

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is one of the language skills that is important in English teaching besides listening, speaking, and writing. Hence, many reading experts find it necessary to make an attempt to increase English learners' reading ability. Based on the concept that good reading comprehension generates good reading achievement, experts and researchers have made efforts during the past decades to find ways of improving students' comprehension ability. Apparently, their efforts have been proven to be worthwhile. These researchers and experts have found the way to improve students' comprehension ability -- that is by applying reading techniques.

This development has brought great effects in the teaching of EFL reading. Reading experts agree and suggest that reading techniques should be used in teaching EFL reading. According to Rosenthal and Rowland (1986: viii) students are able to get the idea of a passage by using reading comprehension skills or techniques accompanied by learning vocabulary, dictionary skills, and library skills. One of the reading techniques they suggest to be used is the SQ3R technique. This technique aims to improve students' reading comprehension through 5 steps, namely Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. SQ3R, however, is not the only technique. Another technique suggested by some experts is speed reading.

Wagiman (1992: 85) in his dissertation states that "There are two important things in the teaching of speed reading technique: the speed of reading and the degree of comprehension". The concept of this technique is that by improving the speed of reading, the process of transmission from short term memory to the long term memory will be easier and smoother, thus facilitating students' comprehension of reading materials (Yue in English Teaching Forum, 1989: 14).

There are a lot of studies that have already been undertaken to discover the effect of the two techniques. Studies about the SQ3R technique were made, among others, by Kosasih (1991) and Lindawati (1996). Kosasih tried to apply the technique to SMA students and compared the effect of the technique with the traditional reading technique. Lindawati conducted her research in the English Department of Widya Mandala University. She compared the SQ3R technique with the Rosenblum technique in an extensive reading course. Both experiments indicated that the SQ3R technique produced better results than the other techniques in terms of students' reading achievement. Studies about the speed reading technique have been conducted by Apsariningtias (1996), and Wagiman (1992). Apsariningtias used SMA students from St. Louis as the subjects of her study. In her experiment it was discovered that the speed reading technique gave a better result than the traditional reading technique. In Wagiman's dissertation speed reading showed its superiority over the reading aloud technique among students learning in the English Department of Widya Mandala University and Satya Widya School of Foreign Languages.

Although much work has been done, further research can be carried out to compare the effect of the two effective reading techniques. For one reason, it can

strengthen the generalizability of each technique. Furthermore, considering that the stress of the 1994 SMU curriculum is on reading, there is a need to do a research on reading techniques so as to give suggestion to SMU English teachers about the variety of reading techniques. Finally, it is hoped that SMU teachers will be able to choose which technique is the most appropriate and useful for their students.

The writer of this study, therefore, chose the topic: "The Effects of SQ3R and Speed Reading Techniques" as he wanted to compare the two techniques and to be able to ascertain which of the two techniques would give a better result in terms of students' reading achievement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study is designed to compare the effect of SQ3R technique with speed reading technique on students' reading achievement. Thus, the writer would like to answer this following question: What is the effect of the SQ3R and the speed reading techniques on the students' reading comprehension achievement?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the problem statement above, the objective of the study is to compare the SQ3R technique and the speed reading technique in order to determine whether there is a significant difference in the students' reading achievement when using the SQ3R technique and the speed reading technique.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is the schema theory as proposed, among others, by Rumelhart and Ortony (1977), Pearson and Spiro (1982), Silberstein (1987) as well as Carrell and Eisterhold (1987). This theory explains how one's knowledge, knowledge of the world, is organized in one's mind. According to the experts above, all knowledge is packaged into units which are called schemata. Further, it is also explained that the process of understanding involves two processes that happen simultaneously at all levels: 'bottom-up' activation -- the process of understanding from specific to general information -- and 'top-down' activation -- the process of understanding from general to specific information.

The schemata alone, however, are useless. The two keys to understanding are possessing the necessary schemata and the ability to interpret the text one reads against those appropriate schemata. In other words, in trying to understand the message from a reading text, a good reader is an active reader who is able to relate the language and the thought retrieving the necessary schemata and connect them with what he reads.

