CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

People read for many reasons, such as reading for getting information, solving problems, and for pleasure. Reading ability enables people to express and develop their knowledge. Consequently, reading is crucial for human beings and is one of the most fundamental skills to be enquired in learning a language.

Reading is not only believed as one of the keys to gain knowledge but is also important to arm people in this global era of information in which people are surrounded with so many reading materials. For people who live in countries where English is a foreign language, a good ability in reading comprehension skill is also important because this kind of ability will enable them to keep up with the latest development in the world.

Reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate efficient comprehension strategies for the majority of second language learners who are already literate in their native language (Brown, 2001). It means that the strategies in reading are important to help learners or students comprehend texts well. In addition, reading comprehension is the process of gaining meaning from the text, which is one of the basis purposes. Williams (1984: 72) stated that reading

comprehension is an activity that recognizes words used in the text, extracts the information contained, and grasps the general meaning or main ideas of it.

According to May (1990), comprehension and fluency work hand in hand. Together they require a complex interaction between the eyes and the brain, as well as a complex interaction between the reader and the author. Additionally, Rudell (1994:415) suggested that comprehension is a process in which a reader constructs meaning while, or after, interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in text, the stance she or he takes in relationship with the text, and immediate, remembered, or anticipated social interactions and communication.

Due to the importance of reading as a crucial part of our life, reading has been part of language learning in every level of education, from elementary schools to universities. However, most of Indonesian students who learn English face many difficulties in understanding what the researcher means in texts. It seems the students feel tired to read texts in English textbooks because most of the texts are not interesting, hard to understand, thus make the students easily get bored.

Considering some problems above, it is necessary for teachers to explore some appropriate methods because actually there are a lot of methods that can be used in teaching English in order to improve students' reading ability. One of those methods is cooperative learning. According to Slavin (1983), cooperative learning has its greatest effects on student learning when groups are recognized or rewarded based on the individual learning of their members. One of the largest and longest

studies of cooperative learning was conducted by Weigel et al (1975), who evaluated a method in which students in divergent teams engaged in a variety of cooperative activities in several objects, winning prizes based on team performances. Giselle Glosser (1977) added that cooperative learning is one of the effective methods. It should be applied in classroom activity, because the result is very productive, and it makes learning activity more fun.

As mentioned above, cooperative learning technique is said to be group work technique that has received considerable attention as an effective classroom methodology for improving academic achievement. By this technique, students work in groups of four or five and are expected to help one another discussing and arguing, to check each other's knowledge and fill in gaps in each others' understanding. In brief, cooperative learning method shares the idea that students work together to learn and responsible for their teammates' learning as well as their own (Slavin, 1995 : 2; Johnson and Johnson, 1987: 9).

Moreover, Harmer (2002) mentioned some advantages of group work approaches, namely:

1. it dramatically increases the amount of talking for individual students;

2. personal relationships are usually less problematic. There is a greater chance of different opinions and varied contributions than in pair work;

3. it encourages broader skills of cooperation and negotiation than pair work, and yet is more private than work in front of whole class;

4. it promotes learner autonomy by allowing students to make their own decision in the group without being told what to do by the teacher;

5. the teachers do not expect any individual in groups to be completely passive, therefore group work technique are allowed students to work in groups more readily than in whole-class or pair work situation

Several studies have looked for possible differences in the effects of cooperative learning on students' achievement in many subjects areas. Evidence from several experimental studies found better outcomes for high achievers than for low (e.g. Edwards & DeVries, 1972), and few found that low achievers gained the most (e.g. Edwards et al., 1972; Johnson & Waxman, 1985; Van Ouden hoven et al., 1987).

By looking at previous studies, this research takes as a starting point to carry out a research entitled *The Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning to Improve Students' ability in Reading,* which aims at finding out whether or not cooperative learning is an effective technique that can be utilized by teachers in order to improve students' ability in reading comprehension.

1.2   Reasons for Choosing the Topic

The reason why the researcher is interested in teaching reading using cooperative learning is driven by the fact that reading is still considered as one of the most difficult aspects to teach.

Indonesian classes generally consist of a large number of students, where each class consists of forty to fifty students. Therefore, the application of appropriate technique is very important. Inappropriate technique will result in a lack of students' interests. On the other hand, many types of texts must be mastered by students in senior high school.

This research applies cooperative learning to create a condition in which students have an opportunity to have different situation and fun learning activity in order to get better results for their academic achievement.

1.3   The Scope of the Study

This study focuses on finding out the students' achievement in reading comprehension skill after being taught using cooperative learning and investigates whether the use of cooperative learning improves students' achievement significantly or not. The study collects and analyzes students' opinions about the technique.

This study deals with the use of cooperative learning at the second grade of SMAN 15 Bandung and uses cooperative learning in their classes. cooperative learning method has been developed through a variety of techniques, such as Group Investigation, STAD, Jigsaw, TAI, and CIRC. The present study adapts Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) technique to improve the students' reading ability.

1.4   Limitation of the Study

This study limits the investigation on whether or not cooperative learning method improves the students' ability in reading and on the use of STAD (Student Teams Achievement Division) as one of the cooperative learning techniques. The study also has limitations in terms of time of research, particularly for the treatment parts.

1.5   Statements of the Problems

The writer has formulated the problems in the form of the following research questions:

1. Is the use of cooperative learning technique in teaching reading effective?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of cooperative learning technique in teaching-learning reading?

