

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study (a), formulation of research questions (b), purpose of the research (c), scope and limitation of the study (d), research hypothesis (e), significance of the study (f), and definition of the key terms (g).

A. Background of The Study

Reading is one of the most important skill in language. This skill belongs to receptive one since readers receive so many beneficial information while reading. By having good capability on this skill, people will be able to comprehensively understand what is actually talked by the writers in the text. This will impact on the knowledge they have as well as acquire the new one. Reading is greatly related with text that is constructed by organized words and paragraphs. Readers will be good at reading if they could entirely comprehend each organized part of the text. It eases them to read well and efficiently. This reading skill is further called as reading comprehension since it is a process of matching ideas of the writer with the message gotten by the readers. A reading text is also frequently used by people to test certain group of people on how they receive information and perceive them into a conclusion as used in

National Examination of English subject for Junior High School Students

National Examination of English subject for Junior High School students in Indonesia is nowadays still dominated by reading text. The percentage of the reading text in National Examination is most likely 80% of 100%. In an examination session, students are given a text or passage and then followed by the questions about it. They must be able to decide which answers are the most appropriate for each questions. If the students do not understand the reading text at all, it means that they are not able to answer the following questions correctly.

This incapability brings a big problem for students themselves as well as the teacher. If the students could not answer at least 75% of the entire questions, it means that they will fail on their examinations. However, in reading an English text to comprehend what it is actually talking about, the students need to know firstly the main idea of a text then respectively looking for its supporting details to strengthen the entire understanding. The students somehow understand a text through one of these two processes called Top-Down processing and Bottom-Up processing. When they read a text by firstly understand the smallest element of language that is vocabularies then going up to the greater idea, it means they are doing the Bottom-Up processing. However,

when they understand a text by firstly reading it then connect each details with what they have known and learned, it means they are doing Top-Down processing. Even though ways to do reading have been clearly explained, unfortunately a lot of students still get problems in reading because particular reasons.

The problems related to the students' difficulty on reading still exists. Firstly, the students have low motivation when the teacher is presenting them an English text. They seemingly feel frustrated when they are asked to read and understand an English text. They assume that reading is boring since they must do several inference when they do not know what is meant by the text. Yet, still related to the first problem, the teacher finds difficulty in creating interesting and effective teaching material which could motivate the students. Teacher rarely uses interesting material and media in the class as finding and creating interesting teaching material and media are difficult and costly. Because of that, teaching reading in many schools only depends on the course book and it made teaching learning process become monotonous. As the consequence, the students tend to feel bored. Another problem is that the students have little vocabularies. In finding the meaning of difficult words in the text, they depend too much on the dictionary. It is not good as it would spent a lot of time and impede comprehension process. Lastly, the teacher ignores the importance of recalling and relating students' background knowledge with the input

text given. He does not give enough portion for pre-reading activity. As the result, students are failed to relate what they have already known with the topic that would be discussed in the text.

According the mentioned problems above, it is needed to use a new strategy in order to give effect on students' score in reading comprehension. One of the new strategy that has not been massively employed is Schema Activation Strategy. Schema Activation Strategy is the one which activates the prior knowledge of the students so that they are able to connect a single separated idea in a text with others to make them sense and logical. As stated by Al - Issa (2006: 41), when students are familiar with the topic of the text they are reading (i.e., possess content schema), aware of the discourse level and structural make-up of the genre of the text (i.e., possess formal schema), and skillful in the decoding features needed to recognize words and recognize how they fit together in a sentence (i.e., possess language schema), they are in a better position to comprehend their assigned reading. Deficiency in any of the above schemas will result in a reading comprehension improvement, the existence of students' background knowledge or schema of a particular English text helps them to easily comprehend it. The schema theory is appropriate to be applied in a group of students that have the similar problems.

MTs Darul Falah is one of the Islamic junior high schools located in Bendiljati Kulon village, Tulungagung regency. It is classified as a suburban junior high school as it is located quite far away from the town. However, the teachers always try to pay attention to the teaching and learning quality, including English. As in most junior high schools in Indonesia, English in MTs Darul Falah Bendiljati Kulon belongs to compulsory subject. The material used in teaching and learning English in MTs Darul Falah Bendiljati Kulon is usually taken from a course book in which it cannot be separated with the existence of English text inside. Because of that, in order to master the material well, one of the requirements that the students should fulfill is the ability to comprehend the English texts well.

