

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents background of the research, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of related terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

Reading is an ability to draw meaning from printed page and to construe information appropriately which entails a great deal of practice and skill (Grabe and Stoller, 2002; Mereilon, 2007 as cited in Alemi and Ebadi, 2010). Hence, the main purpose of reading is to comprehend what text is about (Grabe and Stoller, 2002). In comprehending the text, students should have vocabulary knowledge as background knowledge (Biemiller, 2003 as cited in Hackman, 2008; Sedita, 2005). In addition, it is stated that vocabulary knowledge strongly leads to educational success, particularly for secondary levels because students who have large vocabularies can develop new ideas and concepts more quickly than those with limited vocabularies (Sedita, 2005). Therefore, vocabulary knowledge is important because it encompasses all the words we must know to access our background knowledge and it is one of prominent indicators of how well students are able to comprehend the text in the junior and high school levels (Sedita, 2005). In line with Sedita (2005), Hackman (2008) also argues that students who do not have strong vocabularies knowledge will struggle to comprehend the text in reading and have difficulty to understand new concepts

Nika Asri, 2013

The Analysis Of Two Pre-Reading Strategies: Contextual Redefinition And Word List In Efl Learners
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presented in oral discussion. Related to this idea, therefore, teaching vocabulary is important for the improvement of reading comprehension (Blachowicz, Fisher, and Taffe, 2006 as cited in Hackman, 2008).

Furthermore, there are several studies that have shown the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Thongyon and Chiramonee, 2011; Chou, 2011). One study comes from Chou (2011) who investigated the effect of vocabulary knowledge and background knowledge on reading comprehension. The results revealed that vocabulary knowledge has strong predictor and correlation in decoding, comprehension especially in reading comprehension because it has similar function with prior knowledge.

With regard to the strong correlation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, preliminary observation was conducted to 77 students. This preliminary observation aimed to confirm that there is correlation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension and to seek kinds of problems in reading comprehension that were experienced by them (Fox, 2008). According to the questionnaire distributed, it was found that 55% of students do not like reading English text. Most of the students stated that it was difficult and they used to get confused when they were reading English text. In addition, it is revealed that 69% of students responded that they experience difficulties in gathering or comprehending information from the text. Furthermore, they affirmed that it was difficult because they do not have enough sufficient vocabulary. This finding of preliminary observation was also in line with Biemiller (1999 as cited in Curtis and Longo, 1997)

Nika Asri, 2013

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Reading Comprehension
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who states that poor vocabulary is common problem for the students when they are reading a text and they need a long time to learn new vocabulary. As a result, there is a need to find a way to solve this problem.

In ELT reading classroom, for instance, one of the most common vocabulary learning strategies used in EFL countries is word list (Baleghizadeh and Ashoori, 2010). However, this strategy should be studied further because it is regarded as a boring and stressful way of enhancing vocabulary (Wahyunengsих, 2010 as cited in Roselina, 2011).

Moreover, there is another strategy in learning vocabulary, namely contextual redefinition. Literature on vocabulary and learning strategies has revealed that this strategy is selected as an alternative vocabulary strategy in promoting students' vocabulary development in reading comprehension (Tierney et al., 1985; Baleghizadeh and Ashoori, 2010; Rogers, 2010; Soureshjani, 2011). Contextual redefinition provides a set of activities to derive unknown words' meaning which focus on the use of context clue and actions to give students strategy that can be used in their independent reading (Tierney et al., 1985). This strategy is also believed to have some advantages such as it is easy to be employed, it entails relatively preparation to use, and it has potential transfer to be used by students' in other reading situations (Tierney et al., 1985). Moreover, words and phrases are easier to be learned and remembered if they are meaningful and contextual (Broughton *et al.*, 1987 as cited in Chou, 2011).

Numerous studies have been conducted in relation to use of contextual redefinition in deriving meaning (Jenkin, Matlock, and Slocum, 1989 as cited in Kuhn and Stahl, 1998; Rogers, 2010; Soureshjani, 2011). The result displayed that contextual redefinition is effective in enhancing students' vocabulary development (Jenkin et al., 1989 as cited in Kuhn and Stahl, 1992; Rogers, 2010; Soureshjani, 2011). On the other hand, there are some studies which revealed that word list slightly outperformed contextual redefinition (Amirian and Momeni, 2011; Takashi, 2011). The findings discovered that the use of word list help students memorize vocabulary for test.