1.6   The Aims of the study

Considering the background and the statements of the problems above, the aims of this study are:

1. To find out the effectiveness of cooperative learning in teaching reading;

2. To find out the strengths and weaknesses of cooperative learning based on the results of the study.

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1.7   The Significance of the Study

This study is expected to:

1. provide information about the technique of teaching English as alternatives in teaching and learning reading;

2. develop students and teachers' creativity in comprehending reading skill;

3. improve students' understanding of English teaching methods and techniques;

4. Inform the English teachers about the students' problem in teaching and learning so the teachers can take the appropriate ways to overcome the problems.

1.8   Hypothesis

Hypothesis is a tentative statement about the outcome of the research (Hatch & Farhady, 1982). This study proposes the hypothesis that cooperative learning is an effective technique to improve the quality of students' reading achievement, which is indicated by the scores of the second year students of SMAN 15 Bandung.

1.9   Research Method

The research method employed in this study is an experimental method, because in this study there is a procedure of testing a hypothesis by setting up situation in which the strength of the relationship can be tested. Additionally, Riyanto (1996) states:

Experimental research is a systematic, logical, and careful research in controlling conditions. In experimental research a researcher manipulates a stimuli, treatment, or experimental conditions, then observes the effect resulted by that treatment or manipulation.

The researcher decides to use the experimental design to find out the significance of cooperative learning technique in improving reading comprehension. Furthermore, this design is also the best option after considering the limitations in terms of time and financial.

1.9.1 Research Design

There are two groups taken as the investigated groups in this study. One group is the Experimental Group (EG), which is treated by using cooperative learning technique, while another group is the Control Group (CG), which is treated by using conventional one.

Experimental design with the pre-test and post-test control group design in this study is described as follows:

Sample	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental Group	X1e	T	X2e
Control Group	X1c	0	X2c

Notes:

X1e   : Students' reading achievement of experimental group in pre-test

X1c   : Students' reading achievement of control group in pre-test

X2e   : Students' reading achievement of experimental group in post-test

X2c   : Students' reading achievement of control group in post-test

T   : Treatment using cooperative learning technique.

1.9.2 Population and Sample

The population of this research is the second grade students of SMAN 15 Bandung. This study uses two classes as the sample. The first class is XI IPA 4 as the experimental group and the second class is XI IPA 3. Each class consists of 40 students. The researcher only takes 36 students from each class as the sample, so the fixed number of the sample is 72 students. The sample was chosen through simple random sampling with confidence level of 95%, because every member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected to represent the population.

1.9.3 Instruments

There are some instruments used in this research. They are reading comprehension tests, pretest and post-test, questionnaire and interviews.

1. Pre-test. This is given to both groups before the treatment of Cooperative Learning technique is given. It is to find out the initial abilities of the two groups.

2. Post-test. This is given to both groups to find out the students' reading comprehension achievement after the treatment was given.

3. Questionnaire. It is used to find out students' opinions about the cooperative learning method.

4. Interview. It is used to gain the students' opinion about the effectiveness of using cooperative learning method in the class.

1.9.4 Data Collection

In collecting data, this research follows some stages.

1. Pre-test. Reading comprehension test is given to both experimental and control groups to measure student's reading comprehension.

2. Post-test. Reading comprehension test is given to both experimental and control groups at the end of the research. The aim of this test is to measure student's reading comprehension.

3. Questionnaire. It is administered and filled by the students at the end of the research which are about the implementation of cooperative learning

4. Interview. The students give their own opinion to support the result from questionnaire. The interview illustrated the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of cooperative learning in the classroom.

1.9.5 Data Analysis

There are some steps that the researcher carries out to analyze the data.

1. Determining the students' scores of the two groups in pre-test and post-test using *t*-test in order to find out whether the means of two groups in pre-test and post-test are significant or not.

2. Determining how effective cooperative learning method is in teaching reading by comparing the achievement of the experimental group and control group.

3. Analyzing the results of the questionnaire by calculating the frequency of students who choose the given items.

4. Interpreting the research findings in order to explain the results of the study.

1.9.6 Research Procedures

In conducting the study, the researcher follows the procedures as follows:

1. Organizing teaching procedures in both experimental and control group classes.

2. Organizing the research instrument.

3. Trying out the research instrument.

4. Administering pre-test for both groups in order to find out the initial abilities of the two groups having similar level in reading ability.

5. Treating the experimental group using the Cooperative Learning method.

6. Administering post-test for both groups in order to find out the result of the treatment.

7. Administering questionnaire and interview for experimental group in order to find out more information about the strengths and weaknesses of cooperative learning method based on students' points of view.

8. Analyzing the data collected from pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire

1.10 Clarification of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation in understanding this writing, it is important to clarify the following definitions of key terms.

1. *Effectiveness* refers to different effects which determine a better result in reading teaching process through the implementation of cooperative learning.

2. *Cooperative Learning* in this study is one of the teaching methods in which students work in groups of four or five and are expected to help one another to discuss, argue and share information or knowledge to improve academic achievement.

3. *Reading Comprehension* is the process of understanding the text and also the process of interaction between the readers' background knowledge on the text.

1.11 Organization of the Paper

The research paper is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Provides the background of the study, statements of the problem, the aim of study, the significance of study, limitation of the study, research method, population and sample, data collection, data analysis, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Foundation

Explains the theoretical foundation that is relevant to the research field and be the basis for investigating the research problems.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Discusses the subject of the research, procedures in collecting the data and data analysis.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Discussions

Reports the data presentation and data interpretation. The data obtained from questionnaire and interview are presented in the statistical form as well as in narrative.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Suggestions

Contains the researcher's concluding remarks regarding the results of the study and suggestions for further researches.