CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of The Study

In this globalization era, people struggle to have better lives. They work hard to hold steady jobs and get a good promising career at work. In order to support their career, broaden their horizons and improve their quality of life, people need to get much knowledge. One of the ways to obtain the needed information is by reading any sources of information or printed materials such as: newspapers, magazines, reference books, articles, journals etc. By reading, people learn new materials and get the latest information in any fields of work.

In many second or foreign language teaching situations, reading receives a special focus (Richards and Renandya, 2005, p. 273). Students want to be able to read for information and pleasure, for their career and study purposes. In fact, students benefit from the ability to read in a foreign language as many sources of information are written in a foreign language, especially English, as it is an international language. The ability to read in English is important for students because English is a vehicle of content information (Dhieb-Henia, 2006, p.2) and a learning aid to acquire knowledge in English from printed materials (Ngadiman, 1988, p.1). Thus comprehending English-written materials is expected of the students and a good reading skill in English is essential when students try to comprehend reading texts.

The importance of reading is also suggested in the 2006 SMU Syllabus which stipulates that SMU students are expected to be able to read different reading materials. It is clear that reading is one of the English skills that is very much needed. This can also be seen from the objectives of SMU program, one of which is to prepare students to continue their study in Universities or Institutes (Kurikulum SMU 1984) English is used to prepare them to get the ability to comprehend English texts, from which students increase their knowledge. Therefore, if students possess the reading ability, they will not have problems in higher education that most often require them to read textbooks, articles or journals only available in English and to keep up with developments in their fields (Hutchinson and Waters, 1991, p.128).

Management students need to have the ability of reading English texts to support their study, for example: to write term papers, to make class presentation, to widen their knowledge on economics subjects etc. They also need to read articles taken from the internet. What they read will complete the knowledge they get from the lectures during their study and later in their professional career they have to read English articles to be more well-informed. To acquire the reading skills, the Management students are taught ESP whose specific purpose is the reading of specialist literature in English and the focus is on the teaching of reading strategies with the use of authentic materials and the use of the native language in spoken classroom discourse (Hutchinson and Waters, 1991, p.162-163). Students must be taught the strategies that can help them understand English texts especially of their study fields and others. The strategies that the students

may make use of are the ones that they can apply themselves while reading without the assistance of instructors or teachers.

Reading is a receptive skill, just like listening but reading is also an active process because what a reader gets from reading depends on what he brings to the reading of a selection and his purpose for reading it (Hennings, 2002, p.1). A reader brings to the reading of a selection a set of facts about the subject that he has gained through first-hand experience or prior knowledge. As he reads, a reader connects what is in the text to what he already knows about the topic. The more connections he makes, the more he gets out of a selection when he reads. Baker and Brown (1985: p. 32-33) stated that the ability to grasp the logical organization of the text is firmly rooted in the reader's prior knowledge of the world. Thus, to understand a text a reader can activate his prior knowledge and relate it to the new knowledge from the text being read.

Pre-questioning is a method for helping readers activate their prior knowledge (Ngadiman, 2001, p.118). The questions provided by the instructor or generated by the students themselves from the topic or title of the text trigger their prior knowledge. Then while reading, a reader establishes his reading purposes and finds the answers to the questions from the text. Questions are important in reading comprehension because they help readers understand passages better.

Many Management students from the Economics Faculty had problems in understanding reading texts. When they were given texts and questions about the texts to answer, they answered the questions incorrectly or just left the answers blank. Although they had a wide range of vocabulary, they read very slowly with

poor understanding. Their scores on the tests were not satisfying especially on the part of answering questions. Obviously, the Management students needed to use a strategy that could assist them to comprehend reading texts.

It has been stressed that pre-questioning is an important way to lead students to understand reading texts. Several studies on the effectiveness of pre-questioning before reading have been done. A study done by Ngadiman (1988) on Strata 1 students taking the reading comprehension courses revealed that self-questioning was the effective strategy for comprehending reading selections. The findings of the study showed that pre-questioning prior to reading promoted reading comprehension better than reading-only.

Another study on pre-questioning (Theodore, 1990) indicated that students of Junior High School who were given pre-questioning prior to reading got better scores than those who were not. The study also suggested that students use pre-questioning before reading to activate their prior knowledge to help them get the message of the texts.

Those studies were done in the classrooms where English was taught as a foreign language, while the same study had not been conducted in the environment where students learned English as specific purposes. In addition to that, the instruments of the previous studies used multiple choice reading comprehension test type which had some weaknesses.

The purpose of this study, then, was to test whether the Management students of class H who were trained to generate their own questions or do their self-questioning prior to reading had better reading achievement than before they

got the training. The instrument of the study, to compensate for the weaknesses of the multiple choice reading tests in the previous studies, used open-ended questions with different types of questions according to Barrett's Taxonomy (Richards in Alderson & Urquhart, 1984 http://www.belvoirparkprimary.org/barrett.htm), namely: literal comprehension, reorganization, inference, evaluation and appreciation or personal response.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

The study tried to find out whether the Management students of class H had a higher reading comprehension achievement after they were trained to apply students' generated questions before reading. Thus, the study answered the following questions:

'Do students' generated questions before reading lead the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement?'

