

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language such as English has four language skills : listening, speaking, reading and writing – and four elements: speech sounds, vocabulary, structure and cultural background. An acquirer of language should master the four language skills and the four language components to make him / her really able to communicate in the language. One of the four skills which plays a very important role in increasing the knowledge of language is reading, because through reading the readers can explore the store of all knowledge.

The first foreign language which all SMA students in Indonesia should learn is English. They have to master the four English language components and skills. However, many Indonesian students still find it difficult to comprehend English reading passages. One of the factors that usually causes this difficulty is their vocabulary mastery which is very limited. They cannot understand the reading passages because they find many difficult words the meaning of which is unfamiliar to them. As Paulson and Bruder (1976:168) say:

“The one thing that most interferes with our students’ reading is poor vocabulary and we have recently come to accept the fact that our students have been right all these years when they complained about not knowing and not being taught enough words”

Reading is sometimes referred to as a passive skill, but if one examines what is going on in the reader’s mind while he is reading, he is actually far from

being passive. Reading consists of grasping meaning in the language through its written representation. When someone is reading, his eyes - a vehicle of transmission - are busy catching the words on the paper and his brain starts interpreting what the words are communicating.

Truly speaking, reading functions are not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity but also as a means of extending one's knowledge. Because of the manifold functions of reading, people cannot do without it. In the process of reading, however, people are too often confused after reading a few introductory paragraphs. They are unable to predict what the subsequent paragraphs will deal with. If this is the case, there must be something missing in their understanding the introduction.

Many writers believe that in learning English as a foreign or second language the learners should, first of all, master the sound system, the basic structural patterns and a limited number of vocabulary items of the target language. Many of the senior high school graduates, however, are still unable to be good language learners due to the lack of vocabulary mastery. For this reason, vocabulary enrichment needs to be provided at all levels of English learning where the ultimate goal is the reading skill.

In spite of the fact that there is a common belief that while reading readers who do not know the exact meaning of a lexical item, may get the meaning of the word by guessing intelligently through the context and by employing their own background knowledge and all possible cues they can get in the surrounding of the word. In this way, it seems that the knowledge of vocabulary items is

subordinated to the mastery of the reading skill. This may cause the students to be unwilling to learn vocabulary thoroughly and intensively.

Students' vocabulary, however, determines and contributes to their level of comprehension. They can not read sentences or passages with good understanding if the vocabulary items found in the sentences or passages are beyond their comprehension. They will fail to grasp the message of what they are reading. Vocabularies construct sentences and sentences construct passages. Although structural patterns also determine how sentences are to be interpreted, the meaning of words still plays an important role in determining the meaning of sentences and passages.

The ability to read with full understanding is an essential skill in modern society. Reading plays an important role in life since it makes people have contact with the enormous amount of experiences that has become essential to an understanding of our complex civilization. Life in modern society demands that people know how to read. The tremendous amount of printed materials surrounding them requires considerable reading ability. There are advertisements, forms to fill out, price tags on commodities, bottle labels, calendars, tickets, schedules and countless other things that demand reading ability. There is a deluge of books, newspapers, magazines, brochures and pamphlets. Those who have not learned to sift and interpret ideas from these written words are shut off from a very large part of the exciting modern world. It means that in fact there is an ample opportunity for them to read any kinds of written reading materials but they seem not to do that activity. Reading promotes the development of a rich and

stable personality. It is an important factor to be successful in life, therefore, reading has a very important role in achieving the aims of education.

The awareness of the importance of reading with understanding in the native language has led to the awareness of the importance of reading with understanding in widely used foreign language, i.e English. Several years ago students started studying English when they got to the junior high school. Now, elementary school students are studying English. This is justifiable to prepare students to enter the globalization era.

For that purpose, one of teachers' responsibilities is to help their students to read. It means that an English teacher has to assure students' motivation, introduce difficult vocabulary, set purpose for the reading and give clarity to a number of concepts within the clauses and sentences which are parts of the message of the texts.

