

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Reading is an essential skill that every student in English is expected to achieve. It is a skill that requires extensive and regular practice. In the case of reading, the students are supposed to be enculturated and orientated by the explanations of the teacher within the context, but concerning comprehension, the students are expected to have competencies that go beyond explaining a single text or part of a text after its meaning. The target of reading comprehension is to develop the abilities pertaining to the understanding of textual material. Therefore, they will be competent in English. Reading comprehension makes up a student's ability to get meaning from English text passages, etc.

Reading skills are learners' basic language skills; they take a lot of time and practice for one to develop and master the techniques. The students do not only read the material but are able to make sense of the information contained in it. "Text comprehension depends on understanding words and integrating their meaning into a mental model of the text, and more skilled comprehenders do this better than less skilled comprehenders (Perfetti, Yang, & Schmalhofer, 2008; Yang, Perfetti, & Schmalhofer, 2005, 2007)". Reading for the most part, is also a passive activity for most of the students. Students tend to begin reading the text and proceeding to the end and if difficult words are met, they stop to look up the word in the dictionary. Still, when children do a direct word for word translation, they do not appreciate the meaning of the sentence or the concept behind the sentence. This state of affairs makes the lesson to become boring.

During reading comprehension instruction, authors typically require students to read the paragraph and translate it into Indonesian. Subsequently, the instructor requests the students to respond to the subsequent questions. Upon completion of their assignments, the pupils' work is gathered and evaluated by the teacher. The instructor is unable to engage students in the lecture because of logistical issues. The reading proficiency of the majority of parents is not superior than an average standard.

As the author writes, within context of the past experience in real class as pre service teacher, she observes that large majority of the students face challenges when it comes to identification of the central idea for the paragraph provided to them for reading. They show no changes in behavior that aim at reading which impedes the educational process so much. This particular problem occurs as a result of the approach or methodology employed in the first place. The teacher teaches the students reading by translating the material. In many cases, students seek

alternatives to text reading, such as looking in a dictionary for unknown words. The teacher needs to use a specific, efficient method that would help the students deal satisfactorily with such challenges.

One approach that can be used to teach reading and help improve reading comprehension is Task Based Learning TBL approach. Task-Based Learning (TBL) is an approach to language teaching where students complete meaningful tasks or activities in the target language, rather than focusing on explicit grammar instruction. It is based on the idea that language learning is most effective when learners use the language to perform real-world tasks, which helps improve fluency and communicative competence (Graham, C., & Pongsiri, M.: 2022). This technique could help improve the way reading is taught to kids since TBL lets the teachers to incorporate the materials with the students' background. Wider communities may also encourage learners to extend their reading skills into the real-world context.

According to Norris, J. M., & Ortega, L. (2023), TBL tasks are often divided into three phases: Pre-task: The instructor presents the subject matter and supplies essential background information or terminology for the activity. Objective: Students participate in the primary task, which may encompass problem-solving, conversations, projects, or other practical activities necessitating the utilization of the target language. Post- task: The instructor and students evaluate the task, analyze language usage, and offer feedback that emerged during the activity.

Such engagements include comprehension tasks related to reading a written text which has been emphasized in TBL. Clark et al. (2010) state that s should not only focus on the form but also the comprehension of the language task. Many students strive to learn to read English for communication and so reading comprehension should be promoted through TBL approach (Buckingham 2008). These findings confirm the validity of TBL's objectives and suggest TBL's incorporation into language syllabus.

Emphasizing TBL within extensive reading programs gets learners involved in meaningful tasks necessary to exchange information and use language contextually. As a result, students are better able to appreciate and interact with the texts and improve their reading comprehension capabilities respectively.

TBL reading tasks which involve authentic language materials are meant to draw the learner's attention to meaning and function and not the language form (Liypina, 2021). This is consistent with natural strategies of reading and thus enhances comprehension.

