible for the degree to which students succeed in becoming literate. Furthermore, teachers have a crucial role to encourage their students about the importance of reading and guide the students to get the meaning of the passage that they have read.

After the reading learning and teaching activity happens, there will be ended with a test for the evaluation of measuring the success of the learning. Meantime,

tests are the most common evaluating method in nearly all educational systems and academic institutions worldwide. Generally, tests carry the most load of the students' total grade particularly at the college level. Below the writer will explain two different modes in the reading test and the significant difference on the students' reading performance after doing those two tests.

Nowadays, some teachers still use the conventional test called paper-pencil test. Paper pencil test is kind of conventional test which is used to assess students' achievement in all subjects, including in English test. Commonly, English test can be divided into 4 tests (listening test, reading test, speaking test, and writing test). Reading test will be the focus on this essay. Recently, paper pencil based reading test makes students feel boring in reading test because the number of papers that are used for the passages are too many and there are no variation in design, picture, diagram, and color. In addition, the minimum design of paper pencil test reduces the motivation of the examinees to read the passages; as a result many of them get bad score in their reading test. In order to solve this problem, we need a new, comfortable, and effective reading test in technological system called computer based test. The need of this new invention is influenced by the development of digital era including the development of the use of computer in education, including English language teaching itself.

Reading is one of the most important skills in English education for all levels. As a necessary skill in language learning, reading is also critical in English test. Thus, reading takes a large proportion in large-scaled language tests. Accordingly,

designing a valid, reliable and practical comprehension testing is crucially important in foreign language testing, especially in reading test. In recent years, language teachers and scholars on testing have paid more attention to improve the quality of reading tests. On account of the important role of reading test, it is requisite to raise concerns on the evaluation and improvement of the effective tests of reading, Bijin Dong (2011). As a result, many reading tests nowadays are organized in computer based form. Computer based reading test is chosen because of the demand to renew and replace the conventional test itself.

In this essay, some arguments for the benefit of computer based reading test are explained specifically. In addition, this study asserted that computer based reading test will give better improvement in reader's performance in their reading test. This is certainly something which is worth discussing as it undoubtedly has international repercussions across all areas of education.

1.2 Research Question

In relation with the title and the background of the study, the research question is formulated as follows:

- Is there any significant difference in the college students' reading performance between students who attend computer based reading test and those who don't?

The subjects' ability in judging and evaluating information from the given texts was investigated, since this skill belongs to critical reading which is not beyond the scope of the students taking Reading II course.

1.3 The Objective of the Study

Derived directly from the above mentioned problem, the objective of this essay is aimed to find out whether there is a significant difference on the college students' reading performance between those who attend computer based reading test and paper pencil based reading test.

1.4 The Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework above, the question of the present study could be tentatively answered. Thus the following hypotheses are formulated as follow:

- Ha: There is a significant difference on the students' reading performance between those who attend computer-based reading test and those who attend paper pencil based reading test.
- Ho: There is no significant difference on the students' reading performance between those who attend computer-based reading test and paper pencil based reading test.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

In this research, the writer uses the following underlying theories in order to answer the research question:

The theory of reading comprehension and reading process are needed for the main discussion of this research is about reading. They are including reading and reading comprehension definition, the way of teaching reading, the process of reading, and the improvement of readers' reading abilities after doing the reading comprehension. In addition, the theory of testing including computer based reading test and paper based reading test are explained briefly for the main topic of this research is computer based reading test itself. It consists of its history, its concept, and its advantages to the examinees.

The different test modes in the reading comprehension test are expected to give significant difference result to the students' reading performance. Those basic theories above are reviewed in detail in the chapter two.

1.6 The Assumptions

This study is based on the following assumptions.

1. Each reading test mode may potentially affect the students' reading performance.
2. The significant different of the two test modes are comparable statistically.
3. The reading tests given are considered having the same level of difficulties since they are standardized tests.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

In the English Department, there are intensive reading and extensive reading. The intensive reading consists of Reading I, II, III, IV and the extensive reading is

formed as reading journals that should be submitted twice in a semester. Since reading comprehension covers a great area and different levels of skills, this study is delimited to intensive Reading II focusing on reading for critical thinking as stated in the curriculum of the S1 of the English Department.

It is a case study within a delimited scope of sample using one-third of the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya taking Reading course II in the academic year 2014-2015. 20 students are tested by using two kind of reading test modes, computer-based reading test and paper pencil based reading test. The study itself was delimited to testing the significant difference after doing computer-based and paper pencil based reading tests in terms of the student's reading comprehension performance.

1.8 The Significance of the Study

Practically, the data obtained from this study are expected to give a somewhat clear depiction about the importance of computer-based reading and the effectiveness of computer-based reading test for testing reading comprehension at the English Department. This depiction is then expected to be a basis for selecting the right strategies for testing reading comprehension in every different level as to help the students become effective and independent readers in this digital era.

Theoretically, the findings are expected to support the theory of metacognition and digital reading which states that an awareness of metacognitive skills especially,

an awareness reading plays a crucial role in developing reader's reading performance and the most suitable model of reading test is computer-based reading test.

1.9 Definition of Key-terms

Although terms in the field of reading processes have been fairly well standardized in their meanings, some degree of uncertainty may still exist. As a means of clarification, the following constructs and concepts are defined.

- a. **Reading test.** Reading test is the format or design of structured procedure of evaluation used in testing reading comprehension which consists of the following phases: pre-test and post-test.
- b. **Computer-based reading test.** Computer-based is a model of testing whose main characteristic is that the students are made fully aware of doing the reading test digitally.
- c. **Paper pencil based reading test.** Paper pencil based reading test is the opposite of the computer-based reading test; in this test the students only do their test using their stationery on the paper.
- d. **Reading Performance.** It shows how well the student's ability in reading subject or test.

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 is about background of the study, research question, objective of the study, theoretical framework, hypotheses, the assumption, scope and limitation of the study, the significance of the study, and

definition of the key terms. Chapter 2 focuses on the review for the theory that is used in the research. Chapter 3 consists of the research methodology. Chapter 4 contains the writer's findings and discussions. Chapter 5 includes the conclusion and suggestion.