

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

For some people, understanding reading materials could be difficult at a time. Nevertheless, people in their daily life are always related to reading activities. For the reason of gaining information, laymen read newspapers or magazines ; in order to add new knowledge of certain topics, writers read useful materials ; and students read books to get information and knowledge needed for their study. Related to this point of view, reading becomes an essential point that takes an important role in people's life.

In reading, everyone needs to understand or comprehend the text they read. There are some points that should be noted to comprehend or to understand a reading text. One of the most important points to understand a reading text is to *get the main idea uncovered*. It is about knowing what the text is actually about. The next point which is necessary to be noted is *the facts* that can be figured out – explicitly or implicitly. By this, readers are expected to absorb the information that the writer tried to share. Beside those two main points, the use of *referent* and *inference* also takes control in comprehending a reading text. In giving information, writers usually use referent and inference to make the communication with the readers flows

easily. The last point to be noted is the *knowledge of vocabulary*. How can people understand well if they only know little vocabulary? That is why readers need to know a good amount of vocabulary in order to comprehend a reading text well.

As it is said before, understanding reading materials could be difficult at a time, including to students. Many factors affect students' difficulties in comprehending a text: perhaps they don't know how to trace the main idea of the text, or they can not find any facts from the text, or they do not understand the referent and inference or even perhaps they do not understand the meaning of some words used in the text. Yet, from those difficulties, there is one major point which is very essential in comprehending a reading text; it is about the concept of reading itself.

McNeil stated that students' concepts of reading may determine whether they comprehend the text or not. A major difference between good and poor comprehension is the extent to which the reader is aware of the need to make sense of the text. Better readers understand that stories and other forms of writing should make sense and that reading instruction is a means to enhance their comprehension (McNeil, 1992: 21).

Most students do not know that reading is a communication process and that it can be used to fulfil their needs. By knowing that reading is actually a communication process, students should automatically know that

the essential point in reading is to make sense of the reading text itself. Making sense of the reading text may direct them to the concept of schemata which was firstly introduced by Bartlett in 1932.

Bartlett's concept of schemata explains how the information carried in stories is rearranged in the memories of readers or listeners to fit in with their expectations (Swales, 1990 : 83). In other words, schemata are said to be an organised background knowledge which can be activated in certain conditions. According to McNeil, schemata are the reader's concepts, beliefs, expectations, processes – virtually everything from past experiences that are used in making sense of things and actions. Mostly, schemata theory is said to be related to the reading comprehension, in this case to students' reading comprehension. As one tries to comprehend a text, schema theory says that he or she at the same time activates his or her schemata to fit in with the situated conditions. Activating schemata means activating the background knowledge and rearranging the stored memories according to the situation given.

Every student needs lots of reading in order to gain knowledge related to his or her daily activities at school. By doing lots of reading, students can prevent themselves from being lack of information, including the latest one. The reading materials themselves should not be at the same topic every time they read. If they aim to provide themselves with more



knowledge, they should read a wide variety of topics. It is in accordance to their lessons which are also various. Every lesson they have means new things to read or more texts to read.

Nowadays, students do not only read books or texts in their own language. They also need to – or even have to – read books written in another language. One of the languages which is commonly used in books is English. As we know that English is the international language; that is why, many writers write their books in English so that they can be used in many countries. In fact, it has been estimated that although there are only 325 millions of the world's 4,7 billion population who speak English natively, for as many as 1,4 billion additional people, English is an official second language (Crystal, 1985). This number keeps increasing as the role of English language is getting more important in communicating ideas among countries.

In Indonesia, reading in English is a must for students since many textbooks and references use English. Based on the education system, students in junior high school have started reading English texts. This continues until the next higher education – senior high school and university – with increasing number of topics to read.

Previous researches have pointed out that schemata affect general readers in reading in their first language. Yet, there has been no researches

tried to prove whether schemata also affect specific readers in reading texts which are not written in their first language, e.g. Indonesian students read English texts.

