

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Reading is one of language skills, which should be developed in the teaching-learning process at primary schools. Other language skills, which need to be developed are listening, speaking, and writing. Among the four skills, reading is considered the most important skill, because reading is the core of the teaching-learning process. The aim of reading activity is to understand meaning (a message) of a text. Students must have an ability to comprehend the spoken and written text adequately. Those who have good reading competence will be able to understand them easily and it can help to support the other skills. That is the reason why having reading competence is very important for the students.

Reading is the activity to get meaning (the message) from the text. In other words, it means grasping the meaning out from the text, but for language learning, language components (pronunciation, structure, spelling, and vocabulary) are involved. If the focus is on reading comprehension, then to get message from the text that the writer intends is the main point. To do this, the reader and the writer should share certain assumptions about the world and the way it works. In order to make the text readily understood by anyone, a basic understanding of whatever the text presented is a necessity. If the reader's

vocabulary is far smaller than the writer's, the text will be hard to understand (Nuttall, 1996: 3-4).

The understanding of the text varies according to both one's knowledge of the world and the purpose one has in reading. It also varies according to one's knowledge of language and of text types. A reader has several possible purposes for reading, and each purpose emphasizes a different combination of skills and strategies. Reading emphasizes the many criteria that define the nature of fluent reading abilities, it also reveals the many skills, processes and knowledge bases that act in combination, and often in parallel, to create the overall reading comprehension abilities. It is necessary to have adequate understanding to suit a purpose since it is central to reading. Students need to understand how texts work and what they do when they read, and they must be able to monitor their own comprehension (Grabe and Stoller, 2002: 9-10).

Some basic aspects of reading that are proposed by Heilman, Blain and Rupley (1981: 4) are: (1) Reading is interacting with language that has been coded into print; (2) The product of interacting with the printed language should be comprehensive; (3) Reading ability is closely related to oral language ability; and (4) Reading is an active and on going process that is affected directed by an individual's interaction with his environment.

The teachers, students and learning facilities are supposed to affect students' reading competence or comprehension. They include: (1) method of teaching used by the teachers; (2) teacher professionalism; (3) students' motivation; (4)

students' intelligence quotient; (5) parents support; (6) students' interest; and (7) the availability of learning facilities.

The method of teaching is quite important in the teaching-learning process. Teachers should choose the appropriate method in order to make the students achieve adequate competence in reading. Teacher's professionalism deals with an ability of the teacher to guide, motivate, and facilitate students to develop their reading competence. The teacher's tasks are:

(1) Encouraging: urging students to have a try, praising them for what they get right, not blaming them for what they get wrong but using it to help them improve; (2) prompting: helping students complete the original task by giving cues, asking questions, setting supplementary tasks; (3) probing: finding out why a student has given a particular answer, so that if it is needed, teachers can help him to see where he went wrong; (4) modeling: demonstrating appropriate ways of doing things so that the students will understand what is wanted; (5) clarifying: giving examples, explaining and so on (Nuttall, 1996: 36).

The teacher should encourage the students to try no matter they are right or wrong and help them to finish their tasks completely. When the students answer the questions, the teacher helps them by giving reinforcement. The teacher should be a good model for his/her students. He/she has to demonstrate and explain clearly to them so that they really understand the material by giving examples to them.

Students' motivation and interest are needed to engage them to involve actively in the teaching-learning process. Besides, if their intelligence quotient is high and their parents also support them enthusiastically, it might be easy to attain the aim that is to improve their reading competence. The availability of learning facilities might also support the teaching-learning process to be more interesting,

clearer and more successful. However, it is not easy to either have adequate or improve reading competence.

The phenomenon has also been experienced by the English teachers of SMPN 26 Surakarta. It is due to the fact that their students have low English achievement particularly, their reading test result is not good. It is supposed that the method used by the teachers is inappropriate. To respond this, the writer tries to improve their reading competence by using inquiry-based teaching and learning in teaching reading. She also considers their motivation (high and low) to know whether inquiry-based teaching and learning is suitable for students who have high or those who have low motivation. It is impossible for her to consider teacher professionalism, students' interest, students' intelligence quotient, learning facilities, etc. because of the limitation of both the time and the expense.

Inquiry-based teaching and learning is supposed appropriate to develop students' reading competence. Firstly, in inquiry, instructors or teachers act as coaches, guides, and facilitators who help learners at their "true" questions – the things they really care about. When students choose the questions, they are motivated to learn and they develop a sense of ownership about the learning. Secondly, students take control of their own learning and to apply knowledge, which they learn with understanding. Thirdly, inquiry is instead an active process, where progress is assessed by how well students develop experimental and analytical skills. The use of inquiry in the classroom gives an opportunity for students to complete exercises on their own, and teachers should allow them to figure out thoughts, ideas, and concepts for themselves. With the inquiry method

of instruction, students arrive at an understanding of concepts by themselves and the responsibility for and learning rests with them. Inquiry-based education requires allowing students to discover information that is new to them as well as developing a good relationship between the teacher and the student. Inquiry is a way to rejuvenate a student's curiosity about the world, and it may help students to become more open, to take more risks and responsibilities in class, and to be more objective and precise (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/msen/statement/bp900.html> in <http://pan.tcnj.edu/Carroll/inquiry.htm>).

Inquiry is learner centered but inquiry teaching requires considerable teacher involvement. It also requires that the teacher directs or guides the learning experience by asking questions, making comments or suggestion, and providing data when they are needed. This kind of teacher-directed learning is sometimes referred to as directed or guided inquiry. Regardless of the names applied to it, it is inquiry teaching. It is best used to teach students of any grade or ability level how to inquire as they are learning information, developing, conceptual, knowledge, or clarifying their own attitudes and values. And it may even be used to evaluate how well they can engage in inquiry (Beyer, 1971: 53-54).

