IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH LEARNING COMMUNITY UNDER CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACH

MUSTAKIM SAGITA

Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Jabal Ghafur Sigli

ABSTRACT

Reading is a part of language skills that needs to be increased by the students. Learning Community is used. It invites the students to read, think, predict, and prove each paragraph in narrative text. It employs collaborative Action Research and subjects of the research are 27 students. The criteria of success including: students are active and happy, the students' reading ability improves, and 80% students can achieve the passing grade of the reading comprehension in English lesson that is 75. The finding indicates that CTL Strategy could improve the students' ability in reading comprehension of narrative text.

Key Words: *CTL, Learning Community (LC), reading comprehension, narrative text.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading issomething which is taken for granted. Researcher reads with what appears to be little effort and little planning. And it is remakable that so much of the world's population can read – a litle more than 80 percents of the world's population can read to some extent(Elley,2001; Tucker, 2000; UNESCO, 2007)

As what we have known, *Kurikulum 2006* shows that for second year students of Junior highschool, the students should get *procedure text, recounttext,descriptivetext,and narrativetext. Narrativetext*as the matters ofreadingcomprehensionis a kind of text in monologue text which has been a part of curriculum. It means that each student mustlearn narrative text well.

The importance of reading is also stated by Grabe (2009: 4). According to Grabe, reading is also important to recognize that many people around the world read in more than one language. Large populations of people have learned to read in second or third languages for variety of reasons, including interactions within and across heterogeneous multilingual countries, large-scale immigration movements, global transportation, advanced education opportunities, and the spread of language of wider communication.

It is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought. Readingconsists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text. Readers typically make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text. Much of what we know about reading is based on studiesconducted in English and other alphabetic languages. The principles we list in this booklet are derived from them, but most also apply to non-alphabetic languages. They will have to be modified to account for the specific language (Bernhardt, 1991).

Teaching Reading Purpose

According to Harmer (1998), there are many reasons why getting students to read English texts is an important part of the teacher's job. In the first place, many of them want to be able to read text in English either for their careers, for study purposes or simply for pleasure. Anything we can do to make reading easier for them must be a good idea. Reading is useful for the other purposes too: any exposure to English (provide students understand it more or less) is a good thing for language student. At the very least, some of the language sticks in their minds as part of the process of language acquisition, and if the reading text is especially interesting and engaging, acquisition is likely to be even more successful.

Principle besides the Teaching of Reading

There are six principles behind the teaching of reading according to Harmer (1998). They are:

First, reading is not a passive skill. Reading is an incredibly active occupation. To do it successfully, researcher has to understand what the words mean, see the pictures the words are painting, understand the arguments, and work out if he agrees with them. If he did not do these things - and if students do not do these things - then he only just scratch the surface of the text and he quickly forgets it.

Second, students need to be engaged with what they are reading. As with everything else in lessons, students who are not engaged with the reading text – not actively interested in what they are doing – are less likely to benefit from it. When they

are really fired up by the topic or the task, they get much more from what is in front of them.

Third, students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language. It is important to study reading texts for the way they use language, the number of paragraphs they contain and how many times they use relative clauses. But the meaning, the message of the text, is just as important and researcher must give students a chance to respond to that message in some way. It is especially important that they should be allowed to express their feelings about the topic – thus provoking personal engagement with it and the language.

Fourth principle is prediction is a major factor in reading. When researchers reads text in their language, they frequently have a good idea of the content before they actually read. Book covers give them a hint of what's in the book, photographs and headlines hint at what articles are about reports look like reports before they read a single word. The moment they get this hint – the book cover, the headline, the word processed page – our brain starts predicting what people are going to read. Expectations are set up and the active process of reading is ready to begin. Teachers should give students 'hint' so that they can predict what's coming too. It will make them better and more engaged readers.

Fifth is match the task to the topic. Researcher could give students Hamlet's famous soliloquy 'to be or not to be' and ask them to say how many times the infinitive is used. He could give them a restaurant menu and ask them to list the ingredients alphabetically. There might be reason for both tasks, but, on the face of it, they look a bit silly. He will probably be more interested in what hamlet means and what the menus actually are. Once a decision has been taken about what reading text the students are going to read, the researcher needs to choose good reading tasks – the right kind of questions, engaging and useful puzzles etc. The most interesting text can be undermined by asking boring and inappropriate question; the most commonplace passage can be made really exciting with imaginative and challenging tasks.

The last principle is that the good teachers exploit reading texts to the full. Any reading text is full of sentences, words, ideas, descriptions etc. It does not make sense just to get students to read it and then drop it to move on to something else. Good teachers integrate the reading text into interesting class sequences, using the topic for discussion and further tasks, using the language for study and later activation (Harmer 1998).

CTL Strategy

Contextual Teaching Learning is an educational process that aims to help the students' see the meaning in academic material they are learning by linking academic subjects in the context of their daily lives. According to contextual learning theory, learning occurs only when students (learners) process new information or knowledge in such a way that it makes sense to them in their own frames of reference (their own inner worlds of memory, experience, and response). This approach to learning and teaching assumes that the mind naturally seeks meaning in context that is, in relation to the person's current environment and that it does so by searching for relationships that make sense and appear useful.

Learning Community technique

A learning community is a group of students who take a common set of courses together or share a common experience around their academic. Participants in a Learning Community develop a deeper understanding of the courses subject matter while they build relationship and learn together. Moskowitz (1978:2) said the technique help build rapport, cohesiveness, and caring that far transcend what is already there help students to be themselves, help foster a climate of caring and sharing in the foreign language class.

