"IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION SKILL THROUGH INFERENCE"

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Abstract
There are some problems faced by the students in comprehending reading comprehension and this research was implemented to solve the problems through inference. The purpose of this research was to find out the problems in the teaching and learning process and solve the problems. This research was conducted at grade VIII A of SMP Negeri 3 Kerinci. This classroom action research was conducted in two cycles, each cycle consisted three meetings. Based on the findings, it was found the improvements during the teaching and learning process. The result of the test in cycle one was 60.24% and increased to 97.43% in cycle two. Based on the result of the research, it could be concluded that through making inferencing improved the students' reading comprehension skill at grade VIII A of SMP Negeri 3 Kerinci. Hopefully, this research was a significant input for English teachers to implement making inferencing especially in reading at junior high school.
Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Inference, conversation text

Abstrak
Ada beberapa masalah yang dihadapi oleh siswa-siswa di dalam memahami membaca dan penelitian ini di implementasikan untuk memecahkan masalah-masalah melalui tebakan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan masalah-masalah dalam proses belajar dan mengajar dan menemukan solusi dari masalah tersebut. Penelitian ini di lakukan pada siswa kelas VIII A SMP N 3 Kerinci. Penelitian tindakan kelas ini dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus, dan setiap siklus terdiri dari tiga pertemuan. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, ditemukan bahwa perubahan-perubahan selama proses belajar dan mengajar. Hasil dari tes di siklus I adalah 60. 24% dan meningkat ke 97.43% di siklus II. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat dikatakan bahwa dengan menggunakan inference bisa meningkatkan keterampilan membaca siswa khususnya kelas VIII A SMP N 3 Kerinci. Harapan, semoga penelitian ini bisa menjadi masukan untuk guru bahasa Inggris untuk mengimplementasi inference dalam mengajar membaca di SMP.
Kata Kunci: Membaca, Menebak, teks percakapan

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most important skills to be learned in language learning. There are some problems faced by the students in this case especially in reading text, first, most of them don't like to read an English text because they are not interested in English. Second, most of students just read and find the difficult words without comprehend the text because they don't know the way to understand the text. Third, they still face difficulties to get the information on the text. Fourth, they do not understand or comprehend the text and do not like to

read English text. Finally, it makes them feeling bored to learn English.

Furthermore, it is also caused by the teacher, the teaching way used by the teacher cannot improve teaching reading. So, English teacher should use appropriate way to teach reading in order to make the students comprehend what they read in the target language.

There are various ways that can be used to improve the students' reading comprehension. One of them is inference. Inference is a way of guessing, it means that means they think like a detective and look for clues in the text. Then they use these clues to guess about the text. So, the students can comprehend the texts. It can be said that making inference is important to be learned. Through inference, the students know how to infer the text and use their knowledge to get information, in other words, students should be a critical reading in order to comprehend the texts, it is not enough to just read the words, but readers must add their experiences to help them make sense of text. Mikulecky and Jeffries's opinion (1997: 65 & 133) state that:

"Good readers constantly make inference as they read. That means that readers think like a detective and look for clues in the text. Then they use these clues to guess about the text and about the writer's ideas. This is especially important when some ideas are not directly stated. It means that inference helps you understand ideas, even when you do not know all the words. Good readers make inferences all the time as they read."

It can be said that inference helps the students to understand and comprehend the text based on the context. It can be done by using their prior knowledge, experiences,

and logic based on the clues in the texts and it also makes the students to be critical reader. The readers should be a critical reader because a good reader makes inference when they read.

Reading is an active process, it is not just to get information but the readers have to understand what they read or they will not get anything from the text. In English materials it is not easy for the readers to catch the ideas of the text, they have to take more times to comprehend it, try to find the stated ideas or unstated ones. The text does not just provide facts and information. There are also implicit meanings beyond the text. For students, they have to be able to apply specific skill. They must have good basic of English in order to achieve reading comprehension.