1.5 Hypotheses

There are two hypotheses in this study. They are:

1.5.1 The Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the reading achievement of the students taught by means of the SQ3R technique compared to the students taught by means of the speed reading technique.

1.5.2 The Alternative Hypothesis

There is a significant difference between the reading achievement of the students taught by means of the SQ3R technique compared to the students taught by means of the speed reading technique.

1.6 Assumptions

This study is based on the following assumptions:

1. The second quarter summative test for the second year SMU students is valid and reliable so that it can be used as a reference to measure the level of intelligence of the students.
2. The students follow the treatments in a natural way and do the posttest individually and seriously.
3. The subjects of the study have sufficient competence of English in order that they can understand and follow the strategies of the reading techniques.
4. The reading techniques is applicable or can be taught to the subjects of the study.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to English teachers at SMU about information on the variety of techniques in teaching reading and to enable them to choose which technique is appropriate and best to be given to their students in order that the students' reading comprehension, as well as, their reading achievement improve.

1.8 Scope and Limitation

The writer took the subjects of the experiment from two classes of the second year students in SMU Kristen. Petra 3 or high school in Surabaya. One class received treatment with the SQ3R technique and the second class received treatment by means of the speed reading technique. The writer also took one additional class which was considered as a pilot group.

Furthermore, in conducting this study, the writer limited only on the teaching of reading comprehension by using the SQ3R and the speed reading techniques. In the SQ3R technique there can be various other skills that can be taught, such as vocabulary skills -- to guess the meaning of new words -- and the reading skill to enable students to determine the subject matter of a text or the main idea of a paragraph. However, the writer restricted his research to the application of the steps in the SQ3R technique only. Similarly, the writer limited the application of the speed reading technique. This study was limited to the technique of reading the entire reading text silently and quickly with larger chunks of words.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

The writer would like to define some key terms used in this study in order to avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding. Those key terms are:

1. Reading comprehension

Shepherd states that "Reading comprehension is the ability of a student to think about the information presented by the author. The student must understand the author's language usage and strive to obtain the intended meaning. But this depends

largely on the student's own facility with language as well as the student's background of experiences which can help to evaluate the data and ideas of the author (Shepherd, 1973: 79)."

2. SQ3R.

SQ3R is a reading technique which is designed to deal with the informational material. This technique consists of five steps, namely, Survey (S), Question (Q), Read (R), Recite, and Review (Dubin, F et.al, 1986: 148-149).

3. Speed Reading.

It is a reading technique applying quick and timed reading with meaningful chunks of words which can help to understand or comprehend reading materials better. Both the comprehension and the speed will be improved (Quinn and Nation, 1974: v-vi).

4. Short-term memory.

It is described as the instant playback of the immediate past, a residue of the immediate past in the fore front of the mind. Short-term memory is not very different from attention. It is the temporary retention of certain elements for a very brief period of time. Information flows into and out of the short-term memory (Smith (1985) in Wagiman's dissertation, 1992: 35).

5. Long-term memory.

Smith (1980) defines long-term memory as "the knowledge and belief that are part of our more or less permanent understanding of the world." Long-term memory includes various kinds of knowledge stored in the reader's mind (Smith (1980) in Wagiman's dissertation, 1992: 35-36).

6. Tunnel vision.

Tunnel vision is the condition when the short-term memory is overloaded with visual information and seeing stops for a while (Smith (1985) in Wagiman's dissertation, 1992: 36).

1.10 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I discusses the introduction of the study which is broken down into ten parts. The first part describes the background of the study. The second is the statements of the problem. The third tells about the objective of the study. The fourth part is the theoretical framework.; whereas the fifth part is the hypotheses of the study. The sixth part is the assumptions, and the seventh section is the significance of the study. Next, the eighth part explains the scope and the limitation of the study. The ninth part describes the definition of key terms. Finally, the last part elaborates the organization of the study. Chapter II deals with the opinions of several reading specialists which are used to support the writer's study and the review of related studies. Chapter III talks about the methodology of the research; while chapter IV presents the data analysis and the interpretation of the findings. And chapter V, as the last chapter, will conclude the whole discussion in terms of summary, recommendation and suggestion.