CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

It is undeniable that reading is the most important skill to master for the students studying English as a foreign language. James Ward (1984:2) says that the majority of the students learning English as a second language may never speak much English but most of them should have to read English in order to complete their studies. By reading a lot, a student can improve his knowledge as he will get some information from the books he reads.

In Indonesia, reading in English, as one of the language skills, has been taught since students are in the Junior High School until they graduate from the Senior High School. Good achievement of the reading skill is regarded important to students as stated by the 1994 curriculum of SMU. In the SMU, Reading subject is given the highest priority before any other abilities. This idea is also supported by Diptoadi (1989:15),

> Reading is the key in successful language learning, especially in a foreign language. Therefore, improving reading comprehension is not only top priority but also an area of concern for the majority of teachers today... reading is considered the primary skill to be mastered in learning English at Junior High School and Senior High School in Indonesia. Even at the University level, students are encouraged to read well for most of the reference books are in English.

In order to be able to comprehend the information which is written in English, the students should be able to use their background knowledge when they read the

new information from the text. Yet, lots of High School graduates still find difficulties in comprehending the English reading text well. They may be fluent readers in their native language, but they often can not transfer their skills to reading English.

This case happens because when they read English, they tend to focus on the difficult words or vocabularies which are found in a passage. They stop at each unfamiliar words and are afraid to keep up reading for fear of missing something. They are tied to their dictionaries relying on translation to understand word meanings. They spend more time looking up words rather than reading the text and relating it with the prior knowledge which they have already had. In other words, for students word knowledge is more important than background knowledge.

As the writer has observed during her Teacher Training Program in teaching reading comprehension, the English teachers still use the following procedures:

1. The teachers give a reading passage to each student.

2. The teachers read the whole passage once.

3. The teachers discusses the new difficult words found in the passage.

4. The teachers ask the students to read the passage silently.

5. The teachers ask the students to answer the comprehension questions.

Looking at these procedures, one may conclude that this type of procedure does not bring the reading class into an active process but a passive process. Some students say that they do not like the reading class because the reading class is so boring that it makes them sleepy. One of the reasons is that the procedures used in

teaching them are too monotonous. Even worse, some students seems do not understand anything about the passage.

From what have been found above, the writer tries to conclude that many high school students still lack the ability to comprehend the text. To overcome this problem, the writer tries to use pictorial context and pre-questioning in teaching reading comprehension. The reason of using pictorial context and pre-questioning in teaching reading comprehension is pictorial context and pre-questioning can build or activate student's prior knowledge dealing with the text and it will improve students' reading comprehension. There are three kinds of pre-reading activities: Vocabulary pre-teaching, Pictorial context, and Pre-questioning. Vocabulary pre-teaching is an aid for helping students to find out the essential meaning of a difficult word found in the passage. Pictorial context is an aid to help the students to understand a text. The presentation of picture can build students' prior knowledge relevant to the text. Pre-questioning is an aid for helping students activate their prior knowledge. By giving questions as an aid to activate the students' schemata, it helps them to guess what the passage is about. In this study, the writer as the teacher didn't use vocabulary pre-teaching as the treatment because most of the reading passages in the SMU textbook have contained the list of vocabulary / the list of difficult words. So in this study, the writer used pictorial context and pre-questioning and compare them with the Conventional technique (without pictorial context and pre-questioning).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In accordance with the background, this study is designed to compare the effects of (pictorial context and pre- questioning) and the Conventional technique (without pictorial context and pre-questioning) on students' reading achievement. The problem of the study is stated as follows:

Is there a significant difference in the reading achievement of the first year students of high school taught using pictorial context and pre-questioning and the students taught using Conventional technique (without pictorial context and pre-questioning) ?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the above problem statement, the objective of this study is to see whether there is a significant difference in the reading achievement of the first year students of high school taught using pictorial context and pre-questioning and the students taught using the Conventional technique (without pictorial context and pre-questioning).

1.4 Significance of the Study

The data and information from this study are meant to give contribution to the English teachers in using various activities which are able to improve the students' Ability in comprehending a reading passage, considering the students' background, the material, the situation and so on.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on schema theory. According to schema theory, comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge. This is in accordance with what Kant (1983:553) claimed that new information, new concepts, new ideas can have meaning only when they can be related to something the individual already knows.