According to the current curriculum for senior high school, the objectives of teaching reading comprehension is supposed to enable the students to read English texts in narrative, descriptive and dialogue forms, to get special kinds of information in leaflets, brochures or private letters. It is also stated in the curriculum that vocabulary, structures and theme of the reading text should be taught during the school year. There are some themes, which the curriculum includes to be taught to Indonesian students. They are technology, transportation, mass media, tourism, culture, sports, and world geography. The students of senior high school are supposed to master so many levels of basic words. The teachers are allowed to use or teach other vocabularies which are considered necessary to

construct the natural context of the material being taught. In relation with the present study, the topics of reading materials are going to be developed by using audio visual, namely through the use of computer software.

In the process of teaching reading, evaluation plays an important role. It is used to assess the achievement level of the students during the process of their learning the reading materials. Evaluation may range from an observational judgment about the students' understanding of what is being taught to a battery of test questions to determine whether the students can advance to the next grade or not. Teachers may give written tests or quizzes, or collect information about the students' performance. Evaluation may also involve classroom practice, and homework. By observing how students undertake practice activities, teachers can learn a great deal about students' progress and sources of problems.

The same thing is true in a reading comprehension evaluation. A more reliable information about students' reading ability may be taken from the result of the students' reading test. The grading of the test result can be used to make the decision whether the students are good or poor readers. This can be used to make a well-planned and more systematic report about students' ability in reading comprehension.

Successful language instruction must be carefully planned and implemented by qualified teachers. Probably the most widely cited curriculum researcher whose contributions to curriculum policy should be acknowledged. In other words, the instructional materials should be developed according to the

current curriculum. Therefore, the instructional materials should be ideally designed by qualified instructional material designer.

The foreign language instruction in Indonesia has been conducted for more than forty years. There is a general agreement that parents are anxious to have their children acquire some foreign language skills. Most parents who were interviewed in the national survey of English instruction in junior and senior high school stated that they wanted their children to be able to speak English.

In fact the concept of adapting instruction to the characteristics of the learners is not new. The practice of teaching second and foreign languages to elementary school children is not new in some countries. It is only in recent times, though, that English has been taught in some private courses in Indonesia. There must be a number of reasons advanced for the implementation of English instruction in senior high schools. It seems that the English program is implemented in local school system with little attention to instructional objectives.

The students in senior high school settings usually learn by doing. This means that if English is taught, the students need to be active rather than passive. They need to be engaged in learning activities of which English is a part; they need to be working on meaningful tasks and use the language to accomplish those tasks.

It should be noted that senior high school students in Indonesia have different socioeconomic backgrounds. Therefore, if they want to achieve their reading comprehension skills according to their own pace, they must be provided with various topics in their reading materials. Since the different background of

the students will bring different treatment in providing the topics of reading instructional materials. Besides, the students from big cities will have different facilities from those of rural schools.

The vast majority of students of English are not found in native speaking countries such as England and the United States but spread out in countries all over the globe. Nevertheless, the majority of ESL/EFL methods and approaches are developed in native-speaking settings, especially in the U.S and much literature in the field is thus oriented toward teaching students in the ESL environment. However, anyone who has taught both ESL and EFL knows there are cultural logistical circumstances which influence the students' understanding of the reading materials provided for them. Since the reading materials are designed with certain cultural background, therefore, they cannot be applied well for the students who have different cultural backgrounds from that the reading materials are designed.

Learning is a systematic process where each component relates to each other for the learners' success. The core of learning is the students' learning. This means that the students need to interact with learning sources which are used to achieve the intended objective.

There are two classifications of learning sources; (1) the really designed learning sources, such as textbooks, modules, computer-assisted instructional materials, slides, films, videos, and so on and (2) not specifically designed instructional materials , which includes markets, shops, museums, malls, zoos, parks, etc. Learning through the use of textbooks has some weaknesses; they are

(1) the learning does not start with something interesting which enables to arouse the learners' interest so that they are less motivated to learn, (2) the learning does not inform the specific instructional objectives so that the learners do not know the instructional objectives they want to achieve, (3) the learning is not completed with feedback of the explanation of the answers for the students, so they do not know whether their answers are true or false.

