

Improvement of Students' Reading Comprehension and Activeness Using Read-Pair-Share

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Abstract: This classroom action research aims to: (1) identify whether and to what extent Read-Pair-Share technique improves students' reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Islam Diponegoro Surakarta, and (2) describe the class climate when the teacher implements Read-Pair-Share technique in reading class. The problems faced by the students include the difficulty in finding word meaning, identifying referents of pronouns, specific information, generic structure, implied meaning, main idea, and communicative purpose based on the text. The data were collected by observation, field notes, interview, and photograph. Meanwhile, the data were analyzed by assembling the data which have collected, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretation, and reporting the outcomes. The result showed that the students' reading comprehension on descriptive text improves in two cycles by using Read-Pair-Share technique.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, Read-Pair-Share, Descriptive Text.*

INTRODUCTION

Based on the English syllabus at eighth grade of junior high school in the first semester, students are expected to be able to comprehend recount and descriptive texts. Nevertheless, many students had problem in comprehending the text, especially occurred in class VIII A PK (*Program Khusus*). It was recognized when the researcher did pre-observation and pre-test to the students. Based on the students' average score in pre-test, the researcher found that the score was only 63,2. It was still bellow from expectation because the passing grade of English subject is 76.00. The result indicated the students had problem in comprehending descriptive text, especially in identify main idea, specific information, implied meaning, vocabulary, reference, generic structure and communicative purpose of text.

Moreover, in the teaching learning process, the students seldom got involved actively in the activities in classroom. The teacher tended using traditional method which asked the students to read and completed the task by themselves individually. students were seldom engaged in cooperative and interesting work. Students work competitively and individually which triggers them to give up when it deals with the difficult tasks. As a result, they end up feeling bored and unmotivated.

The last cause comes from the material. The material is usually not suitable to the teenage world and it is not interesting. Moreover, the text contains unfamiliar words. So, teacher must be creative and innovative to make interesting material in order to get the goal of the language teaching.

Teaching reading comprehension in junior high school needs such kind of

interesting strategies in teaching and learning process. One of them is by giving students “Read-Pair-Share” technique. According to McTighe & Lyman (in Herrell & Jordan, 2012:192) Read-Pair-Share technique is an adaptation of a partner activity called Think-pair-share. The activities and steps between those two methods are almost similar. Both of them are cooperative learning strategy, which allows students to think about a question, idea, issue, or notion, and share their thoughts with partners before discussion in a small group.

Another expert supports the explanation as the following:

Read-pair-share is just like Think-pair-share, but only students will read first, rather than think. This is a collaborative strategy in which students can either read the required reading together or individually, but then the pairing has to occur. This strategy works best if students have a set activity or project associated with their reading. (Letendre, 2012:23)

Meanwhile, another expert who support the explanation above is Herrell & Jordan who state:

In this activity partners read together, stopping after each paragraph or appropriate section of text to answer the traditional “who, what, where, when, and how” questions related to the text they have just read. Whenever the partners cannot answer a question, they return together to the selected material to find the answer. This activity is a strong reinforcing activity for English learners, giving them the opportunity to read and reread text, while receiving encouragement and support from a partner. Pairing an English learner with a strong English

speaker gives both students an opportunity to explore the language at a relaxed pace and in a less stressful environment. The social element introduced in this activity offers a positive opportunity for verbal and social interaction, reinforcing language acquisition and development. (Herrell & Jordan, 2012:192)

Considering the benefit of Read-pair-share technique stated by some experts above, the researcher is interested in conducting an action research in teaching reading by using Read-pair-share technique.

This research aims to: (1) identify whether and to what extent Read-Pair-Share technique improves students’ reading comprehension of the students, and (2) describe the class climate when the teacher implements Read-Pair-Share technique in reading class.

RESEARCH METHODS

To solve the students’ problems which is explained above and improve the students’ ability in reading comprehension on descriptive text, the researcher decided to conduct classroom action research. Classroom action research is a kind of research that is used to examine teachers’ own practice, solve problem and find innovation dealing with their teaching. That statement is supported by Ebbut in Hopkins (2008: 48) who states that action research is about the systematic study of attempts to improve educational practice by groups of participants by means of their own practical actions and by means of own reflection upon the effects of those actions.

In this research, the researcher conducted the research in two cycles which is consisted of 5 meetings. The researcher began the research by identifying the problems and figuring the solution out. From the identification of problems, the

researcher made planning. The plans includes lesson plan and the instruments to collect the data including observation checklist, field note, and supporting materials that was needed in lesson plan in order to help the students in solving the problems.

However, technique which is used in solving students' problem requires base score to determine the students' improvement, so the researcher did pre-test; and the pre-test score would be base score for students. Then the researcher made lesson plan dealing with the students' problem in comprehending the text. Based on the lesson plan, the researcher did action in classroom. Since this is collaborative action research, so the researcher acted as English teacher who applied Read-Pair-Share technique in the classroom, while the English teacher acted as observer who observed the activities in classroom. The researcher presented the material based on lesson plan which was designed by the researcher and the teacher.

