

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers background of the problem, formulation of the problem, objective, significance, scope of the research, and definitions of related terms.

A. Background of the Problem

Reading is considered to be a difficult language skill to learn. The underlying reason is that reading comprehension requires students to cope with a challenging task of obtaining a lot of information, including identifying the main idea, finding inference, finding reference, recognizing detailed information, and discovering the meanings of vocabularies in the reading text. Identifying the main idea is finding out the central of a story from the first paragraph. Reference refers to the word that the reader uses to find another meaning of the word in the story. Besides reference, there is inference. To make inference means to draw conclusions from the whole story, or from the parts of the story. To recognize detailed information, we should skim the reading text to identify specific information we are looking for, while discovering the meaning of a vocabulary involves the understanding of the context of the story.

Here, the students are expected not only to comprehend the written symbols combined with their prior knowledge but also to understand the content of the text thoroughly. As Smith (1982:5-6) suggests, comprehension in reading is a matter

of making sense of the text, of relating written language to what we know already and to what we want to know.

School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) for the 8th grade of junior high-school expects students to be able to comprehend the aspects of a text, i.e. the main idea, the topic sentence(s), the factual, stated, and unstated information, and the vocabularies. Yet in fact, junior high-school students have to deal with difficulties in reading comprehension. Confirming the fact, research by Hariyanti (2010:1) found that the students faced some difficulties in reading, particularly concerning lack of vocabulary and little degree of engagement in classroom reading activities. Lack of vocabulary, certainly, will encourage students to open dictionary or to ask their friends and teacher frequently. This, in turn, will make them ineffective and inefficient readers. Besides, it directs them to be highly dependent learners, which, again in turn, makes it hard for them to cope with the text at hand and to finish the reading comprehension task individually. Therefore, the interdependency created will be negative rather than positive one.

The rationale leads to the demand of creating classroom situation in which the students can engage reading activities actively, a favorable situation that will make them comprehend the reading text at hand more easily and without impeding problems. To do this, a suitable technique is required to foster students' motivation to read all parts of the text, so they can obtain the necessary information completely. The technique should also increase students' reading comprehension and make them enjoy the teaching-learning process.

For that reason, this research would try a technique to solve such problems, i.e. Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique. TPS, according to Lie (2002:23), will give students the opportunity to work both individually and in a group, by following three steps: *thinking*, *pairing* and *sharing*. In TPS technique, after given a task by the teacher, students first think individually, then share what they have thought with their pair, and finally share it with the others. Moreover, they have to listen to the explanation from their peers. Every student should try to understand the content of the text because they have the obligation to explain it to the others.

It is believed that TPS technique can motivate students to actively carry out classroom reading activities because it make the activities more engaging by raising students' nature as story teller. This nature is strengthened by the responsibility to comprehend the text, so students can provide better explanation of its content to their peers. Being imposed with this responsibility, students may feel more motivated to read the text. Once they have felt motivated in reading activities, it would be much easier for them to achieve full comprehension of the text and to perform the reading task well.

This study, therefore, would investigate whether the implementation of Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique could increase students' achievement in reading comprehension.

B. Formulation of the Problem

The discussion above led to the following research question:

'Is there significant increase of students' reading comprehension achievement after the application of Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique for teaching reading?'

C. Objective of the Research

Therefore, the objective of this research is:

‘To find out whether there is significant increase of students’ reading comprehension achievement after the application of Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique for teaching reading.’

D. Significances of the Research

The significances of this study are:

- 1) as a reference for further research on students’ reading comprehension achievement and the application of Think-Pair-Share technique; and
- 2) as information for English teacher about the strength of Think-Pair-Share technique as an alternative for improving students’ reading comprehension.

E. Scope of the Study

This research was conducted to a group of grade-eight students of MTsN 1 TanjungKarang, Bandar Lampung. A grade-eight class was selected because the material that would be applied—i.e. narrative text—matched the syllabus for this level. Furthermore, the student had had the background of being taught the components of reading comprehension. This class basically had already studied vocabulary, structure and some types of reading texts.

This research would focus on how TPS technique can increase students’ reading comprehension achievement. The materials were based on the curriculum of English for grade eight of junior high-school. They included several narrative

texts: ‘*The Hermit*’, ‘*The Wolf, the Kid and the Goat*’, and ‘*The Tiger who would be a King*’.

F. Definition of Key Terms

The following are the definitions of the key terms covered in this research. These definitions are presented to avoid misunderstanding concerning the terms.

- 1) *Reading* is the process of grasping the main idea and scanning pieces of information from a text.
- 2) *Reading comprehension skill* is the ability to comprehend and obtain information from a text. As a form of thinking process, the reader basically uses his brain to read and his eyes to transmit images to the brain.
- 3) *Narrative text* is a sequence of events which provides a literary experience to the reader. It is written based on life experience and organized by focusing on the characters. The purpose of narrative text is principally to inform, to tell story, and to entertain.
- 4) *A technique* is a particular trick, stratagem or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective.
- 5) *Think-Pair-Share (TPS)* is a technique for classroom instructions that consists of three steps: *think*, *pair*, and *share*. These steps are carried out individually, in pair and in group. In TPS, after given a task by the teacher, students first think individually, share what they have thought with their pair, and finally share it with the others. They also have to listen to the explanation from their peers. Every student should try to understand the content of the text because

they have the obligation to explain it to the others. TPS technique gives the opportunity to students to work both individually and in a group.