In Task-Based Learning, tasks play a crucial role since they form the learning activity and serve as the starting step for the students. Upon completion of the work, the teacher concentrates on the language employed and provides feedback and recommendations concerning the students' product. Case studies demonstrate that project-based teaching is more effective than problem-based approaches for achieving educational solutions.

The use of peripheral reading primarily in focusing on ideas or the general meaning of the text in reading and comprehension of the whole text is called skimming. It helps the students to explain the purpose of the text, locate the central idea or message and some other ideas that may enhance the main idea.

In the past studies, TBL is an effective method for improving reading comprehension because it aligns language learning with real-world tasks. It promotes active participation, enhances motivation, and fosters a deeper understanding of texts (Astuti & Priyana: 2020). Later studies done by Kospanova (2022), she advocates for the use of the task-based approach as a dynamic and effective method for teaching reading comprehension, particularly in environments where student engagement and language proficiency are key goals. The article highlights how this approach can help students move beyond basic comprehension to develop higher-order reading skills through active participation and real-world tasks.

Therefore, the writer claims that a Task Based Learning method will improve the effectiveness of the teaching and the learning process especially in reading comprehension for the learners.

1.2 The Problem of the Study

In reference to the above scenario, the problems of the study are stated in the following words:

1. “How are the students' ability in reading comprehension?”
2. “Does Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach affect students’ reading comprehension?”

1.3 The Objective of the Study

The study aims to assess the impact of the TBL method on students' reading comprehension achievement.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study exclusively focuses on task-based learning (TBL) in relation to students' reading comprehension. A pre-test and post-test will be administered about reading comprehension questions. The study sample included 52 students from SMA Free Methodist I, Medan, categorized into a control group and an experimental group.

1.5 Hypothesis

The researcher proposes an assumption to be true in cases where the conditions differ from the ideal, which is stated as follows:

H₁: The Task-Based Learning (TBL) strategy significantly influences students' reading comprehension.

H₀: The Task-Based Learning (TBL) strategy has no substantial impact on students' reading comprehension.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

The results of this study are anticipated to be beneficial for the subsequent:

The author's understanding of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach in reading is anticipated to enhance students' reading comprehension skills and assist them in overcoming challenges in reading comprehension using the TBL technique. The researcher aims to analyze and enhance teaching and learning methodologies concerning the difficulties encountered in reading comprehension. Ultimately, the author anticipates additional research on Task-Based Learning and Reading Comprehension from many perspectives.

1.7 Review of Literature

Task-Based Learning (TBL) is a teaching method that places the emphasis on tasks, task completion, and the relevance of everyday contexts in language learning. Over the last few years, studies have increasingly pointed out the beneficial effect of TBL on students' reading abilities, especially in English foreign language (EFL) classrooms. The most important research conducted within the last five years focused on the following aspects: collation and integration of the new theories.

Task-Based Learning (TBL) has been shown to significantly enhance students' reading comprehension abilities. According to Nguyen (2022), students who regularly engaged with the TBL model experienced notable improvements in their reading skills within a short timeframe. The tasks involved real-life contexts and communicative activities that required students to complete reading comprehension exercises.

Beyond comprehension, TBL is linked to vocabulary enhancement, which further supports understanding. The interactive and task-based activities allow learners to connect vocabulary to specific contexts, thereby improving their retention and practical use of new words. In a 2022 study, participants noted that even brief exposure to TBL led to meaningful increases in their vocabulary.

Active communication is crucial in fostering TBL principles, creating interactive classroom environments that motivate students to engage and participate actively. Research by Nguyen (2022) and other studies indicate that when learners can relate tasks to real-life situations, both their engagement levels and academic achievements improve.

Additionally, studies have demonstrated that TBL positively affects the retention of reading skills. After participating in a TBL program, learners showed sustained retention of informational literacy and vocabulary several weeks later, highlighting the effectiveness of the TBL method in enhancing reading comprehension over the long term.