Inquiry teaching requires a high degree of interaction among the learners, the teacher, the materials, the content, and the environment. Perhaps the most crucial aspect of the inquiry method is that it allows both student and teacher to become persistent askers, seekers, interrogators, and questioners. Questioning plays a crucial role in both the teaching and learning acts associated with the inquiry mode of learning. Questions lead to investigations as students attempt to

understand the topic under study. One of inquiry models is inductive inquiry. Pictures are usually the easiest way to introduce the concept of inductive inquiry. For young children, the steps are by showing different pictures of the same scene to the class and asking them to tell what they see in the pictures and describe patterns they observe. The questions below help the students to examine all kinds of interrelationships, one of the desired goals of inquiry teaching, they are as follows:

(1) What kind of object is it?; (2) What is it called?; (3) Where is it found?; (4) What does it look like?; (5) Have you ever seen anything like it? Where? When?; (6) How is it like other things?; (7) How can you recognize or identify it?; (8) How did it get its name?; (9) What can you do with it?; (10) How was it made?; (11) What is its purpose?; (12) What does it work or operate?; (13) What other names does it have?; and (14) How is it different from other things?

The following question stems are also suitable for use in inductive inquiry:

(1) What is happening?; (2) What has happened?; (3) What do you think will happen now?; (4) How did this happen?; (5) Why did this happen?; (6) What caused this to happen?; (7) What took place before this happened?; (8) Where have you seen something like this happen?; (9) When have you seen something like this happen?; (10) How could we make this happen?; (11) How does this compare with what we saw or did?; (12) How can we do this more easily?; and (13) How can you do this more quickly? (Orlich, et al., 1998: 291-303).

Motivation is quite important to acquire good reading competence, when students have motivation to learn, it is easy to engage them in a teaching – learning process and the instruction has been found effective. Students are involved in learning because they want to know or they have a purpose. They exhibit both much greater involvement in and commitment to achieve the goals if

they have high motivation (<http://www.youthlearn.org/learning/approach/inquiry.asp>).

Motivation is commonly thought of as an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to particular action. Most specifically, human beings universally have needs or drives that are more or less innate, yet their intensity is environmentally conditioned. There are six desires or needs of human organisms commonly identified which undergrid the construct of motivation. They are as follows: (1) The need for exploration, for seeing 'the other side of the mountain', for probing the unknown; (2) The need for manipulation, for operating on the environment and causing change; (3) The need for activity, for movement and exercise, both physical and mental; (4) The need for stimulation, the need to be stimulated by the environment, by other people, or by ideas, thoughts, and feelings; (5) The need for knowledge, the need to process and internalize the results of exploration, manipulation, activity, and stimulation, to resolve contradictions, to quest for solutions to problems and for self-consistent system of knowledge; and (6) The need for ego enchancement, for the self to be known and to be accepted and approved of by others (Brown in Simanjuntak, 1988: 2-3).

The needs to construct motivation cover investigating or inquiring something unknown, handling something skillfully to make it changed, creating activities physically and mentally, encouraging oneself by both internal and external factors, acquiring knowledge, analyzing the results of exploration, manipulation, activity, and stimulation to solve the problems, and making oneself to be regarded and acceptable.

B. Problem Identification

Dealing with the background of the study, there are some problems that can be identified:

1. Why do students tend to have low reading competence?
2. What factors cause low reading competence?

3. Can students' reading competence be improved? If it can, how can it be improved?
4. Does the method or the approach of teaching used by teachers influence students' reading competence?
5. Does teacher professionalism affect students' reading competence?
6. Does students' interest also affect their reading competence?
7. Does students' motivation also influence their reading competence?
8. Is it necessary to consider the method of teaching used in terms of the students' characteristics like interest, motivation, IQ, and parents support?

C. Problem Limitation

Questions arisen in problem identification will be limited into the problem, which is supposed to influence students' reading competence, they are method of teaching (inquiry-based teaching and learning and traditional method) and students' motivation.

D. Problem Statement

From the background of the study, problem identification, and problem limitation, there are four problems that are formulated.

1. Which one is more effective, inquiry-based teaching and learning or traditional method for teaching reading?
2. Which one is more effective, inquiry-based teaching and learning or traditional method for teaching reading for students having high motivation?

3. Which one is more effective, inquiry-based teaching and learning or traditional method for teaching reading for students having low motivation?
4. Is there any interaction between teaching method and students' motivation?

E. Objective of the Study

Generally, this research is aimed at knowing the influence of the teaching method and students' motivation in terms of students' reading competence. Particularly, this research is proposed to know (1) which one is more effective, inquiry-based teaching and learning or traditional method for teaching reading; (2) which one is more effective, inquiry-based teaching and learning or traditional method for teaching reading for students having high motivation; (3) which one is more effective, inquiry-based teaching and learning or traditional method for teaching reading for students having low motivation; and (4) whether there is any interaction between teaching method and students' motivation or not.

F. Benefit of the Study

Hopefully, from this study whether the method of teaching used (inquiry-based teaching and learning) can increase students reading competence or not will be significantly known, so the writer is able to decide the next step in teaching reading. If the learning motivation also influences students' reading competence, it is crucial to have better steps in motivating students to involve actively in the teaching learning-process in order to have better competence in terms of students who have high learning motivation.