One of the individualized teaching-learning strategies is computer-assisted language learning. As it is stated by Tsai and Pohl (1982:65) "The Computer-Assisted Learning can be designed with the linear method or branching". This idea implies that the direct strengthening of the right answer is a good strategy for learning. In linear program, the learners step forward through instructional materials. Based on this brief illustration, there is a need to design software of computer-assisted language learning.

As long as students' competency is concerned, computers have apparently provided facilities by which students can improve their language skills. When looking at the history of Computers-Assisted Language Learning (Swain, Brooks and Tocalli-Beller) in Agus Dwi P. unpublished paper (2006:5), "The role of computers has shifted from merely as a tutor to a tool". As a tutor, computers were utilized to provide language lessons. Computers were used to provide tutorials, drills, simulations, tests, and games. As a tool; however, computers are now used to assist learners to work on learning the language, to find authentic learning resources, and to communicate with other language learners or native speakers. The computers' role is to provide alternative contexts for social

interaction; to facilitate access to existing discourse communities and to the creation of new ones.

We need teaching materials to save learners from our deficiencies as teachers to make sure, as far as possible, that the syllabus is properly covered, and that exercises are well thought out. This way of thinking might lead, at one extreme, to the idea that the best teachers would neither want nor need published materials. At the other extreme we would have teacher proof materials that no teachers, however deficient, would be able to teach badly with the good teaching materials that can replace the role of teachers in classroom. Without being presented by teachers, the students can use those teaching materials by themselves.

Technology is part of our lives. The economic technological competition that characterizes the world forces in its uses in educational contexts of all sorts. The supposed failure of conventional teaching methods to achieve better results in students' performance has focused educational specialist' attention on new, more modern methods to improve teaching and to bridge the gap between the school culture and the real world. Video and computers have become useful tools in this modern teaching and learning process, and both belong to the world our students live in.

When it is applied in the field of language, computer-based learning is also well known as computer-assisted language learning or known as CALL for short. According to Dhaif (1989), the benefits obtained from this program among others are (1) CALL gives something new for students, CALL teaches language with the

different language learning techniques and are more challenging, and provides language through the use of game and problem solving as well. Thus, the boring language patterns can even be interesting (2) CALL can function as sources of self language learning which are adaptable with the grade of students' level. In addition, CALL also gives direct feedback to identify students' mistakes and self-correction (3) besides the function of language learning, CALL enables students to know better about computers that become the most important technology for present modern society.

Based on the above fact, it is necessary to develop software of Computer-Assisted Language Learning for teaching reading comprehension for the students of Senior High Schools. The materials designed by the use of this software are reading instructional materials taken from the SMA textbooks.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study elaborated above, the writer formulates the main problems SMA Gloria encounter as follows:

- 1.2.1 SMA Gloria students still find it difficult to comprehend the English texts their teachers give.
- 1.2.2 The English learning sources which are available in SMA Gloria are mostly in the form of text books and these are not designed to support the individual learning. However, SMA Gloria students need to be provided with self-learning materials so that they are able to learn English according to their own pace.

1.2.3 SMA Gloria students need to have another English learning source, so that they will not feel bored with the monotonous learning material.

1.2.4 SMA Gloria students will feel more interested in learning English using a learning medium such as computer, so that they can make use of technology in their learning process.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the problems formulated in the above statements, the objective of this study is mainly to produce a software of computer assisted learning as an alternative learning source which can be used to solve the problems of unavailability of self-learning sources, which can enhance students' motivation in learning English through the use of technology.

1.4 Assumption and Limitation of Development

The development of this reading instructional materials through the use of software is based on the following assumptions:

1. the students need facilities in learning reading materials. Therefore, the reading materials which can be designed various teaching learning activities, are required.
2. the design of this reading instructional material is appropriate to fulfill the students' need.
3. the development of this software is designed for self-learning as it does not involve the direct interaction between teacher and students.

4. the subjects who answered the questionnaires really know the purpose of the distributed questionnaires.
5. the teaching-learning process by means of software is relatively effective and efficient.