In this research, the data were collected by observation, field notes, interview, and photograph. Meanwhile, the data were analyzed by assembling the data which have collected, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretation, and reporting the outcomes. While acting in classroom, the researcher observed what happened in the classroom to gather data by using observation and field note. The researcher observed the process from the beginning until the teaching learning process was over. From the observation, the researcher knew about the students' improvement through teaching and learning process. Besides observation checklist and field notes, the researcher also used written test to collect data in order to measure the students' reading comprehension on descriptive text. Based on the observation, the English

teacher and the researcher discussed about teaching learning process and gave feedback to each other about what had been done.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research was conducted in two cycles, and the result indicated the improvement of students' comprehension in descriptive texts related to the main idea, specific information, implied meaning, vocabulary, reference, generic structure and communicative purpose of text. The students were able to find the answers of the comprehension test well. Besides, their performances or activities in the classroom were getting better, their mean score also improved from cycle I to cycle II. In this research, the researcher indicated the improvement based on their mean score in each cycle, the students who passed passing grade, the percentage of mean score on each aspect of reading comprehension. However, the most important in this research was the process in the classroom.

During conducting the research in the classroom, the students showed the improvement in teaching learning process. The students more active in responding the teacher's questions and took part actively in group working than before. The students tried to learn how to responsible and achieve the goal together in order to get achievement. In addition, the students learn together in comprehending text and support each other. All of the improvement's process in the classroom can be seen from the observation by the researcher in the classroom by using observation checklists and field notes.

After conducting the research, the researcher also found that the students' mean score were improved from pre-test to post-test 2. The mean score of students were derived from written test in each cycle. In

pre-test, students' mean score was 63.20. This mean score was categorized as poor. Then, in post-test 1 improved to 73.80. The categorized was better from poor to average.

Finally, in post-test 2 the students could reach 83.10 for mean score. It showed that the students' comprehension improved from one cycle to another.

Table.1 The Improvement of the Students' Mean Score

Sub cycle	Observation	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Kind of test	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
Mean of the students' score	63.20	73.80	83.10

Besides mean score which is getting better, the number of students who passed the passing grade also improved from pre-test to post-test 2. In pre-test, there were only two students who passed the passing grade of fifteen students in the classroom. The percentage was only 13.33%. In post-test 1, the number of students who pass the passing grade improved than before. There were six students who passed the passing grade. The percentage was getting better to 40%. Then, in post-test 2 the improvement was great. There was only one student who couldn't pass the passing grade. So, the percentage reach 93.33%. It also indicated that there was improvement of achievement during the research by using Read-Pair-Share technique.

The second finding is the development of the classroom situation. Before this research, the students were noisy during teaching learning process. It happened because they were bored with the learning activities. However, after implementing this research, it can be seen that the students became happy and enthusiastic during teaching learning process. Moreover, the students became more active in English teaching learning process, paid attention to the teacher's explanation, became diligent to

do their homework and submitted it on time; their responsibility increased and could interact with their friends.

By observing the result of the monitoring, the researcher concludes that teaching reading by using read-pair-share technique made it easier for the students to understand the content of the text. They became more active in learning reading. The lower-ranked students would be helped and informed by the higher-ranked students. The higher-ranked members themselves got benefit too. When they shared their understanding to the lower-ranked students about how to comprehend the text, they understood more about it. In other words, all of the members of the pairs even all of the students in the classroom learnt and were actively involved in the teaching learning process.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The implementations of Read-pair-share technique as the teaching technique in teaching learning activity showed that: 1) Read-pair-share technique is able to improve students' reading comprehension. It is supported by the results of the test scores and the situation of the class. From the results of the test scores, it can be seen that

the mean of pre-test score is 63.20 and it increases up to 83.10 in final post-test. This result proves that teaching reading using Read-pair-share technique can improve students' reading comprehension. 2) Read-pair-share technique is able to improve situation in the reading class. The class was conducive for teaching-learning process to be held referring to the research findings. Read-Pair-Share technique is able to make the students tended to be active learner; they were willing to speak English in the classroom; their responsibility increased and they could interact to their friends.

After conducting an action research and based on the research findings, the researcher would like to add some suggestions for the English teacher and institutions.

The teachers should provide appropriate teaching method in teaching reading so that the English class commonly quite interesting for the students and the teachers should improve their skill in managing the class by optimizing some techniques in order to create improvement during teaching learning process for example by using Read-Pair-Share Technique to attract the students' interest and motivation.

The institution should encourage and support the English teacher to improve the quality of their teaching and give them more practice of teaching skills so that they can be the creative professional teachers who have high language competence of English and supported teaching skills. Besides, it is suggested that the school should motivate the teachers to do action research in order to solve the problems which is faced in class.

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