Wallace (1992: 3) states that reading is the most important resource that any potential reader possesses, whether reading in a first or any other language, an awareness of the way in which we use language. There are two things which we all know about language: (1) we use it for purpose and (2) it only makes sense in context, which is as part of a larger text or in a situation. Wallace (1992: 6) also describes reading purposes:

a. Reading for survival

We might call some kinds of reading in response to our environment "reading for survival". Indeed some reading is almost literally a matter of life and death, for example, a "stop" sign for motorist. Survival reading serves immediate needs or wishes. Obvious examples are "ladies", "gentlemen", and "exit".

b. Reading for learning

As well as a means of finding out information on a strictly utilitarian basis-reading for survival-reading serves the wider role of extending our general knowledge of the world. Much day to day reading is for this purpose of learning. Moreover, we may want not so much to learn something new as to remind ourselves about half-known facts or vaguely formulated opinions. For instance, as I write this book I move between the texts I am creating and key sources in order to support, consolidate, and clarify my ideas.

c. Reading for pleasure

While reading for survival involves an immediate response to a situation and reading for learning is also goal orientated, albeit in a rather different way, reading for pleasure is done for its own sake-we don't need to do it. This point may be lost on students in school where literature, originally written primary to offer enjoyment, is required reading for examinations. Educational practices tent to neglect the pleasure principle, producing young learners of the kind quoted by Clark (1976) who, although already a fluent reader, expressed the view that the purpose of learning to read was "so that you can stop"! And if readers do not read for pleasure in their mother tongue they are unlikely to do so in a second or foreign language. An important by-product of reading for pleasure in any language is fluency. This can create a vicious circle. Unless a reader gains fluency, that is speed and ease of reading, the reading of any material for whatever purpose is likely to be tedious. This, in turn, decreases motivation to read anything other than essential "survival" material-the minimum required to function in school or the workplace-and fluency never gets a chance to develop.

Moreover, Clowes (1980: 8) says reading is an active process, not a passive process. It involves interpreting passages, not just receiving a message. A reader interprets a passage by:

1. Understanding a writer's implications
2. Making inferences
3. Realizing not only what information is given but also what information is not given
4. Evaluating the passage

Based on the explanation above we know that reading is not a simple process but an active one. Reading is a complex process because it is not only to get information or ideas from the text but also to understand information that is not given in the text. The reader also has to know the reading purpose, the reading process, and a critical reading procedure or being a critical reader.

To be a critical reader, students should master the inference. Inferencing is a ways of guessing based on the clues in the text. There are some experts give the definition of inferencing. First, according to Mikulecky and Jeffries (1997: 56) state inference is a way of guessing. When you make an inference, you have some information and you guess more things from that information. You often make inferences in your life. You can make inferences on the bus, for example. You hear two people talking. You do not know what they are talking about but after you listen a little, you can guess what they are

talking about. Second, Kurland (2000: 4) states that inference is a mental process by which we reach a conclusion based on specific evidence. Inferences are the stock and trade of detectives examining clues, of doctors diagnosing diseases, and of car mechanics repairing engine problems. We infer motives, purpose, and intentions. We want to find significance. Inferences are not random. While they may come about mysteriously with a sudden jump of recognition, a sense of "Ah ha!," inferences are very orderly. Inferences may be guesses, but they are educated guesses based on supporting evidence. The evidence seems to require that we reach a specific conclusion.

There are some ways to apply inference, Hampton (2006:1) suggests model how to draw a conclusion in the following:

1. Read the sentences aloud and say: When I read, I look for details (circle walked, fiction section, rows of books).
2. Think about what I already know.
3. A conclusion

Conversation is an interaction between two people or more to deliver information and ideas. Lenin and Stalin (2007: 2) say that:

"Conversation is the verbalization of concepts involving abstractions and concrete objects which make up the reality in which we reside. A conversation is communication by two or more people, or sometimes with one's self, often on a particular topic. Conversations are the ideal form of communication in some respects, since they allow people with different views of a topic to learn from each other. A speech, on the other hand, is an oral presentation by one person directed at a group."

Moreover, Lenin and Stalin explain modes of conversation include small talk (talk about everyday social matters), gossip (informal talk about other people), negotiation (try to come to an argument by discussion), interview (meeting at which is asked questions), argument (discussion; reason for or against), debate (formal discussion at a public meeting or in a parliament), etc.

