CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1   Background of the Study

In recent years, scholars and scientist are required to be able to speak and read in, at least, a foreign language, mainly English. It has been considered as one of the international languages for years, and which is the most widely used as a medium of communication in science. It is inevitable that many scientific textbooks and advanced journals of various fields of study are composed in the consideration of global usage, thus English has a great role in them. This, according to McCrum, Cran, and Mac Neil, is supported by the fact that half of the world's technical and scientific periodicals are in English and it is the medium for eighteen per cent of the information stored in the world's computers. Three quarters of the world's mail, telexes, and cables are in English. They also added that English at the end of twentieth century is more widely scattered, more widely spoken and written that any other language has ever been. It has become the language of the planet, the truly global language. (Cited in Tesol Quarterly: Sept., 1989.)

The Indonesian community does not use English in its daily communication. It, nevertheless, expects competence in the language on those rare occasions when English is called for. However, the need for English competence is strongly expressed by communities pursuing higher

education, as well as other Indonesians. While Indonesian, the native language, is the medium of instruction in universities throughout the country, higher education nevertheless makes wide use of literature written in English and expects university students to be sufficiently competent in English to plow through volumes of assigned reading and, if necessary, present papers in English. Yet, the development of English adoption by the rest of Indonesian societies is often hindered by the lack of urgency felt for the communicative competence in that language, which in turn obstructs the availability of such competence when the occasion calls for it.

By looking at the need of the English competence, therefore, the Department of Education and Culture of Indonesia includes English as a foreign language in its 1994 curriculum for high school. Accordingly, there are four aspects of language skills which are included in the curriculum: listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The purpose of studying English is to make the students to be able to listen, speak, read, and write a simple composition by using advance patterns as well as vocabularies. Those four skills are closely related one to others in such a distinctive way (Dawson, et. al., 1963).

The ability to read for comprehension is the most important component of 'knowing' a second language. In the sense that it is the major means of learning more about the language and its people, reading is basic to the improvement of other language skills and the expansion of knowledge (Chastain, 1977).

Relating to the schema theory, reading is a process by which readers combine their own background knowledge (termed as schemata) with the information in a text to comprehend that text. Thus readers develop a coherent interpretation of text through the interactive process of "combining textual information with the information a reader brings to a text" (Widdowson cited in Carrel and Eskey, 1988).

The reading process, therefore, involves identification of genre, formal structure and topic, all of which activate schemata and allow readers to comprehend the text. This schemata activation could be mediated by pre-reading activities in which helping students/readers build background knowledge on the topic prior to reading (Carrell, 1988). Such schemata activation through pre-reading activities become more important to the ESL—English Second Language—students/readers since schema differences stand between ESL readers and the reading, both the culture and the linguistic structure.

Accordingly, reading pre-activities, as suggested by Brown (1987), may encourage and activate schemata or knowledge already stored in memory. Students can bring the best of their knowledge and skills to a text when they have been given a chance to anticipate the passage.

Knowing that schema theory provides a beneficial tool—pre-reading activity—for a better comprehension of reading, teachers hold a significant responsibility in its application. Unfortunately, some are still using the straight-forward method of reading instead of pre-reading

activities where their textbook (i.e., junior high school) already provides a set of pre-questions prior to the reading.

Given such phenomenon, the writer is encouraged to conduct an experimental study on the effect of pre-reading activities on the reading comprehension.

I.2 Statement of the Problem

In this study, the writer has formulated a problem to be discussed:

- Is there any difference of the use of pre-reading activity in reading comprehension of junior high school students?

There are two possible hypotheses that the writer has formulated as the consequence of such pre-reading activities.

H0: There is no difference of the use of pre-reading activity in reading comprehension.

H1: There is a difference of the use of pre-reading activity in reading comprehension.

I.3 The Purpose of the Study

Regarding the statement of the problem, the writer would like to examine the influence of pre-reading activities on reading comprehension. Furthermore, the writer wants to test the proposed hypotheses.

I.4 Significance of the Study

Hopefully, the findings of this study may give a significant contribution to whom it may concern, especially for language teachers and students. For the teachers, it may give new insights on the use of pre-reading activities in the reading comprehension, therefore, it may improve students' comprehension of reading passages. For the students, it may motivate them to be more responsive to any kinds of pre-activities, since they have already known the positive impact on their reading comprehension.

I.5 Theoretical Framework

A theory is a set of assumptions or principles designed to explain phenomena. Research findings have resulted in many theories related to the reading process, but as Richard Smith and others have pointed out, no current theory adequately explains "all of the mysteries of reading" (cited in Burns, Roe and Ross, 1984). Therefore, in conjunction with the object of this study, reading comprehension related to reading pre-activity, the writer bases his study on schemata theory of reading, which is related to pre-reading activities.

Referring to the schemata theory, the act of reading is the process of discovering meaning in written language. Meaning comes from an interaction of the reader's experiential background and the reader's language competence towards the written of an author. It is a complex

process that begins with decoding written language and is influenced by the reader's language and experience, attitude and motivation, sensory perception, and comprehension abilities (Michaelis, Grossman, and Scott, 1975).

Readers will understand what they read because they are able to take the stimulus beyond its graphic representation and assign it membership to an appropriate group of concepts already stored in their memories. Skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world (Clarke and Silberstein cited in Brown, 1987).

In short, the schema theory describes the reading process by which readers combine their own background knowledge with the information in a text to comprehend that text. Thus to anticipate what would be read, to make connection between what the students had already known and what they would learn, and to stimulate the answer of questions which will stand with the text, Brown (1987) in *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* suggests the use of varying degrees of guidance which are needed by the students, namely pre-reading activities.

