

Chapter I

Introduction

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1.1 Background of the study

Learning English is important since English is considered an international language. According to Crystal (1995) English has an official or special status in at least 75 countries with a total population of over two billions; about 1.500.000.000 people in the world speak English. Almost all international conferences and competitions are conducted in English, for example, The Olympics games and Miss World Contest. In the political field, English is also used, diplomats and politicians from different countries use English to communicate with each other. Besides, English is the main language of world organizations like The United Nations and NATO. English as a foreign language in Indonesia is not used as means of daily oral communication but mostly functions as a vehicle of a body of scientific and technological information needed for developing the country (Ngadiman, 1990).

The goal of learning English as a foreign language is that the learners can master the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among those four skills reading should be first learned to achieve goal of teaching English in Indonesia. Dubin (1982) in her article says that reading would seem to be the most attainable language skill for students in countries where English is not widely spoken. Their fluency in

speaking English is almost possible to achieve without the opportunity to practice frequently with native speaker but with reading. According to Williamson (1988) reading is good for language acquisition; it promotes better spelling, better writing, higher reading comprehension and a more advance vocabulary. Hua-Shang's (1983); has the same opinion he states that, "Reading even sharpens insight and vision, and it enables readers to expand their knowledge, to find recreation and enjoyment, and to improve technique in many different ways". Although reading is placed third in the hierarchy of the language skill, it does not mean that it is less important than the other three skills. We can also learn the other three skills of language by reading. Therefore, reading is the basic skill in learning a foreign language.

In the education field, being able to read in English can be very important especially for students who are going to pursue further studies. It is known that most of the text books available in university are still written in English, therefore, students must, at least, be able to read in English. Eskey (1983) points out that, for the students in a non-English-speaking environment, the only practical reason for studying English is to gain the ability to read journals and books in that language. Having similar opinion, Ward (1980) states that the majority of students of English as a foreign language may ever speak much English, but most of them will have to read English in order to complete their university studies. Not only in the academic studies, a reading knowledge of a foreign language, according to Alderson (1984), is also important to professional success and personal

development. This is particularly true because much professional, technical, and scientific literature is published in English. He also states that reading ability is often needed by learners of English as a foreign language.

Realizing the importance of reading, Indonesian government, in the 2004 curriculum, states that one of the objectives of teaching English is to increase and develop the students' reading ability so that high school students and graduates are able to comprehend English texts related to their study. Although the teaching of English at SMA emphasizes on the importance of reading, the reality shows that most of SMA students often get difficulties in comprehending English passages. They are not able to comprehend the contents of English reading passages and thus they feel bored in the class during reading lesson. Alderson (1984) points out that it is the common experience of EFL teachers that most students fail to learn to read adequately in the foreign language. It happens because there is a gap between the content of reading material and the process of instruction or the way of teaching reading.

One of the students' problems in comprehending English passages could be the differences in the English semantic and syntactic patterns which are different from those of their native language. The students often have difficulties in understanding texts despite knowing the words and structures and also in the interpretation of words and syntactic structures – which are grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, teachers of English usually stress on grammatical patterns and vocabulary. Thus, the teachers may not

actually teach Reading but Vocabulary and Structure. As a result they know the sentence pattern and the meaning of the words in the text but they do not understand the contents of English passages. So, the students' reading ability is not well developed.

The writer also notice that the teachers used conventional lecture approach in conducting reading class that might make the students cannot really comprehend the content of English passages. It happens because the teacher dominated the class. The teacher started the lesson by asking the students to read the reading passage silently. After that, the teacher asked the students to find the difficult words. She explained the words by giving synonyms in English or Indonesian. Then, she asked the students to answer the reading comprehension questions.

That way of teaching reading is not effective enough because the students can not learn actively in the class. There is less opportunity for the students to get the information in the passage effectively so that the students are not motivated in reading English passages and feel bored in class. Furthermore, the size of reading class is usually big. The number of students in one class is more than 40 students with different levels of fluency; therefore, the teacher can not provide the same attention to each student. Besides that the time allocation for English is short, it takes 45 minutes.

Realizing that conventional technique of teaching reading is not effective and can not build students' motivation in reading class, the writer suggests that English teachers use a cooperative learning method, using

Student Teams and Achievement Divisions (STAD) technique by Slavin (1978) in the reading class.

Several studies using the STAD technique reported effects on the academic achievement (Slavin, 1978). Those studies yielded higher scores for experimental as compared to control groups on language arts (reading vocabulary, grammar). Another study by using STAD technique was also conducted by Bejarano (1987). She conducted her study in the junior high school students in Israel where English is as a foreign language. The purpose of her study was to assess the effect of STAD and of the traditional class on the general achievement of junior high school EFL learners and on their acquisition of specific language skill. The result of the study on the reading comprehension is that there is no significant differences found between the two methods, but STAD technique can build motivation to each student to read the reading passage and to contribute score to their group. Her result also shows that STAD technique affects the students' achievement and motivation on the listening comprehension and grammar.