High school students need lot of reading to equip themselves with more knowledge for their study. In senior high school, students have to pass through three grades in three years time. At the first and the second grade, they are taught the basic and general studies. In these grades, they read all the general things as the basic for the final grade at the third year. They read texts related to their lessons. The lessons of the first and second grades are as follows:

Table 1 : High School Subjects

No.	First Grade	Second Grade
1	Pendidikan Agama	Pendidikan Agama
2	Pendidikan Pancasila & Kewarganegaraan	Pendidikan Pancasila & Kewarganegaraan
3	Bahasa Indonesia	Bahasa Indonesia
4	Sejarah	Sejarah
5	Bahasa Inggris	Bahasa Inggris
6	Matematika	Matematika
7	Fisika	Fisika
8	Biologi	Biologi
9	Kimia	Kimia
10	Geografi	Geografi
11	Ekonomi	Ekonomi
12	Pendidikan Jasmani	Sosiologi
13	Kesenian	Pendidikan Jasmani

At the third grade, they are divided into two majors: science class (called IPA class; IPA is the abbreviation of Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam) and social-science class (called IPS class; IPS is the abbreviation of Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial). Here, they meet specific topics to learn and read in each major. The science class students learn and read only about science texts and things included in it, while the social-science class students also learn and read only about social-science texts and things included in it. Their lessons are as follows:

Table 2 : Subjects of Third Grade High School

No.	Science Class (IPA)	Social-Science Class (IPS)
1	Pendidikan Agama	Pendidikan Agama
2	Pendidikan Pancasila & Kewarganegaraan	Pendidikan Pancasila & Kewarganegaraan
3	Bahasa Indonesia	Bahasa Indonesia
4	Sejarah	Sejarah
5	Bahasa Inggris	Bahasa Inggris
6	Matematika	Matematika
7	Fisika	Ekonomi
8	Biologi	Antropologi
9	Kimia	Tata Negara
10	Pendidikan Jasmani	Sosiologi

Since the third grade high school students need a lot of readings, the writer is curious to know whether these students' background knowledge also plays an important role in their comprehension towards reading texts.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The question that arises from this study is :

Do schemata really affect the students' reading comprehension ?

- Null Hypothesis (H_0):

Schemata do not affect the students' reading comprehension.

- Alternate Hypothesis (H_1):

Schemata affect the students' reading comprehension.

1.3. Objective of the Study

The purpose of the study is to know if schemata really affect the students' reading comprehension.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is hopefully useful to high school students and writers. To students, it is expected to encourage them to read a lot of materials in order to have wider knowledge as the reading itself is connected directly to obtaining knowledge. The more they read, the wider knowledge they will get. To writers, if it is proved that schemata affects reading comprehension, it will be an aspect to be considered in writing suitable texts viewed to whom the texts are for.

The last but not the least is that this study is expected to be very useful for the students of English Department to increase their knowledge about Discourse Analysis.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on several theories of discourse analysis. According to Bartlett in his classical book *Remembering* (1932 : 201), the term "schema" refers to "an active organization of past reactions, or past experience". The term active here was intended to emphasize what he saw as the constructive character of remembering, which he contrasted with a passive retrieval of "fixed and lifeless" memories (Anderson and Pearson, cited in Carell, 1988 : 39). Bartlett, who was the first to introduce the concept of schemata in 1932, explained that information carried in stories is rearranged in the memories of readers or listeners to fit in with their expectations. In Bartlett's experiments, British students re-interpreted Apache folk-tales so that they fitted in with their own schemata, or prior knowledge structures, based on their European folk-tale experiences (Swales, 1990 : 83).

According to McNeil, there are three kinds of schemata. One kind is *domain*: knowledge of specific topics, concepts, or processes for reading particular subject matter. Another kind of schema is *general world*

knowledge: understanding social relationships, causes, and activities that are common to many specific situations and domains. General world knowledge allows readers to make appropriate inferences while reading and to identify with persons and events. The third kind of schema is *knowledge of rhetorical structures*: the conventions for organising and signalling the organisation of texts (McNeil, 1992 : 20).

McNeil also stated that students will read for their own purposes and in relating the printed text to their own schemata, they will modify the text and their original schemata. He emphasised that student who does not apply schemata appropriately is going to have trouble learning and remembering the information found in textbooks because that information will be interpreted and stored in memory in light of the student's past experience (ibid: 20).

Defining the reading process, William Grabe viewed that it is not simply a matter of extracting information from the text. Reading is viewed as a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text (Grabe, cited in Carell, 1988 : 56).

Relating the reading comprehension and schema theory, Coady mentioned that the subject of reading materials should be of high interest and relate well to the background of the reader, since strong semantic input can help compensate when syntactic control is weak. The interest and

background knowledge will enable student to comprehend at a reasonable rate and keep him involved in the material in spite of its syntactic difficulty (Coady, 1979 : 12).

