

CHAPTER I

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1.1 Background of the Study

In this modern era, globalization happens in all over the world. People in one country build a wide relationship with people in another country. Therefore, nowadays, people have to be able to master several languages, especially English as an international language.

The importance of English as an international language and the first foreign language in Indonesia causes it to be one of the most important school subjects, thus, it is taught from the second grade of elementary school up to the university level. In addition, the focus of teaching English is in reading skill, since the students are expected to be able to read textbook in English. Moreover, Ward (1982:2) states that the majority of the students learning English as a second language may never speak much English but most of them have to read English. Hence, it is clearly seen that reading skill holds an important role in the process of English teaching.

However, a crucial problem appears when a lot of students still find many difficulties in reading subject. They often get difficulty in comprehending a reading text; which is mainly caused by their lack of vocabulary mastery, especially the ones used in the text. This might happen because of the process of teaching and learning itself. It is common that the teaching of vocabulary during reading lesson is often neglected by teachers. The vocabulary is often taught in the

form of direct translation or through the list of words. This condition occurs because of the time constraint in the process of teaching and learning. Teachers feel that there is not enough time to teach the vocabulary first to the students. They prefer to ask some triggering questions before reading to the students, then directly go on with the text.

Question before reading is an aid for helping students to activate their prior knowledge (Tagliber, 1988:458). Through questions, a teacher can know whether the students are able to understand the text or not. Teachers can also develop students' comprehension skills by using questions. According to Rasinski and Padak (2004:184-188), question before reading has some advantages, which are: helping students in activating their prior knowledge in reading comprehension, checking the students' ability in mastering the reading comprehension and as a way to communicate with the students.

Even though question before reading is also useful in pre-reading activities, it can not provide the students with a good preparation in vocabulary. This condition leads the students to confusion when they have to deal with a new reading text, especially with unfamiliar words.

In this thesis, the writer suggests a kind of pre-reading activity in teaching reading. Heilman, Blair, and Rupley (1981:81) point out; a good readiness program leads the students to maximum success in reading. The focus of pre-reading activity selected is called vocabulary before reading, since this activity directly concerns with the vocabulary mastery.

Vocabulary before reading is conducted before the class deals with a new reading text, thus, it can be said that vocabulary before reading is a kind of pre-reading activity for the students (Brown, et al., 1980:91). The procedure of vocabulary before reading is that firstly the writer brainstorms all the vocabulary that the students know related to the topic of the text. This activity has a benefit as to activate students' linguistic schemata (Rasinski and Padak, 2004:141). Secondly is that she teaches the vocabulary or difficult words that the students will encounter in the reading text. In this activity, the writer uses the contextual vocabulary, since Baker (1989:53) confirms that learning words in context is the best and often the easiest way to improve the vocabulary. In addition, Holburt (1981:23) adds that the method of comprehending words in context in the learning vocabulary has several advantages over the use of word list. One of them is that words may have different meaning if they are used in context, and this is often not conveyed by a word list definition. In details, in presenting the vocabulary before reading in context, the writer takes Marksheffel's idea (1966:34). The writer introduces some unknown words and pronounces the words as she writes them on the board. After the new vocabulary is written and pronounced for the students, she uses it in a sentence example to help students to guess the meaning of the word in the sentence given. By doing so, the students are invited to join the class discussion and this makes them to be more active, and at the same time their interest on the subject can be aroused. Finally, it is expected that vocabulary before reading can bring positive effect on the students' reading comprehension achievement.

Furthermore, through this study, the writer hopes that she will be able to give contribution for the field of teaching English, especially for the teachers in using the variety of pre-reading activity.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Based on the background of the study, the writer would like to see the effects of using vocabulary before reading in the process of teaching reading. This suggested technique in the experimental class is compared to the common technique used in pre-reading activities namely question before reading. To enable her to do so, she would like to answer the following major question:

“Is there any significant difference between the reading comprehension achievement of the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading?”

In addition, to have deeper analysis on the students' reading achievements, their ability in answering several types of reading comprehension questions is also analyzed. Thus, the major question is supported by four sub-questions as follows:

- a. “Is there any significant difference on the students' ability in answering the detail questions in the text being read between the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading?”
- b. “Is there any significant difference on the students' ability in answering the meaning of the vocabulary being asked between the students taught

using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading?”

- c. “Is there any significant difference on the students’ ability in answering the reference word questions between the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading?”
- d. “Is there any significant difference on the students’ ability in identifying the main idea of the paragraph in the text between the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading?”

The idea of having four sub-questions is accordance to Gilmore, Sack, and Yourman (1983:4) who state that the reader can really comprehend the text if they can answer six fundamental questions which concern with subject matter, generalization, detail, significance, conclusion, and vocabulary. However, according to the achievement indicators in the 2004 Curriculum for junior high school student, the emphasis of reading lesson is to make the students able to comprehend detail information of the text, to answer the meaning of the vocabulary in the text, to answer reference word questions and to identify main idea of the paragraph.