The reasons for conducting this research is that the writer would like to know the effects of STAD besides motivating the students in reading the English passages. The writer would also like to know whether there is any significant difference in the students' achievement in reading comprehension when STAD is applied instead of the conventional technique.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study is an attempt to determine the effects of Student Teams and Achievement Divisions (STAD) technique on the SMA students' reading comprehension. The major question is formulated as follow:

“Does STAD technique affect students' reading comprehension achievement?”

According to the 2004 English curriculum for SMA, being able to read comprehensively means that the students should have the skills of (1) identifying the explicitly stated information, (2) determining the topic, (3) identifying the main idea, (4) identifying the implied information (5) interpreting the word, phrase, and sentence in context. Thus, the major problem is broken down into minor problems as follows:

- a. Does STAD technique affect students' achievement in answering factual questions?
- b. Does STAD technique affect students' achievement in answering inference questions?
- c. Does STAD technique affect students' achievement in answering subject matter questions?
- d. Does STAD technique affect students' achievement in answering main idea questions?
- e. Does STAD technique affect students' achievement in answering structural questions?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

Derived directly from the above problems mentioned, the objective of this study is:

“To investigate whether STAD technique affects students’ reading comprehension achievement”

In details, the objectives of this research are:

- a. To investigate whether STAD technique affects students’ achievement in answering factual questions.
- b. To investigate whether STAD technique affects students’ achievement in answering inference questions.
- c. To investigate whether STAD technique affects students’ achievement in answering subject matter questions.
- d. To investigate whether STAD technique affects students’ achievement in answering main idea questions.
- e. To investigate whether STAD technique affects students’ achievement in answering structural questions.

1.4 Significance of the study

The results obtained from this study are expected to give contribution to the practice of teaching reading comprehension on the SMA students. The teacher will have more choices as variations of teaching techniques.

Theoretically the results of this study are expected to prove whether the theory of STAD which states that STAD can raise the students' motivation and give each individual equal opportunity in reading comprehension is supported or rejected.

1.5 Scope and limitation of the Study

Directly related to the objective of this thesis, this study is limited to teaching reading comprehension to the first year of SMA students with the time allocation of 45 minutes in each meeting. The discussion deals only with the teaching technique that is STAD technique and conventional technique in teaching reading comprehension to SMA students. Thus, teaching approaches and media are not discussed. And also the other factors that may affect the students' reading comprehension achievement are not included.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the cognitive theory of learning such as cooperative learning theory. The cognitive view takes the learners to be an active processor of information. Cognitive theory states that learning is a process in which the learners actively tries to make sense of data, and learning can be said to have taken place when the learner has managed to impose some sort of meaningful interpretation or pattern on the data (Pergamon, 1985). It means that the learners learn by thinking about and

trying to make sense of what they see, feel, and hear. The cooperative learning theory states that cooperative learning refers to instructional methods in which students work together in small groups to help each other learn (Slavin, 1978). In the cooperative learning classroom students and teacher are in a state of dynamic cooperation and together they build up an intimate learning and social atmosphere in the classroom (Bejarnno, 1987: 485). The teacher is no longer a lecturer or transmitter of material, but rather a facilitator of learning who focuses on the learning process by encouraging cooperation among the students; the students are no longer trying to impress their teacher but are busy learning actively. So, the process of teaching learning activity can be more live and the students can be more active in receive the material or information.

1.7 Hypothesis

Based on the statement of the problem the writer comes to the hypothesis as follows:

Ho: The STAD technique does not affect the students' reading comprehension achievement better than the conventional technique.

Ha: The STAD technique affects the students' reading comprehension achievement better than conventional technique.

1.8 Definition of key terms

To avoid ambiguity in discussing the points in this study, the key terms used would be clarified. There are seven terms:

1) Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD)

A peer-tutoring technique is a learning strategy which is based on raising students' motivation for learning by focusing on cooperation among members within each team, followed by a competition among the teams in the class (Slavin, 1978).

2) Reading Comprehension:

Reading comprehension in this study means getting messages of what one reads and understanding the ideas presented by the author.

3) Factual Question:

Is a type of question which concerns with information stated explicitly in the passage. It requires the students to recognize information, facts, statements, and opinions explicitly stated by the author (GBPP 1994).

4) Inference Question:

Is a type of question which requires students to recognize the information stated implicitly in the passage (GBPP 1994).

5) Subject Matter Question:

Is a type of question which requires students to determine the topic of the passage what the passage is about (GBPP 1994).

6) Main Idea Question:

Is a type of question which requires students to find the major information of the paragraph in the passage (GBPP 1994). A paragraph should only contain one main information.

7) Structural Question:

Is a type of question which requires students to interpret the word, phrase, and sentence in context (GBPP 1994). This question includes the question about the meaning of words found in the passage and that of the structure of sentences in the passage.

1.9 The organization of the study

There are five chapters presented in this study with the following organization: Chapter I is about the introduction which discusses about background of the study, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, hypothesis, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, research method, the organization of the study. Chapter II concerns with review

of the related literature. Chapter III deals with the research method.

Chapter IV deals with data analysis. Chapter V deals with conclusion.