Narrative Text

A narrative text is a text that amuses, entertains, and deals with actual or vicarious experience in different ways. Narrative deals with problematic events which lead to a crisis or turning point of some kind, which in turn finds a resolution.

This kind of story is very familiar and very easy to find in daily life, because the themes of this story have close relationship with human life and human characteristics.

Anderson Anderson(2002; 3) gives an example of narrative texts which includes: myths, fairytales, science fiction, and romance novels.

The Generic Structures of Narrative Text

According to Anderson (1997), every text has the different generic structure, and the steps constructing a narrative text are; (Orientation) it can be a paragraph, a picture or opening chapter in which the narrator tells the audience about *what, when* and *where* the action is happening, and then (Complication) a crisis arises, it sets off a chain of events that influence what will happen in the story, after that (Sequence of events) it provides where the characters react to the complication, next (Resolution) the crisis is solved, for the better or for worse. It provides a comment or moral value based on what has been learned from the story (an optional step), and lastly (Coda) providing a comment or moral based on what has been learned from the story (an optional step).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design used in this study is classroom action research. "Action research is a

process designed to empower all participants in the educational process (students, instructors and other parties) with the means to improve the practices conducted within the educational experience" (Hopkins, 1993). All participants are known as the active members of the research process. Currently, this kind of research is called classroom action research.

Considering the explanation above, the researcher employs the collaborative action research design. The researcher works together with the other English teachers to solve the reading comprehension problem in the class.

Furthermore, the researcher conducts the action in a cyclical process. The procedure is done based on the cycles consisting of certain actions which covers the planning of the action, the implementation of the action, the observation, and the reflection.

Observing

The observation was conducted by using some instruments. They are theinterview, field notes, questionnaire or self-observation checklist, and final work scoring rubric.

The interview is done to get more information about the students' progress during teaching and learning process. The researcher can ask, especially in their comprehension of narrative text, how their ability before and after studying using the strategy is.

Field note is used to collect the qualitative data. During the teaching and learning process collaborator noted any findings that occur. The finding range from situation (atmosphere) of the class to unexpected things that may happen during the implementation.

Meanwhile, to collect the data about students' participation the self-observation checklist or questionnaire is used. This observation checklist is handed out to the teacherand he must observe himself and collaborator checked it,it is about the activities during the observation, frequencyofprediction, the discussion with the students.

Final work scoring rubric was given in the last time after giving the material or doing the cycle. It was used to know the students final score, so it can be included in quantitative data because it can be counted.

Analysis and Reflection

Based on what the teacher had done,heanalyzedthe result of the secondimplementation and observation.

The students score average in reading comprehension of narrative text was 83.38 and there were 5 students got score under 75, their scores were better than the first cycle.It happened because students followed what their teacher wanted, as like;

they brought dictionary, they paid attention, they had been active and enthusiasm in the class, they asked every difficulty they met, and they wrote the questions, predictions, synonyms, and antonyms that made them easy to study.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDING

Based on the result of reading test and checklist, the teacher assumed the first cycle implementation was not applied optimally. Most of students did not give more attention. They did not participate actively, they just kept silent because they were afraid to get the mistake in predicting or asking something, they spoke with their friends during the process. So, only the clever students gave attention, they were very active and did what the teacher asked.

When the first test was given, they felt difficult and confused, because they did not understand the instructions, they did not follow the process of applying the strategy. It was found that the main score of the students' reading comprehension of narrative text mean score was 69.71 and it was still under the standard score that school had.

Besides, there were a lot of factors that influenced students' comprehension a narrative reading text, which was, the limitation of the vocabulary, the amount of previous knowledge that the reader brought to the text and the complexity of the concepts expressed (Nuttal, 1982: 6).

CONCLUSION

The application of teaching narrative text trough Learning Community (LC) technique could improve students' reading comprehension. Based on the observation result before and after the cycle showed that there was improving in students' reading ability, especially in narrative text. It showed that the students' score in reading narrative text increased. The students' score in preliminary study was 10 of 27 students got score over than 75 as the criteria of success or 30% of the students were success. In the first cycle, 17 of 27 students got score over than 75 as the criteria of success or 42% of the students were success. Based on the result of CAR, the teacher assumed that Learning Community (LC) technique could improve students' reading comprehension, especiallyin the second grade of SMA Negeri 2 Bandar Baru.

SUGGESTION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the research held, the teacher stated that the students' reading comprehension of the second grade of SMA Negeri2 Bandar Baru, after being taught by Learning Community (LC) technique, had positive significant result improvement and it could be categorized as good, thisfindings led the teacher to give suggestion and recommendation as follow;

For the Teacher

First, it was suggested for the teacher to consider the Learning Community (LC) technique developed in this study in order to teach the students reading essay or to improve their reading comprehension ability. Second, before teaching, the teacher needed to formulate instructional objective to be achieved by the students through lesson plan, he selected material or topics which were interesting for the students, he prepared the instructional media, and he designed instructional procedure of assessment.

For the Administrator

It is also suggested that the administrator provides facilities to improve the students' ability in learning English especially reading. The school can supply the materials and media that can be used in teaching learning activities like materials in form various kind of books. So, it is influence the students to visit the laboratory and borrow some English narrative text.

For the Future Researcher

Since the study was an action research, it was advisable that future researchers followed up the study by conducting action researchers on improving the students' reading ability in other types of essay. It could be conducted not only in senior high school but also at junior high school.

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