Unlike those previous studies which were only concerned about students' vocabulary enhancement, this study aimed to compare the contextual redefinition and word list as pre-reading strategy in helping students' reading comprehension and to examine students' responses toward the use of those strategies.

1.2 Research Question

In conducting this study, there are three research questions as follow:

- a. Which pre-reading strategy is more effective in reading comprehension:
contextual redefinition or word list?
- b. What are the students' responses toward the use of **contextual redefinition** as pre-reading strategy in reading activity?
- c. What are the students' responses toward the use of **word list** as pre-reading strategy in reading activity?

1.3 Aims of the study

The research has some aims as follow:

- a. to investigate which strategy is more effective between the use of contextual redefinition and word list in helping students' reading comprehension;
- b. to find out the students' responses on the use contextual redefinition as pre-reading strategy in reading activity, and
- c. to find out the students' responses on the use of word list as pre-reading strategy in reading activity.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on investigating and comparing contextual redefinition and word list as pre-reading strategy in reading comprehension for eight grade students in one of junior high schools in Bandung. It describes the implementation of contextual redefinition and word list as pre-reading strategy in helping students' reading comprehension.

1.5 Significant of the Study

This study is expected to be significant theoretically and practically. It is hoped to be one of the references for ELT teachers when teaching reading in the classroom especially in EFL context. So, the teacher can gain knowledge that the use of pre-reading activity by using contextual redefinition and word list strategy can promote students' vocabulary development in reading comprehension. Theoretically, the result of this research is expected to be one of the alternative choices to enrich the literature on teaching reading. Practically, the research is expected to give an

Nika Asri, 2013

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alternative pre-reading strategy for teacher in helping EFL learners' reading comprehension.

1.6 Clarification of Related Terms

To avoid misconception, it is required to explain some terms as follows:

1. Pre-reading strategy is an activity which enables students to be supplied by necessary background to comprehend a material given (Tudor, 1989 as cited in Alemi & Ebadi, 2010)
2. Contextual redefinition is a strategy that introduces new terms which involves context that can help to derive the meaning of the unfamiliar words and facilitate memory by giving the words meaningful associations (Bean, Baldwin, and Readence, 2012). In this study, the students were given some technical term which surrounded by context sentence. Some technical terms are taken from the text that will be read by the students. Then, the words are guessed by the students and verified by the dictionary use or asked to the teacher (Tierney et al., 1985).
3. Word list is an old-fashioned vocabulary learning strategies that makes written or printed notes which includes new, unfamiliar, or noticeable words which are followed by direct meanings (Roselina, 2011; Balegizadeh and Ashoori, 2010).
4. Reading Comprehension is an active and intentional thinking which involves cognitive process which entails deeper thoughtful to comprehend information in the text (Durkin, 1973; Snowling, 2009).

1.7 Organization the Paper

This paper consists of five chapters:

Chapter I

The chapter presents background of the research, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of related terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II

This chapter presents several theories that are related to this study. In detail, this chapter explains about the definition of reading, the process of reading, the purpose of reading, reading comprehension, pre-reading strategy, the definition of contextual redefinition, contextual redefinition procedure in pre-reading activity, the definition of word list strategy, and word list procedure in pre-reading activity. Also, this chapter discusses related previous studies about contextual redefinition and word list as the basis of investigating this study

Chapter III

This chapter presents how the research was conducted. Moreover, it tries to examine which strategy between contextual redefinition and word list that gives significant impact in helping EFL learners' reading comprehension and how the students' responses toward both strategies were. This chapter consists of research design, population and sample, data collection which includes research instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Chapter IV

Nika Asri, 2013

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This chapter is divided into two main parts, which are findings and discussions. The findings and discussions in this study aim to answer the research questions that investigate which pre-reading strategy is better in helping students' reading comprehension and examine students' responses toward those strategies used. The findings consist of five parts; namely, pilot test scores analysis, pre-test score analysis, post-test score analysis, the research findings from questionnaire and interview. Then all findings are discussed and interpreted in the discussion part.

Chapter V

This chapter contains the conclusions and suggestions from this research. The conclusions are drawn from the findings and discussions of the research. Furthermore, the suggestions are formulated for the English teacher and further researchers.

1.8 Concluding Remark

This chapter has been reviewing background of the research, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, scope of the research, clarification of related terms, and organization of the paper. Furthermore, theoretical foundation of the study is going to be discussed in the next chapter.