Anderson also stated that comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and text. Efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge. He pointed out that "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well" (Anderson. 1977 : 369). This means that there should be a relation between comprehending a text (which can be referred to reading comprehension) and the knowledge of the world (which can be referred to schemata).

1.6. Method of the Study

In this study, the writer uses quantitative analytic method to analyse the data because the writer wants to see whether there is a significant influence of schemata towards high school students' reading comprehension. In this case, the writer uses a statistical test of significance to explain the problem. With this method, the writer can make a generalisation of the result, so that it is not only focused on the sample taken but also for the population in general.

1.6.1. Definition of Keyterms

1. Student : a person who is studying at the third year of senior high school.
2. Schema : one's concepts, beliefs, expectations, processes-virtually everything from past experiences that are used to make sense of things and action (McNeil, 1992 : 19).
3. Reading comprehension : understanding a text by transforming information from the text.

1.6.2. Location and Population

The location of this study is SMU Negeri V Surabaya, and the population is the students of the third grade. The reasons why the writer chooses SMU Negeri V are because:

- ❖ It is a well-known and highly qualified public school in Surabaya. This can be seen from the standard DANEM requirement which is not less than 45.00 every year
- ❖ It is located in the centre of Surabaya city. It is at Jalan Kusuma Bangsa 21, Surabaya

The reason for choosing the third grade students as the population is because these high school students have been divided into two majors namely – science class (IPA) and social-science class (IPS) – after two years, the first year and the second year, learning the general subjects. It is also the final year of their study at high school. Therefore they must have good background knowledge in reading.

1.6.3. Sampling

The population by which the writer holds the study is too big in number. The total number of the third grade students at SMU Negeri V is 360. Therefore, the writer needs to take a sample.

A sample is a part or subset of the population used to gain information about the whole population (Moore, 1985). In this case, the sample is taken by using purposive sampling method, that is a sampling method by which a sample is taken for a special purpose. The third grade students at SMU Negeri V are divided into two groups, IPA group and IPS group. The IPA group consists of nine classes while the IPS group consists of only one class.

In this study, the purpose is to prove if schemata really affect the students' reading comprehension for English texts. From this purpose, the writer takes class III IPA 8 as the sample. The reason why the class of IPA

8 is taken as the sample is because, according to the information from the English teacher of SMU Negeri V, this class' average mark in English is the highest among the other IPA classes.

1.6.4. Technique of Data Collection

Since the population of this study is the high school students of SMU Negeri V, the writer firstly asks the SMU Negeri V authority for a permission to conduct a research at the school.

Secondly, the writer asks about which class of science is the best (in average score) in English. The writer uses this class as the sample. This is in accordance to the purpose which is to know the students' comprehension towards English texts.

Thirdly, the writer looks for two reading texts from a TOEFL book because TOEFL is well-known as the standard test of English proficiency. The first text is about science, in this case is biology, while the second text is about social science, i.e. history. Each text has the same number of questions. These texts are used as the tests for these students.

Fourth, the writer gives the students both of the tests at the same time for the students to answer. The process is carefully watched so that the students really do the tests by themselves.

Fifth, the writer counts the score of the tests for each student.

Shortly, the techniques of the data collection are as follows:

1. Ask the SMU Negeri V authority for a permission to hold an observation.
2. Ask about the best class in English.
3. Look for 2 standard reading texts (one related to science and the other is not) from TOEFL book and questions related to them.
4. Ask the students to do the tests.
5. Count the scores of the tests.

1.6.5. Technique of Data Analysis

In analysing the data, the writer uses the *t - test* formula. To find the result, first of all the writer will count the mean of the difference of score A and score B (\bar{d}).

Secondly, the writer will count the standard deviation of the difference (S_d) in order to find the *t*-value.

Thirdly, the writer can find the *t*-value. The last step will be looking for the T from the table of correlation and make the diagram.

Shortly, the technique of the data analysis are as follows:

1. Count the mean of the difference of score A and score B (\bar{d})
2. Count the standard deviation (S_d)
3. Find the *t*-value

4. Look for the T from the table of correlation
5. Draw the diagram

CHAPTER II

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION
OF THE OBJECT OF THE STUDY**