According to schema theory, pre-reading activities can build or activate students' prior knowledge dealing with the text and it will improve students' reading comprehension. According to Tagliber (1988:458), pre-reading activities are reading activities which are used to anticipate what will be read, to make connections between what the students know already and what they will learn, and to raise questions answers of which will withstand the text of verification through reading. Pre-reading activities try to direct the students to what they are going to read before reading the text.

According to Vacca (1981:216), a picture can be used to express something, arouse interest and stimulate questions. Picture can be used as an aid to help the students to understand a text. Meanwhile, Tagliber (1988:461) says that the presentation of picture can build students' prior knowledge which deals with a few concept related to the reading passage.

Pre-question is an aid for helping students activate their prior knowledge. The questions provided by the teachers trigger their prior knowledge. Pre-question is also

used to motivate. By giving questions as an aid to activate the students' schemata, it helps them to guess what the passage is about. Paulston (1976:165) states that pre-question can be used to activate the students' schemata in order to focus their attention to the important points of the passage.

1.6 Hypotheses

In conducting this study, the writer uses two hypotheses; they are:

The Null Hypothesis (Ho)

There is no significant difference between the reading achievement of the

Students taught using pictorial context and pre-questioning and those taught

Using conventional technique (without pictorial context and pre-questioning).

The Alternative Hypothesis (HA)

There is a significant difference between the reading achievement of the

Students taught using pictorial context and pre-questioning and those taught

Using conventional technique (without pictorial context and pre-questioning).

1.7 Methodology

This study is a quasi experimental study, that is conducted in intact classes. The classes are used as they are without randomization. The writer uses three classes which have more or less the same level of intelligence and reading ability. One class is used as a try-out class. Another class is used as the experimental class, that is the reading class which is taught by using pictorial context and pre-questioning. The

other class is used as the control class, that is the reading class which is taught by using conventional technique (without pictorial context and pre-questioning).

The subject of this study is the first year students of SMU Dapena I Surabaya. This study uses the reading two class students due to the permission given by the headmaster of the SMU Dapena I Drs. Bara Lazuardi, and the English teacher Drs Rufus Ridwan Handojo. The reading passages which are used for this study is taken from "Buku Penuntun Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA kelas I" by. Drs.M. Simatupang and Djoko Kentjono.

The data for this study is obtained from the experimental class and control class through the two post test reading by using pictorial context and pre-questioning and Conventional technique (without pictorial context and pre-questioning).

1.8 Limitation of the Study

Realizing that this study is conducted with limited time, the writer decides to carry out this study only in one Senior High School in Surabaya. And the school chosen for this study is " SMU Dapena I" at jalan Sumatra 112-114 in the academic year 1997-1998.

This study is limited only on the teaching of reading comprehension by using pictorial context and pre-questioning and Conventional technique (without pictorial context and pre-questioning). In her study, the writer only wants to compare the effects of pictorial context and pre-questioning with the Conventional technique

(without pictorial context and pre-questioning) on the students' reading comprehension achievement.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation and ambiguity of the terms used in this study, the writer would like to give the definition of some key terms as used in this study. Those key terms are:

1. Reading is an interactive process between the text and the reader's previous background knowledge.

2. Reading Comprehension is the ability of the students to understand given written text by making appropriate connections to things they have already known before.

3. Pre-reading activity is 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 underlying most pre-reading activity, however is 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.

4. Schema or Schemata are functions in the brain that interpret, organize and retrieve information. Schema theory tries to explain how new information from the text becomes integrated with the reader's prior knowledge and thus influencing the comprehension process.

5. Achievement is the successful finishing or gaining of something. It is generally used to refer to a formal test which has been designed to show how far students have mastered the particular material.

6. **Conventional technique (without pictorial context and pre-questioning)** is a technique which just stresses on the product of reading. This technique does not give a special attention to the students' background knowledge which is very important in order to help them understand the reading text.

1.10 The Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I presents background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, hypotheses, methodology, limitation of the study, definition of key terms and organization of the thesis. Chapter II talks about review of the related literature. Chapter III is about research design and methodology and Chapter IV discusses the findings and discussion. The last chapter is about the summary and some suggestions.