

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background of the Problem**

English as first language in Indonesia is a compulsory subject at formal education settings, from Junior High School up to University. Recently, English has also been introduced to students of elementary school, starting at first grade. The curriculum states that SMA/ MA students should be able to use the language in informational level that is expected to access knowledge by the language skills (Depdiknas, 2006: 307). Based on the reason that students are expected to get information for increasing their knowledge which is mostly written in English. Moreover, the curriculum used is text based curriculum so that reading dominates the teaching materials in almost English text books.

Reading is a process used for learning that inseparable from any kinds of learning including language learning. In this activity, students are in the process of comprehending the content of the text given by the teacher. In the process, the students do some task that are given such as finding certain information and main ideas from the texts and gathering the general description from the content of the texts. When the students can not get something from what he reads, he will not get the knowledge which is a part of learning.

To gather the knowledge from the text, it is important for students to have a good reading comprehension. Without comprehension, reading would be empty and meaningless. Comprehension is not only intended to know what the letters stand for, but also involved power of fully understanding. Reading comprehension requires motivation, mental frameworks for holding the ideas, concentration and good study techniques. There are many ways to be good at reading such as; the readers should know the purpose in reading, they also should have awareness of type of material they are reading, and kinds of learning strategies can also be used in reading that can help them in comprehending the reading text.

In fact, not everyone is good at reading. In general, students still have difficulty in comprehending the idea in a reading text. Nurmalasari (2005) found that students in SMAN 5 Bandar Lampung had difficulty in comprehending reading texts.

Some factors that cause the students' difficulties in comprehending the text she found in her research, are: (1) interpreting the new vocabulary, (2) unphrasing reading, (3) interest in the materials (the text), (4) the lack of schemata/ background knowledge about the text, (5) ignoring reading technique.

These conditions show that reading is not a simple task to do for some people. For those people reading can be a painful and boring activity.

There are many factors that might influence students' problem in reading. One may have difficulties to comprehend a passage because of some problems such as unfamiliar code in which the text is expressed, the amount of previous knowledge that reader brings to the text, the complexity of the concept expressed, and vocabulary knowledge, (Nuttal 1985:5-6). However, the researcher assumes that

one of the most important factors is the reading strategy used in the class. The students are lack of effective reading strategy. As the way out of this problem, the readers need a more creative reading strategy to overcome the problems. They need to be familiar with many kinds of reading strategy that can help them comprehend the text much better.

Among many techniques that can be applied in teaching reading comprehension is translation technique. This technique belongs to Grammar Translation Method and still widely used by English teachers in Indonesia until now. When applying this technique the students are supposed to be able to read a reading passage written in target language and translate the target language into the students' native language. Many English teachers tend to use this technique since it is easier to present language material in the classroom and evaluate the process of language teaching. Moreover, the medium of instruction is native language, which is used to explain conceptual problems and to discuss the use of particular grammatical structure. Using the native language for the purpose of instruction is believed to give language learners a set of clear objective and a clear of sense of achievement. The students also need sense of security, thus the using of native language will provide it.

Another technique that can be applied in teaching reading comprehension is information transfer technique. This technique is important to help the students to understand the text by means of nonverbal device. An information transfer exercise involves the transfer or change of information from one into another form. The students are presented with a written text and provided incomplete

stimuli that have to be completed with information drawn from the text. Unlike many instructional tools that just have one purpose, information transfer technique is flexible and endless in application. It can be used to improve anyone's learning ability in any kind of texts, and the kinds of information transfer exercises are unlimited. Moreover, information transfer may include ordering sequence of pictures, comparing text and pictures and completing documents. Or the students look at the information in the form of diagram, chart or picture and then they transfer it into a written form.

Nur (2005) at SMA Al- Kautsar did research dealing with the use of information transfer technique. However, she focused on the students' perception on teaching reading comprehension through information transfer technique. The result of her research was 100% students (twenty one students) told that the exercise was the most interesting activity and 90 % students (19 of 21 students) told that they have more understanding to the content of the text through this technique.

According to the statement above, the researcher is intended to compare students' reading comprehension achievement between students who are taught using information transfer technique and translation technique.

## **B. Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the background of the problem above, the writer formulates the problem as follows:

1. Is there any significant difference of students' reading comprehension achievement between those who are taught through information transfer

technique and those who are taught translation technique at the first year students of SMAN 2 Pringsewu?

### **C. The Objective of the Research**

In line with the research problem above, the objectives of the research are :

1. To find out whether there is significant difference of students' reading comprehension achievement between those who are taught through information transfer technique and those who are taught through translation technique at the first year students of SMAN 2 Pringsewu.

### **D. The Use of the Research**

The uses of the research are:

- a. Theoretically, to verify the previous theory dealing with theories in this research.
- b. Practically, to be a consideration for English teachers that information transfer technique can be used as an alternative technique in teaching reading comprehension

### **E. Scope of the Research**

The research is focused on students' reading comprehension achievement. This quantitative research was conducted to the first year students of SMA Negeri 2 Pringsewu.

In the research, the information transfer and translation were used as the technique to teach the students. The researcher limited the type of text being used in the research into descriptive text. Since this type of the text belongs to curriculum of first year students of senior high school. According to KTSP 2006 there are some sort of texts that should be comprehended by the first year students of senior high school, which is narrative text, news item, and descriptive. Descriptive text is chosen since it allows many forms of the exercise involve the transfer or change of information. Then, the topic that chosen are describing people, places, and buildings.

#### **F. Definition of Key Terms**

- Reading comprehension is an active process of interacting with print and monitoring comprehension to establish meaning.
- Information transfer technique is strategy that requires the students to process deeply the information in which the exercise involves the transfer or change of information from one form to another form. During the transfer the information remains substantially the same but the form of information changes.
- Translation technique is a technique in which the students transfer the thought and ideas from one language (source of language) to other language (target language).
- Descriptive text is a text that gives vivid details of how something or someone looks.