

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

1.1 The Background of the Study

As it is stated in the curriculum 1984, the main objective of teaching English in SMA is to provide SMA graduates with a reading ability. Based on that reason it is known that reading ability is important. This idea is also supported by Diptoadi.

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." ¹

In fact, Lucida reports that the lecturers who teach English at the non English department for the first

¹ Veronica L. Diptoadi, Reading Strategies to Improve Comprehension in EFL., unpublished paper.

semester students find that most high school graduates are not able to comprehend the English text well.² In order to achieve the objective of teaching English at SMA (providing SMA graduates with reading ability) the students need guidance to be able to read well. According to Richard T. Vacca, there are varying degrees of guidance which are needed by the students, namely, pre-reading activity, whilst reading activity and post-reading activity.³ Furthermore, Vacca states that pre-reading, whilst reading and post-reading activity will improve comprehension as well as increase students' understanding of how information can be gotten through reading.⁴

Tagliber et.al. say that pre-reading activity is intended to activate knowledge structures or provide knowledge that the reader lacks.⁵ According to them

2 Lucia Nany Lucida, "Providing Comprehension Input in Teaching Reading Comprehension at SMA, Unpublished paper; 1988

3 Richard T. Vacca, Content Area Reading, Boston, Toronto, The United States of America ; Brown & Company Limited ; 1981 ; page 31

4 ibid

5 Leoni Tagliber et. al., "Effects of Prereading Activities on EFL Brazilian Collage Students" TESOL, September 1983, 3, page 456

three pre-reading techniques, that can be used during prerading activity in teaching reading comprehension, are pictorial context, vocabulary preteaching and prequestioning.⁶

Then, whilst reading activity according to Vacca is intended to bridge the gap between students and text book assignment so that students can learn how to read selectively, to distinguish important from less important ideas, percieve relationship and to respond actively to meaning.⁷

Furthermore, Linda Jensen says that post-reading activity is intended to check the mastery of the students in comprehending the passage. It can be done by giving true or false questions, multiple choise questions or short answer questions.⁸

From the short description above and from her experiance during her PPL and study in SMA, she would like to say that pre-reading activity is almost never

6 ibid

7 Vacca; "op.cit." page 15

8 Linda Jensen; Advance Reading Skills in a Comprehensive Course ; Teaching Second Language Reading for Academic Purposes ; United States of America ; addison-Wesely Publishing Company : 1986 ; page 118

used in reading class. the most typical activities used in reading class are whilst reading and post-reading activities. This statement is supported by Lucida in her thesis "Providing Comprehension Input in Teaching Reading Comprehension at SMA, 1988"⁹. She says that some English teachers still use traditional technique in teaching reading comprehension. They usually use the following steps:

1. the teacher reads the reading passage.
2. the teacher asks the students to read the passage aloud.
3. the teacher explains the difficult words or new vocabulary found in reading passage.
4. the teacher gives the students some questions concerning the reading passage.

The procedures in teaching reading comprehension stated by Lucida above can be categorized into two activities, namely, whilst reading activities [procedure 1 to 3] and post-reading activity [procedure 4]. Moreover, this kind of procedure had been done when the writer was in SMA and she also find that this procedure still be used up

⁹ Lucida; "Loc.cit."

to now in some high schools. Therefore, it also proves that the way most SMA teachers teach reading does not change time to time. They still use the traditional way and often ignore pre-reading activity.

On the other hand, Vacca states that pre-reading, whilst reading and post-reading activity will improve comprehension as well as increase students' understanding of how information can be gotten through reading.¹⁰ This statement proves that pre-reading activity should not be ignored, for it can influence the students' comprehension. To sharpen this idea, Mayer states that pre-reading activity can help the reader to activate his/her prior knowledge relevant to understanding the new text.¹¹ Then, Hansen says that pre-reading activity prepares the students for concepts that follow, makes the reading task easier and connects¹² the new content meaningfully to the prior knowledge.

¹⁰ Vacca, "loc.cit."