Comprehending English text belongs to one of the activities in reading section. Reading section activities in MTs Darul Falah Bendiljati Kulon starts by presenting reading material to the students. Then, the students are asked to answer pre reading questions. Next, the teacher asks them to read the text silently. Some students, then, are asked to read it aloud in the class. While one of the students are reading the text, the others are asks to listen and pay attention to the pronunciation. After that, the teacher corrected students' pronunciation. The teacher, then, asks the students to find difficult words from the text. In finding the meaning of difficult words, students used the dictionary. Students, then, are guided to understand the whole text by translating

each sentence in the text. After the whole text are translated, the students are guided to answer comprehension questions.

Those are some constraints in teaching and learning reading which happen in MTs Darul Falah Bendiljati Kulon, especially in VIIIth grade. Based on the the problems above, it is necessary to solve them through a strategy that have not been employed. This strategy will be tested whether or not it is effective towards the students' reading comprehension. The effort is aimed at improving students' reading comprehension ability by activating students' schemata or on the other words using Schema Activation Strategy.

Considering the importance of schema for the success of understanding and comprehending an English text as well as increasing students' score on reading comprehension, the researcher is interested to conduct research entitled "The Effectiveness of Schema Activation Strategy towards Students' Reading Comprehension of the VIIIth Graders of MTs Darul Falah Bendiljati Kulon". Through schema activation strategy, the researcher hopes that it could help the school as well as the teachers to improve students' reading comprehension.

B. Formulation of Research Questions

Based on the background discussed above, the researcher formulates the research questions as follows;

1. Is there any significant different score on students' reading comprehension between the 8th graders who are taught by using Schema Activation Strategy and the ones who are not taught by using Schema Activation Strategy?

C. Purpose of The Study

Based on the formulated research questions above, the purposes of this study are:

1. To know whether or not there is any significant different score on students' reading comprehension between the 8th graders who are taught by using Schema Activation Strategy and the ones who are not taught by using Schema Activation Strategy.

D. Scope and Limitation of The Study

The scope of this study is the process of teaching and learning reading comprehension of the students. This study is limited on testing whether or not Schema Activation Strategy is effective towards students' reading comprehension. It is also needed to discuss the steps in using the strategy to know its effectiveness. No other topics will be discussed on this thesis.

E. Formulation of Hypothesis

Hypotheses of this study are as follows:

1. Null Hypothesis (Ho)

There is no significant different score on reading comprehension between the 8th graders who are taught by using Schema Activation Strategy and who are not taught by using Schema Activation Strategy.

2. Alternative Hypothesis (Ha)

There is significant different score on reading comprehension between the 8th graders who are taught by using Schema Activation Strategy and who are not taught by using Schema Activation Strategy.

F. Significance of The Study

The researcher hopes that this study will give advantages for:

1. For the English teachers

The result of this research is expected to give the English teachers information and reference about the effectiveness of using Schema Activation Strategy in activating students' prior knowledge, so when the teacher is in difficulty to make the reading instruction easy, this strategy can be one of the alternative.

2. For the students

Hopefully, the practices of Schema Activation Strategy could help them to improve their comprehension to read fast and comprehensively so that students do not waste their time in examination confusing unnecessary information. More, this strategy is expected to motivate the students in the sense that reading is actually fun and interesting.

3. For the future researchers

This study can be used as the previous study of the next coming research. This study hopefully gives them knowledge and experience in the implementation of schema activation strategy to improve reading comprehension skill.

G. Definition of The Key Terms

Definition of key term is necessary to be given in order to avoid misunderstanding. Based on the title of the study, this research is focused on Schema Activation Strategy to improve students' reading comprehension of the VIIIth graders of MTs Darul Falah. In order to make the terms used in this research clear, some related terms are needed to be defined well.

1. Reading is information-processing: transforming print to speech, or print to meaning. (Coltheart in Snowling and Hulme 2005: 6)

2. Reading can be simply defined as making meaning from print and from visual information. (Moreillon 2007: 10)
3. Schema Activation Strategy is a strategy that suggests the readers to make a connections between text to themselves, text to text, and text to world. This strategy helps students activate their prior knowledge. (Keene and Zimmermann in Moreillon, 2007: 21)
4. Reading comprehension is the process of matching the reader idea found in the text with writer's message expressed in the text. (Sadoski,2004)

