

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays, English has an important role in Indonesia. Although English is the first foreign language in Indonesia, people would like to learn it because it is really needed in this globalization era. One aspect that supports Indonesian to learn English is that many books, references, news, and magazines are written in English.

As a result, English is taught beginning from an Elementary School or even in a Kindergarten. Besides that, to motivate pupils in studying English, many schools especially in big cities, also include English as one of the subjects that is going to be tested in the Mid - Semester Test and Final Test. It is not only in Junior and Senior High Schools but also in the Elementary School.

By learning English at school, pupils are expected to master the language skills well. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. From those four language skills, reading is the most important one. It is because from reading, pupils can get new knowledge and information about many things.

Realizing the importance of reading skill, the pupils should consequently have the ability to comprehend English texts well. However, as a matter of fact, many pupils 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 the passage well.

As the writer had observed during her “PPL” program and her teaching experience, in teaching reading comprehension, it was found out that the pupils of English as a foreign language had some difficulties in comprehending English text when reading them for the first time. Taglieber (1988:455-472) supported this idea; he states that these difficulties are usually caused by the pupils, who lack of vocabulary, have difficulty in using language cues to meaning, and lack of background knowledge.

Seeing this fact, the writer tries to suggest teachers to use pre-reading activities to improve pupils’ reading comprehension. Mayer in Taglieber’s article (1984:456) in Julia’s thesis (1998:3) states that pre-reading activity is a way to familiarize pupils quickly with the content of the material. By giving pre-reading activities, it is hoped to be an activity that can activate the pupils’ prior knowledge relevant to understanding the new text. Then, with pre-reading activities, the pupils will get the ideas of what lie ahead and they will be able to comprehend the text well.

According to Taglieber (1988:456) in Julia’s thesis (1998:3), there are three kinds of techniques in pre-reading activities that seem most practical for second language learners. They are vocabulary preteaching, pictorial context and prequestioning. In this study, the writer will combine the last technique with the two previous techniques. So there will be two techniques that are going to be compared and used in this study:

(1) Vocabulary preteaching and prequestioning technique

(2) Pictorial context and prequestioning technique

Based on the statements above, the writer would like to know which one of the two techniques has a better effect on pupils' reading comprehension achievement, with the hope that the result will give some contributions to the English teaching learning especially in the teaching of reading.

1.2 Research Questions

In this study, the writer wants to know whether the vocabulary preteaching and prequestioning technique have more determinant effects than the pictorial context and prequestioning technique. From this statement, the question to be examined in this study is:

“Do the vocabulary preteaching and prequestioning technique have a better effect than the pictorial context and prequestioning technique on pupils' reading comprehension achievement of the sixth grade pupils of the Elementary School?”

1.3 Research Objectives

In accordance with the background of the study, the objective of this study is to find out which one of the two teaching techniques has greater determinant effects on pupils' reading comprehension achievements of the sixth grade of the Elementary School.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

There is one theory underlying this study. It is the theory of schemata. Barnett (1989:42) states that schemata (the plural form of schema) are knowledge that already stored in memory. It also supported by Carrell and Eisterhold (1983:556-557) who state that comprehending a text is an interactive process between the readers' background knowledge and the text. So, by giving vocabulary preteaching and prequestioning technique and pictorial context and prequestioning technique, it will help the pupils to activate their prior schemata which are related to the reading passage given.

1.5 Hypotheses

In this study, the writer does not find any statements from the experts who state that vocabulary preteaching and prequestioning is better than pictorial context and prequestioning and vice versa. So in this study, the writer used '*The Null Hypothesis*'.

The Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the reading achievement of pupils who get the vocabulary preteaching and prequestioning technique and those who get the pictorial context and prequestioning technique.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are oriented on how far the pre-reading activities can affect pupils' reading comprehension achievement and found out which one

of the two teaching techniques used as the techniques in pre-reading activity (vocabulary preteaching and prequestioning technique and pictorial context and prequestioning technique) has greater determinant effects on pupils' reading comprehension achievements of the sixth grade of the Elementary School.

Furthermore, from a theoretical point of view the result of this study provided a clear description about the use of vocabulary preteaching, pictorial context, and prequestioning. Hopefully, from practical point of view this study gave some help for teachers in choosing a suitable technique in teaching reading comprehension. It is also hoped that this study can be a useful guidance to the teaching and learning of reading comprehension, so that pupils will be able to comprehend the passage better, easier, and faster.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of The Study

In this study, the writer conducted the two techniques in prereading activities. They are vocabulary preteaching and prequestioning technique and pictorial context and prequestioning technique which are given before whilst activities.

Besides that, the writer realized how broad the topic would be, so she limited the subjects, the pictures and the materials. The subjects of this study were the sixth grade pupils of St. Carolus Elementary School and the pictures used in this study are situational pictures. For the materials, the writer used reading passages, which are in simple present tense, present continuous tense, future tense

or simple past tense. In this study, there were seven reading passages: six reading passages for the treatments and one reading passage for the post-test.

1.8 Assumption

This study was carried out under the following assumptions:

1. The pupils' report scores and the post-test represent their reading comprehension achievement.
2. The subjects of this study were considered having the same age and the same level of competence.
3. The treatments of this study were considered doing at the same time.
4. The situations of the pilot class and the experimental classes were considered the same.
5. The material for the treatments and the material for the post-test were considered having the same level of difficulties.

1.9 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.

1.9.1 Prior Knowledge or schemata

Anderson & Pearson (1984:255) in Barnett (1989:42) states that schemata (the plural form of schema) are knowledge that already stored in memory.

1.9.2 Pre-reading activities

According to Barnett (1989:114), Pre-reading activities are activities that involve pupils in reading a particular text, elicit or provide appropriate background knowledge, and activate necessary schemata.

1.9.3 Vocabulary Preteaching

Nuttal (1983:85) states that vocabulary preteaching is a technique of giving vocabulary lists that are given before the pupils read the reading passage. It is to help pupils to recognize the words, which carry the ideas of the passage.

1.9.4 Pictorial Context

Finocchiaro (1973:164) in Gunawan's thesis (2004:21) states that pictorial context is a picture of situation in which persons are "doing something" with objects and in which the relationship of objects and/or people can be seen.

1.9.5 Situational Pictures

Finocchiaro (1974:100-102) states that situational pictures are pictures of situation in which persons are doing something with objects and in which the relationship of objects or people can be seen.

1.9.6 Prequestioning

Prequestioning here is related with the technique of questioning. The questions, which are related to the reading passage, are given

before the pupils read the reading passage. As Zaher (1987:36) states, asking questions before reading can help pupils to acquire a reading schema and to facilitate dynamic interaction between the reader and the printed material.

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter I, the introduction, is about the background of the study, research questions, research objectives, theoretical framework, hypotheses, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, assumption, and definition of the key terms.

Chapter II deals with the review of related literature, which includes the concept of reading comprehension, schema theory, pre-reading activities, the application of prereading activities in reading comprehension, and review of the related studies.

Chapter III presents the methodology of research, this covers methodology research design, population and sample, the treatments, research instrument, procedure of collecting data, and procedure of analyzing the data.

Chapter IV describes the data analysis and findings. It includes the result of the data analysis and the interpretation of the findings.

Chapter V concludes this study. It gives some suggestions concerning the result of the study.