¹¹ R.E. Mayer "Aids to Text Comprehension" in Leoni Tagliber et. al. (eds.), "Effects of Prereading Activies on EFL Brazilian Collage Students" TESOL, September 1983, 3, page 456

¹² J. Hansen "An Inferential Comprehension Strategy for Use with Primary Grade Children" in Leoni Tagliber et. al., "Effects of Prereading Activies on EFL Brazilian Collage Students" TESOL, September 1983, 3, page 456

Since there is a gap between the fact that most SMTA teachers ignore pre-reading activity during the teaching of reading comprehension in a reading class and the suggestion that pre-reading activity should be used in teaching reading comprehension, so that the writer intends to conduct library study on teaching reading comprehension through pre-reading activity.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

It is beneficial to start the teaching of reading comprehension in reading class through pre-reading activity, but in fact some teachers still ignore pre-reading activity during the teaching of reading comprehension. Therefore, this study is planned to answer the following questions:

- 1 What are the types of pre-reading activities in teaching reading comprehension?
- 2 What are the advantages of starting the teaching of reading comprehension through pre-reading activity?
- 3 How to apply pre-reading activity in teaching reading comprehension?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

Derived directly from the above formulated problems, the objectives of this study are:

- 1 To suggest the types of pre-reading activities in teaching reading comprehension.
- 2 To conclude the advantages of pre-reading activity in teaching reading comprehension to help the SMTA teachers realizing the importance of pre-reading activity in teaching reading comprehension.
- 3 To present some application techniques of pre-reading activity in teaching reading comprehension.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

Since the teaching of reading comprehension through pre-reading activity is supposed to be as a means to facilitate the students to comprehend the passage easier, the information obtained from this study is expected to enable the SMA English teachers to have a clear picture of the importance of pre-reading

activity in teaching reading comprehension.

Based on this clear picture the teachers are expected to be able to improve the way they teach reading comprehension in guiding the students to comprehend the english text.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

This thesis is limited to a library study. This study only discusses pre-reading activities in guiding the SMA students to comprehend the passage in a reading class. In discussing the techniques of pre-reading activity the writer will discuss three pre-reading techniques, namely, pictorial context, vocabulary preteaching and prequestioning. Since this thesis concerns with the teaching of reading comprehension at the SMA, it is important to bear in mind that the students have known how to read in the sense that they have known how to decode written symbols. It is also supposed that the students have mastered the basic grammar and vocabulary needed, since they have got these things at the SMP. Remembering that this thesis is devoted to teach reading comprehension at SMA, so the examples

chosen will also suit to the ability of the SMA students. As guidance the writer will use the ones which are approved to be used at SMA by Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.

1.6 Research Methodology

This thesis is a library study. As the background, the writer reads and evaluates the existing curriculum of SMA 1984. Besides, she also reads several books on teaching English as a foreign language. Afterwards, she gives her own conclusion. The titles of the book can be seen in the bibliography section.

1.7 The Definitions of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation and/or misunderstanding, it is necessary to define the following key terms:

a. Prereading activity

Prereading activity, according to Vacca, is a reading stage, that is used in teaching reading comprehension, which is used to:

1. anticipate what will be read

2. make connections between what the students know already and what they will learn.
3. raise questions which answers will withstand the¹² text of verification through reading.

b Reading Comprehension

According to schema theory, reading is the interaction of the reader and the text.¹³ It means that, according to Dupuis, the reader must be able to comprehend the text by making appropriate inferences and finding in his/her memory of the appropriate connection to things s/he already knows.¹⁴ Therefore, in this thesis reading comprehension means the ability of the students to understand / comprehend given written text by making connection to things they have already known with the incoming information.

12 Vacca, "op.cit." page 91

13 Mary M. Dupuis and Askov Eunice, Content Area Reading Printice Hall, Inc., page 17

14 ibid

c. Prior knowledge

Prior knowledge, or more technically, schemata (the plural form of schema) according to Rumelhart is an abstract representation of generic concept for an object, event or situation.¹⁵

d. Advance Organizers

Advance organizer is an introductory material presented in advance of and at a higher level of generality, inclusiveness and abstraction than the learning task itself.¹⁶

¹⁵ D.E.Rumelhart , Schemata: The building Blocks Cognition in Rand J. Spiro (ed.) Theoretical Issues: Reading Comprehension ,Perspectives from Cognitive Psychology, linguistics, Artificial Intelligence, an Education bid, 1980, page 34

¹⁶ Veronica L.D. The Use of Advance Organize to Improve the Ability of Students in Comprehending Reading Material, unpubilshed paper, 1987,page1

d. Technique

According to Richard, a technique is implemantional that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, strategem used to accomplish an immediate objective.

17

17 Richard, Jack C. & Rodgers, Theodore S., Approach Methods in Lanquage Teaching.