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem, the objective of this study is to find out whether there is any significant difference between the reading comprehension

achievements of the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading.

Besides, this study also has the sub-objectives which are:

- a. to find out whether there is a significant difference between the students' ability in answering the detail questions of the text being read between the students who were taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading.
- b. to find out whether there is a significant difference between the students' ability in answering the meaning of the vocabulary being asked between the students who were taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading.
- c. to find out whether there is a significant difference between the students' ability in answering the reference word questions between the students who were taught using vocabulary before reading and students who were taught with question before reading.
- d. to find out whether there is a significant difference between the students' ability in identifying the main idea of the paragraph in the text between the students who were taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In writing this paper, the writer hopes that the result of this study will contribute both to the English teachers and the field of teaching English as a

foreign language. English teachers can use various pre-reading activities which can lead students to improve their ability in comprehending a reading text. Furthermore, concerning the field of English teaching, the writer expects that the use of pre-reading activities which are often omitted during the reading lesson can be activated.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The writer basically constructs this study based on the theory of schemata. According to this theory, comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. James in Ngadiman (1990:6) mentions that basically there are three areas of schemata that play a part in the act of reading. They are linguistic schemata, content schemata, and formal schemata.

In this study, the writer focuses on linguistic schemata, since they are directly concerned with vocabulary mastery of the students. According to Rumelhart (1980:22), the linguistic schemata are the knowledge of the letters and the corresponding sounds, both alone or in clusters, a reader's familiarity under the frequency of various letters, clusters and the ability to predict, through the knowledge of Syntax the word or words that will follow. Therefore, the students' knowledge of vocabulary is definitely influenced by the linguistic schemata which they have.

Through vocabulary before reading, the writer tries to activate the students' linguistic schemata which can give contribution to the students' ability

in comprehending the text. Moreover, the students will have better preparation for reading.

1.6 Hypotheses

Based on the theory, students need to be taught using pre-reading activities, especially vocabulary pre-teaching in order to activate their linguistic schemata and improve their reading comprehension achievement; therefore in conducting this study, the writer uses two hypotheses: the Alternative Hypothesis (HA) which supports her prediction that vocabulary before reading has better effect on the students' reading comprehension achievement and the opposite is the Null Hypothesis (Ho).

HA: There is a significant difference between the reading comprehension achievement of the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading.

Ho: There is no significant difference between the reading comprehension achievement of the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading.

The Major hypothesis is tested through these four sub-alternative hypotheses, which are:

Hypothesis A: There is a significant difference on the students' ability in answering the detail questions of the text being read between the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading.

Hypothesis B: There is a significant difference on the students' ability in answering the meaning of the vocabulary being asked between the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading.

Hypothesis C: There is a significant difference on the students' ability in answering the reference word questions between the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading.

Hypothesis D: There is a significant difference on the students' ability in identifying the main idea of the paragraph in the text between the students taught using vocabulary before reading and those taught using question before reading.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the study

Since there are many kinds of vocabulary pre-teaching that can be used in pre-reading activities, the writer thinks that it is needed to limit the scope of the study. In this study, the writer only focuses on the teaching of reading comprehension by teaching vocabulary before reading using vocabulary list with sentence example.

Moreover, the writer particularly concerns on seeing the effect of vocabulary before reading on the students' reading comprehension achievement.

Types of reading comprehension questions used in the test were only detail, vocabulary, reference word, and main idea questions.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

Before the writer continues to the next chapter, it is important to give the definition of the key terms first in order to avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity.

Those key-terms are:

1. Reading comprehension: a complex mental processes involving three basic skills, which are a reader strives to identify the specific ideas of another person, establishes the organization of these ideas, and then reacts to them both emotionally and intellectually (Griese, 1977:4).
2. Achievement: something done successfully, especially with effort and skill (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1995:11).
3. Pre-reading activity: an activity which is used to anticipate what will be read, make connections between what the students know already and what they will learn. The basic idea of this study is underlying most pre-reading activity, that the reader will process a text more meaningfully if they are conceptually prepared for the content of the text by having achieved the relevant aspects of their background knowledge (Rasinski and Padak, 2004:180).
4. Vocabulary before reading: teaching vocabulary before reading a text.
5. Question before reading: giving triggering questions before reading a text.
6. Schemata: the organizations of experience in the mind or brain (Websters' 3rd New International Dictionaries, 1986:2029).
7. Contextual vocabulary: new vocabulary written in a sentence to help students to get the meaning associated with the word (Marksheffel, 1966:34).

1.9 The Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, hypotheses, limitation of the study, definition of key terms and organization of the thesis. Chapter II deals with the review of the related literature. Chapter III discusses the research design and methodology, while the results of data analysis and discussion are in chapter IV. While the conclusions and suggestions are covered in the last chapter, chapter V.