Therefore, based on the above assumptions, the development has some limitations as follows:

1. This development is only focused on the reading instructional materials for the second year of SMA students covering the topics of reading found in English text books for second year students of SMA.
2. The product of software is designed under the existing condition of SMA students.
3. The try-out of the software is conducted in the same SMA but with different students.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This current study is conducted to prove whether these proposed instructional reading materials can really help the students to improve their reading ability. By conducting this study, it is expected that this proposed strategy of developing instructional reading materials really arouse the learners' interest to improve their reading ability and their understanding of the texts they read. In addition, through the use of this teaching aid that is CD computer, the learners can choose their own topics to read in line with their interest. Further, this model of developing instructional reading materials can be one of the alternatives to solve

the learners' problems in reading English texts and find out the meaning of unfamiliar words they come across in the texts they are reading. Further, it is expected that by conducting this reading materials, the result of this research can contribute to the government in accelerating the students' English proficiency since this kind of proficiency plays an important role in national building especially in the field of education. Thus, the mastery of English is absolutely required to develop the nation.

1.6 Specifications of the Product

The computer software as the designed product has some specifications. Firstly, this software functions as a medium to provide another alternative teaching aid that enables the SMA students to use without being fully guided by their English teachers. Secondly, the design used in developing this teaching software consisting of three designs. They are (1) functional design, (2) physical design, (3) logical design. Each of these designs is further explained in the following paragraphs.

In terms of functional design, the writer selects tutorial design. In this design, software plays its role as a good tutor. According to Burke (1982) "Tutorial design has its best function presenting the beginning materials, descriptive-narrative materials and question-answer techniques as well". Tutorial is given by providing individual drills based on the tutorial procedure.

Dealing with the physical design, this teaching software uses combination design. So that this software is able to make the students do their tasks

individually. Through this procedure, the students get the experience of how to do individual study that is they can learn the provided materials based on their own pace and capability.

Logical design means that this software provides some exercises in which the students have been given some examples of how to answer the questions. It means that the form of questions is more or less the same as that of in exercises.

Further, the specification of this product is that it has some components enabling the students to learn the reading materials more easily, because it includes materials arousing the student's interest, feedback of student's answer, content of discussion, exercises, and explanation.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid any different perception of some important terms which are used in this study, the writer would like to give explanation about the terms used before she goes on to further discussion. The technical terms used in this study are mentioned in the following.

1.7.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is grasping the meaning of the reading passages, and referring to finding the subject matter, the main idea, and the major detail, and to draw the conclusion of a given reading passage.

1.7.2 Computer-Based Teaching

A teaching process directly involving a computer in the presentation of the instructional materials in an interactive mode to provide and control the individualized learning environment for each individual student (Joiner; 1982:29)

1.7.3 Computer-Assisted Language Teaching

Computer-assisted learning software is the instructional material which is used in teaching with the aid of computer. A teaching process directly involving a computer in the presentation of the instructional materials in an interactive mode to provide and control the individualized learning environment for each individual student (Hick and Hyde; in Joiner; 1982:29).

1.8 Organization of Thesis Writing

This thesis consists of two separated main parts. The first part is about the analysis process of material development and the second one is the development of the product in the form of CD containing software of computer-assisted reading materials. The detailed organization of this thesis is as follows. Chapter I describes (1) the background of the problem, (2) problem formulation, (3) objective of material development, (4) specification of expected product, (5) the importance of reading material development, (6) assumption and limitation of material development, (7) operational definition of key terms, and (8) organization of the thesis.

Chapter II discusses reviews of related literature in succession. This chapter presents (1) material development principles, organization of the course material development, (2) reading comprehension process, (3) the meaning of reading comprehension, (4) reading strategy, (5) reading process, (6) the importance of reading comprehension, (7) the use of media in language learning, (8) computer-based learning and (9) review of previous study.

Chapter III is method of developing software. In this chapter, the writer discusses (1) procedure of designing the product, (2) determining English-instructional materials to be developed, (3) formulating instructional objectives, (4) administering test item, (5) designing software for learning, (6) developing flow chart, (7) producing the designed software, (8) development steps of producing the software, (9) research subject, (10) research data, (11) instrument and technique of data collection, and (12) data analysis procedure.

Chapter IV is a report and the result of developing the designed product. This describes a report on conducting the instructional development and need assessment and the real form of designed instructional materials with the aid of software. Chapter V is conclusion and suggestion about the product which has been revised and the suggestions for using this software.