According to Barrett's Taxonomy, a reader's level of understanding respectively starts from the lowest to the highest: literal comprehension, reorganization, inference, evaluation and appreciation. In line with the levels of understanding a text, the following sub-questions are formulated:

1. 'Do students' generated questions before reading lead the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement in answering literal comprehension questions?'

2. 'Do students' generated questions before reading lead the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement in

answering reorganization questions?'

3. 'Do students' generated questions before reading lead the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement in answering inference questions?'

4. 'Do students' generated questions before reading lead the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement in answering evaluation questions?'

5. 'Do students' generated questions before reading lead the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement in answering personal response questions?'

1.3 Objective of The Study

This study aimed at determining the effects of the students' generated questions before reading on the reading comprehension achievement of the Management students of class H. Specifically it investigated whether the students' generated questions before reading gave a higher reading comprehension achievement on the Management students of class H in answering literal comprehension, reorganization, inference, evaluation and appreciation or personal opinion questions.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study was metacognitive theory in reading comprehension which states that, as the purpose of reading is to achieve

understanding of the text, metacognitive skills are vital in reading (Baker and Brown, in Flood, ed, 1984:28-42). These skills consist of, among others, the ability to utilize prior knowledge to get the meaning of the new information. Other skills such as determining the purpose of reading and using different strategies for different purposes are equally important.

Besides the metacognitive theory, schemata in reading comprehension was also discussed because schemata theory is important in explaining how prior knowledge aids in the acquisition of new knowledge (Bransford et al, 1982, www.hi.is/-Joner/eaps.). However, besides the discussions on metacognitive and schemata, the writer also defined what a good reader is, critical reading, the reading process, self-questioning and review of the related studies.

1.5 Hypotheses

The schema-based theory hypothesizes that 'how much prior knowledge is activated during learning affects what is learned and how meaningful the learned material is' (Bransford et all., 1982 in schemata theory and Roger Schank www.hi.is/-Joner/eaps). Pre-questioning can be done to activate one's prior knowledge and by questioning themselves students are expected to set up their purposes of reading. The metacognitive theory suggests that when a reader has established his purpose of reading, he can control what he is reading for, the strategies he will use in reading and what information he is looking for (Baker and Brown, in Flood, 1984:21-44). Thus, pre-questioning activities which students generate by themselves may increase students' understanding in the passage. It

was, then, hypothesized that 'Students' generated questions before reading led the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement' This hypothesis was tested using the following sub-hypotheses:

1. 'Students' generated questions before reading led the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement in answering literal comprehension questions'

2. 'Students' generated questions before reading led the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement in answering reorganization questions'

3. 'Students' generated questions before reading led the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement in answering inference questions'

4. 'Students' generated questions before reading led the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement in answering evaluation questions'

5. 'Students' generated questions before reading led the management students of class H to higher reading comprehension achievement in answering personal response questions'

1.6 Assumptions

This study was based on these assumptions:

1. The Management students of class H needed English in their study and later in their work.

2. The reading text that was used for the pre-test and post-test wass in accordance with the students' major, Management, because the text was taken from an Economics textbook on Management.

3 The instrument of the study to get the data was valid because the questions were constructed according to Barrett's Taxonomy (http://www.belvoirparkprimary.org/barrett.htm)

4. The subjects of the study could be taught how to generate their own questions prior to reading a text because they had basic knowledge of English. They had studied English at least for six years from the Junior High to the Senior High.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study applied the technique of students' generated questions before reading for comprehending English texts to non-English department students learning English as a foreign language. Practically, the data and information obtained from the study were expected to give a clear picture of the effectiveness of students' generated questions before reading for teaching reading comprehension. The students could use this technique when reading so that they would become effective and independent readers.

Theoretically, it was also expected that the findings of the study supported the theory of schemata in reading which states that schemata activation before reading is important in order to make students comprehend a text better. According to this theory, comprehension takes place if a reader's schemata or background knowledge fits the new information in the text. Therefore, a reader's

schemata should be activated and pre-questioning, in this case students' generated questions before reading, is a way to activate the schemata.

1.8 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focused on the reading comprehension of the Management students of class H. The study was conducted to measure the ability of Management students of class H in understanding a text after a reading process applying the technique of students' generated questions before reading. While pre-questioning can be done through teachers' provided questions, questions provided by the text itself and students' generated questions, this study focused on students' generated questions before reading, not after reading.

This study was a pre-experimental study single group pre-test post-test design using a limited sample of the Management students of class H at the Faculty of Economics. The study was limited to the effectiveness of generated questions made by the students themselves before reading the text in increasing their comprehension of the texts they read.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding of this study, the following terms are defined:

1. Students' generated questions or self-questioning before reading refer to questions made or produced by the students themselves before the actual reading, during the while-reading and the post reading activity.

2. Reading comprehension refers to the activities of a reader to get and understand the message or information of the text.

3. Effects in this study refer to results of the application of students' generated questions on their comprehension.

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the introduction of this thesis. In this chapter, the writer explains the background of the study, problem statement, objective of the study, theoretical framework, hypotheses, assumptions, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of key terms and organization of this thesis. In chapter two, the writer explains review of related literature which supports this study. The third chapter of this thesis is concerned with the research method namely: research design, population and sample, treatment of students' generated questions before reading, data collection and data analysis. The research findings, hypotheses testing and discussions of the findings are discussed in chapter four. The writer presents the conclusion and suggestions in chapter five.