Tuchloor (cited in Brown, 1987) supports this idea by saying that the basic idea underlying most pre-reading is that the student will process a text more meaningfully if they are prepared for the content and the structure of a given text by having activated the relevant aspects of their background knowledge. Brown (1987) adds that pre-reading activities is

intended to activate knowledge structure or provide knowledge that the reader lacks.

Whereas, the purpose of this study is to find out the influence of pre-activities on reading comprehension, the writer considers that the theories described above sufficiently underlie this study.

I.6   Research Design

This study is a quantitative one, with two hypotheses need to be tested. The basic idea is to compare two groups of respondents with different treatments, so that the writer is able to discover the objective of this study. For this reason, the writer divided the chosen respondents into two groups equally. The pre-reading group and the non pre-reading group.

The pre-reading group is treated with a set of pre-reading activities prior to a reading task. This treatment was given for less than fifteen minutes. In contrast, the non pre-reading group did not have the luxury of such treatment. All respondents have 30 minutes to do the given task in each session, ten minutes to read the passage and twenty minutes to answer the reading questions. In order to have a better validity of the results, the writer repeated this procedure up to three times or sessions. As a result, the writer has three pairs of data, each pair contains two versions of data—the pre-reading data and the non pre-reading data.

I.7   Method of the Study

In this study, there are two hypotheses that need to be tested or proved. In order to gain the expected result, the writer applies the descriptive-quantitative method, with statistical analysis of the data.

I.7.1   Location

The observation of this study took place in SMP Negeri 16 Surabaya focusing on the second-year students, all of whom speak Indonesian as the dominant or first language and learn English as the second or foreign language. SMP Negeri 16 Surabaya requires its students to be able to speak, read, and write in English by allocating 225 minutes per week for English subject to every class. Located in a suburb area of Surabaya, SMP Negeri 16 Surabaya has the majority of its students coming from middle to lower class of society. Such condition fit the writer's purposive sampling.

I.7.2   Population and Sampling

The population of this study is the students of SMP Negeri 16 Surabaya. Using the purposive sampling, the writer took two second-year classes with the same number of students, 43 students. Consequently, 36 students are chosen as the respondents of this study. They are divided equally into two groups, pre-reading group and non pre-reading group.

The respondents participating in this study are selected through several qualifications. The qualifications of the respondents are:

1. Students who are speak Indonesian as the dominant or first language and learn English as the second or foreign language.

2. Students in the second-year class and who were taught by the same English teacher as they were in the first year.

3. Students who did not take English courses, at least one year before the research was done.

4. Students with the annual school grade for English subject that ranges between 6 and 7.

I.7.3 Scope and Limitation

The result of this study may open to broadening possible questions that need to be considered and discussed. Therefore, the writer puts several limitations to reach the goal of this study.

The writer only deals with the respondents' scores on the defined reading tests as the measurements of the respondents' comprehension of defined reading passages, ignoring any other measurements of reading comprehension.

The writer also considers that the defined set of pre-reading activities to be to only stimulus associated to the scores of the reading tests.

Since this study is to compare two groups, pre-reading and non pre-reading, the data are assumed as group, not individual, and they are independent to each other.

In this study, the writer tries to describe and analyze the data collection in the standard of statistic procedures, paired t-test analysis.

I.7.4 Technique of Data Collection

In this study, two groups were assigned as the data collection sources, the pre-reading and non pre-reading groups. Three tasks of reading tests were given to both groups. All of them were carried out in written. The enclosed reading passages were taken from three different sources. (See appendix, p.53 – 57.)

In the process of collecting the data from the respondents, the writer used direct (explicit) approach collectively. The three tasks of reading tests were conducted in three different sessions. The time limit imposed to the respondents on each task was ten minutes for silent reading the passage and twenty minutes for answering the questions. Dictionary-assistance was prohibited in doing the task.

Briefly the data collection steps in this study were set up as follows:

1. Giving the task to the respondents: three reading passages.

2. Asking the respondents to do the reading questions enclosed in the given instruction.

I.7.5   Technique of Data Analysis

The findings of the data collection fall into two versions of data, the pre-reading data and the non pre-reading data, for each session. Thus, there are three pairs of data collected from three sessions. The analysis of the three pairs of data were done independently, but the technique used were the same.

In interpreting the result and to test the hypotheses proposed in this study, the writer used the Paired t-test (Bhattacharyya and Johnson, 1977), which is useful to compare two different groups of data of two treatments. Related to this, the writer took the application of computer software of statistical analysis, SPSS 10.0 for Windows.

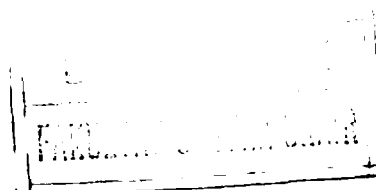To sum up, the procedure of the data analysis are:

1. Classifying the data.

2. Computing the data with statistical analysis, paired t-test.

3. Testing the proposed hypotheses.

4. Interpreting the results of the analysis, in a descriptive way.

I.7.6 Definition of Key Terms

~ <u>Schemata</u>: mental stores, knowledge already stored in memory, function in the process of interpreting new information.

~ <u>Stimulation</u>: action of arousing, exciting, and quickening thought or feeling.

~ <u>Stimulus</u>: tools or media of stimulation.

~ <u>Pre-reading group</u>: a group of respondents receiving an intended treatment, a set of pre-reading activities.

~ <u>Non pre-reading group</u>: a group of respondents receiving no pre-reading activity.

I.8 Organization of the Paper

This study is presented into four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction. It is divided into eight subchapters: background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study. Significance of the study, theoretical framework, research design, method of the study, and the organization of the paper itself. The second chapter is literature review. Here, the writer reviews in more detail the theories used and the objects related to this study. The third chapter is presentation and analysis of the data. The last or fourth chapter is conclusion, where the writer concludes the results of this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW