

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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### 1.1. Background of the Study

Learning a language means acquiring a set of skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Since 1987 curriculum emphasizes primarily on reading skill, reading is considered very important especially for SMA students. As it has been stated in National Objective that in developing foreign language skills, the students have to master the ability to read so that they can comprehend the content of reading text (Amran, 1980:139).

Realizing the importance of reading skill, the students should consequently have the ability to comprehend English text well. It is intended to prepare them to have a good reading comprehension in reading the textbooks, most of which are written in English, when they continue their study. However as a matter of fact, many SMA students who have studied English for three years or more still have difficulties in reading. When they are introduced to the printed material presented by their reading teacher, they are still unable to understand their

textbook well.

In reading class most of the SMA students take too much time to read a reading passage. They read too slowly than necessary and it seems that they read word by word. It is, in fact, not a good way to read a reading passage like that because they might lose the thread of meaning and too often backtrack to reread for comprehension while it is not likely a right way to have adequate understanding.

While the writer conducted her PPL (Praktek Pengalaman Lapangan) at DAPENA I SURABAYA, it seemed that the students took much time to read a reading passage like that. Moreover, they could not answer the questions well. Another experience that the writer had in line with reading class is that there was a tendency for the students to answer some of the questions by writing down the sentences that were not necessary to be written. They only found some words in the reading passage that were asked and they wrote all sentences. From this condition the writer assumes that they do not understand the reading passage well. And this condition will be worse if the English teacher does not pay attention to the speed and the quality of

comprehension.

✓ Reading without comprehension is useless. It is not efficient to take much time to read a passage in order to understand it well. Therefore, if the students can read more quickly, they can read and understand more material than before (Quinn and Notion, 1980:vi). Both their reading and speed are improved.

Dealing with reading problems that the students always have, Yue Mei Yun (1986:14) states that there are five major reading problems. They are:

1. Reading word by word, relying too heavily on their visual information which greatly impedes their reading speed and hampers their comprehension
2. Focusing too much attention on form at the expense of meaning.
3. Paying too much attention to details, with the result that they often miss the main idea
4. A small reading vocabulary and heavy reliance on the use of the dictionary
5. Limited background knowledge.

Based on the reasons above and the claim of Warni Salim in her thesis, Speed Reading, that is still a hypothesis, the writer tries to prove statistically the effect of speed reading on students' reading comprehension.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

In accordance with the background of the study, the problem is "Does speed reading affect reading comprehension?"

More specifically the statement of the problem is divided into two, namely a major problem and minor problems. The major problem of this study is:

1. Does speed reading improve reading comprehension?

And the minor problems of this study are:

1. Does speed reading improve students' comprehension in answering factual questions?
2. Does speed reading improve students' comprehension in answering inference questions?
3. Does speed reading improve students' comprehension in answering main idea questions?
4. Does speed reading improve students' comprehension in answering structural questions?

## 1.3. Objective of the Study

Derived directly from the above formulated problems, this study tries to find out the influence

of speed reading on reading comprehension. The objective of study of the major problem was to find out the effect of speed reading on reading comprehension.

This major problem is subdivided into the following objectives:

1. To find out the effect of speed reading on students' comprehension in answering factual questions.
2. To find out the effect of speed reading on students' comprehension in answering inference questions.
3. To find out the effect of speed reading on students' comprehension in answering main idea questions.
4. To find out the effect of speed reading on students' comprehension in answering structural questions.

#### 1.4 Significance of the Study

Practically, the results of this study are expected to give a contribution and positive input in the field of language teaching . The writer wants to

prove the effect of speed reading on reading comprehension. Theoretically, the study may give classification on the effectiveness of speed reading on reading comprehension.

Hopefully the English teachers will realize that they should give more attention to speed reading as well as reading comprehension, and they know how important speed reading in enhancing reading comprehension.

#### 1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The subject of this study is limited to the second year students of SMA St. Louis Surabaya belonging to the school year of 1990-1991. The writer considers that they have adequate knowledge of vocabulary and structure. Because of the administrative constraints, the writer can only conduct her experiment to the second year students of 1990-1991.

In this study, the writer wants to prove the effect of speed reading on reading comprehension. The choice of reading passages are in line with the students' interest and need. Because the subject is

physics class, the material concerns with the subject about physics.

The results of this study which are established through the use of inferential statistics represent the competence of the students. Accordingly they could, to a certain extent, be generalized to the target population. However, such generalization should be made with caution.

#### 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

It is necessary for the writer to give a brief explanation of the key terms used in this study in order to avoid misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

Speed reading is reading reasonably quickly without loss of comprehension, but speed itself is not the most important thing so that the students lack comprehension. Speed is important but the quality of reading comprehension is not allowed to suffer in greater speed. Merely speed in reading without comprehension is valueless (Quinn, 1980:3).

Reading comprehension is an active, interactive process of getting the writer's message

out of the text (Christine, 1982:4).

### 1.7 Theoretical Framework

There is one theory underlying this study. It is theory of speed reading. In speed reading the readers learn to get the meaning out of the page, from behind the words, in a shorter space of time. From this theory, it is clearly stated that speed reading refers not only to the quantity but it also refers to the quality of comprehension. Therefore, the prime purpose of speed reading or faster reading is not only to save the time but also to improve comprehension. Gloria R. P (1987 : 4) in her unpublished report on research about the teaching of speed reading by computer proves that reading speed tends to be accompanied by improvement in reading comprehension score.

To be a faster and better reader, a reader should not fall into habit of reading everything he encounters at the same high speed. When he reads rapidly, he will read in whole thought and whole phrases instead of word by word. Paul D. Leedy (1956:137) says that words are important but they are

not all important. Reading fast does not mean that the reader should read as fast as he can. There are some factors affecting speed reading: the reading purpose, nature of reading and the level of difficulty of the reading material itself. As Gordon R. Wainwright (1977:47) says the key of the efficiency in speed reading is the flexibility.

#### 1.8 Hypothesis

In view of the fact that this study is intended to investigate the effect of speed reading on reading comprehension. The major hypothesis of this study is "Speed reading affects reading comprehension". The minor hypotheses of this study are:

1. Speed reading improves students' comprehension in answering factual questions
2. Speed reading improves students' comprehension in answering inference questions
3. Speed reading improves students' comprehension in answering main idea questions
4. Speed reading improves students' comprehension in answering structural questions

### 1.9 Assumption

Realizing the general perception of the subjects in this study, assumptions underlying the execution of this study are:

1. The students' scores of pre-test and post-test represent their reading comprehension proficiency.
2. The subjects of the study are considered having the same level of competence.
3. The general characteristics of the students under this study are similar with those of all other SMA students in Surabaya.
4. The second years of students have mastered 2500 words and structural knowledge.

### 1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter I, the introduction, is about the background of the study, statement of the problem, the objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of key terms, theoretical framework, hypothesis, assumption. Chapter II deals with the review of related

literature which includes the theories of reading comprehension, speed reading, and some aspects involved in speed reading. Chapter III presents the methodology of research which covers research design population and samples, research instrument, procedure for data collection, and data analysis technique. Chapter IV describes the data analysis and findings which includes the result of the data analysis and interpretation of the findings. Chapter V concludes this study and gives some suggestions concerning the result of the study.