In Wikipedia's Article (2013:1) states that text and conversation is a theory in the field of organizational communication illustrating how communication makes up an organization. In the theory's simplest explanation, an organization is created and defined by communication.

Communication "is" the organization and the organization exists because communication takes place. These communicators achieve this through constant development, delivery, and translation of "text and conversation." So, conversation text is one of reading text. We use the text of conversation in reading to get information ao interact with the text.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a classroom action research. According to Gay and Airasian (2000:593), "classroom action research is a type of practitioner research that is used to improve the practitioner`s practice; action implies doing or changing something". In addition, Johnson (2005: 97) states that classroom action research is systematic observation of one's own teaching practice. The aim is to understand what is

happening in a particular classroom or school.

Classroom action research is a research that tries to solve problems in the classrooms and improve teaching and learning processes based on the problems faced by teachers. This means that classroom action is research is much important for teachers in improving their teaching practices.

Based on the above discussions, it can be concluded that classroom action research is a research that is conducted in order to find out solutions of any problems found during teaching and learning process. The classroom action research is also conducted collaboratively; that is, the teacher did not work alone, but he worked together with a collaborator whose participation is important.

The participants of the research was the Grade VIII of SMP N 3 Kerinci . The researcher chose a class VIII A to do the research. In class a, there were 24 students in this class. There were 14 female and 10 male. It was located in Tanjung Pauh Mudik.

The researcher collected the data through the test, the observation, field-note. The researcher used reading comprehension test in conversation texts form which was used to measure the students' ability. The test would be answered with short answer. The topic of the conversation texts was small talk, it meant that the conversation was about daily activity that faced by the students, it was based on the syllabus and the topic.

The observation and fieldnotes were made in checklist for. It was used to collect and record the real information and performance of the students in teaching

and learning process during the research. The collaborator helped the researcher to do it.

There were four stages in doing the research; planning, doing action, observing and evaluating. This model was called spiral model.

This classroom action research was conducted at grade VIII of SMP N 3 Kerinci. It was done in two cycles and each cycle consisted four meetings. The findings of this research are presented and discussed for the each cycle in the following.

DISCUSSION

The result of the test could be seen in the table of the interval score of cycle 1:

Grade	Score Interval	%
A	90-100 (Excellent)	41,66 % 0
B	75-89 (Good)	-
C	65-74 (Fairy Good)	4,16%
D	55-64 (Fair)	-
E	05-54 (Poor)	54,16%% 3
Total		100% 4

From the students' test, it could be seen that there were ten students got excellent score. From 24 students, there was 1 student who reached the fairy good. This result showed any. It could be seen that there were not many improvement, the improvement was only in good score and fairy score. The result of the test in cycle 1 showed there were no many improvements. The students still got the problems to inferencing or finding the information from the text. Thus, it was still needed do the next cycle after did the reflection.

The result of the test could be seen in the table of the interval score of cycle 2:

Grade	Score Interval	%
A	90-100 (Excellent)	91,66 % 2
B	75-89 (Good)	-
C	65-74 (Fairy Good)	8,33%
D	55-64 (Fair)	-
E	05-54 (Poor)	-
Total		100% 4

From the students' test, it could be seen that there were some improvements n students' score in reading test in cycle 2. There were 24 students excellent score from 26 students, there were only 2 students who reached the fairy good. It could be seen that there were not many improvements, the improvements were only in good score and fairy score. The result of the test in cycle 2 showed there were many improvements. The students' score and students' attitude in the teaching and learning process, the result of the test showed their reading skill was increased.

The teaching and learning process through making inferencing brought the improvement of students' reading skill at grade VIIIth A of SMP N 3 Kerinci. The students showed positive attitudes towards reading lesson, and became more active and enthusiastic during the teaching and learning process. These improvements were caused by the operational of several factors. These improvements were also supported by the data from field notes, observations and interviews.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research's findings, the use of inferencing helps the students to improve their reading skill. It is shown from the scores they got in the tests either in each cycle. The students improve their speaking skill.

Besides, the students' motivation and attitude toward English lesson especially reading get better. These improvements are influenced by several factors materials, media, tasks, communication/interaction, classroom management and motivation.

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