Improving Students' Activeness in Reading Comprehension through Discussion Technique.

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Abstract

Abstract: - This study aims to enhance the Activeness in Reading Comprehension through Discussion Technique. Discussion is is a scientific deliberation that contains an exchange of ideas carried out by several people who gather in groups to seek the truth. The design of this study is action research. The subjects in this study are forty students of second class at Senior High School. The research phase in this study is an adaptation of the Kemmis and Taggart (1988) model which includes; planning, action, observation and reflection. The research has been implemented in two cycles, each cycle consists of four meetings. Research instruments are using observation, document analysis, interview, and questionnaire. The results of the research shows classroom action research which aims to improve the use of discussion technique in language learning successfully implemented. The implementation of discussion technique in class reading, especially in comprehending the text can make students' mind relaxed in thinking and not depressed. From the students' side, the students can solve the problems that faced in reading comprehension. Students' activeness is improved 18.125% that the Cycle 1 is 54.025 % and the Cycle 2 is 72.15 %. They are motivated to complete the task precisely on due time.

Keywords : Students, Discussion Technique

INTRODUCTION

Reading is the most efficient way to obtain information about various aspects of life, because most of the information presented is carried in print media such as papers, journalists, publications and manuscripts. Therefore, good reading skills are needed to find out the contents of the information. Even on the internet, information is presented in written form, so users need to read the information. As stated by Carell (1998: 1) for many students, reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second language or foreign language. Of course, if they regard the study of English as an international foreign language, the conditions in which most English students find themselves reading are the main reasons why students study the language. The purpose of learning to read in junior high school is to understand the meaning of personal and simple transactional written discourse in a formal and

relaxed manner, especially in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in the context of everyday life.

To be effective, students must be able to have solid reading skills. Other hand, the inactiveness of students in understanding English texts is a common problem faced by teachers in teaching reading. Consequently, they are very difficult to answer the reading questions given by the teacher. There are three reasons of student passivity in understanding a text. First, students do not master vocabulary, or lack vocabulary. These difficulties also make it problematic for them to understand or comprehend the text since many words are new to them. Second, many students do not have dictionaries due to the slow economic situation of their parents. Some of them even feel reluctant to bring a dictionary because most complete dictionaries are heavier than the additional books. Third, the students with low abilities, they also need a long time to reflect, so they are easy to get into trouble. They choose to play with their group rather than understand difficult texts. To response these problems, the writer believes that it is very important to change the attitudes and behavior of students in the teaching and learning process, especially by perfecting students' activities in the reading class. This study entitled at grade eight of senior high school in Wanareja by improving students' activeness in reading comprehension through discussion technique.

Reading Comprehension

Reading does not mean just looking at the words but also more than the collaboration between the reader and the text. Many linguists also view that reading is a process. Hornby (1995: 1037) states that the word "reading" as a noun comes from the word "to read" (infinitive verb with to). To read means to look for and to be able to understand something written or printed. In the curriculum, the purpose of teaching reading for the junior high school is to understand the meaning in the simple written interpersonal and transactional discourse formally or informally, especially in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in the context of everyday life.

There are a lot of reading comprehension definitions, and one of them is proposed by Finochiaro (1986: 77). He said that reading comprehension means understanding information from it as efficiently as possible. There are some steps of reading comprehension such as prior knowledge, reading text, comprehension tasks and language exercise. The first step is prior knowledge which consists of activities that aim to activate students' prior knowledge through two methods. Both methods are vocabulary preview: students will try to get the meaning of some

difficult words before they read the text. The second method is context anticipation: students will be given time to anticipate the content of the text based on the given direction. The second phase is to read the text which contains of reading passages, which need to be read. The third step is comprehension tasks which consist of three main activities, namely literal level (there are a number of statements which can be found in the text), interpretive level (there are a number of statements, each of them must be an implicit conclusion of the text), and the last level is applied level (there are also some statements, each of them must be an appropriate generalization of the text). The fourth step, language practice focuses on studying the linguistic devices of the text to strengthen students' comprehension skills. From this description, the writer concludes that reading comprehension is defined as the ability to understand messages from printed or written materials.

Stated by Widyanto (1995: 62) says that there are five points in the importance of reading as way to successful study. The first, reading is the most learning resource. The second, reading is the cheapest learning resource. The third, reading is the easiest learning resource. The fourth, reading is speed learning resource and the last, be up to date to reading comprehension. Thus, people can improve their skills and knowledge and broaden their prospects. As students, reading is something that is very important and absolute because their success in learning depends on their reading activities and skills. If their reading is bad, they are desperate to fail in their studies or at least they will have a hard time making progress. On the other hand, if their reading skills are good, they will have a better chance of succeeding in their studies.

The aim of teaching English is to develop the four language skills. They read, listen, speak, and write. Learning English integrates all four language skills and emphasizes reading skills. There are two different approaches to teaching reading; they read for language and read for purpose. The first approach of this section is to provide practice in learning certain aspects of the language, for example to learn certain grammatical items. The real reason for reading in this view is to learn the language. In the second approach, the focus is on reading for purpose. The purpose of reading here is reading for information and reading for interest and pleasure. Therefore, in reading comprehension students must always be active and enthusiastic in order to succeed in learning.

Teaching Reading Using Discussion

The step of using discussion technique for teaching reading below are quoted from Hasibuan and Mudjiono (1985: 23-24).
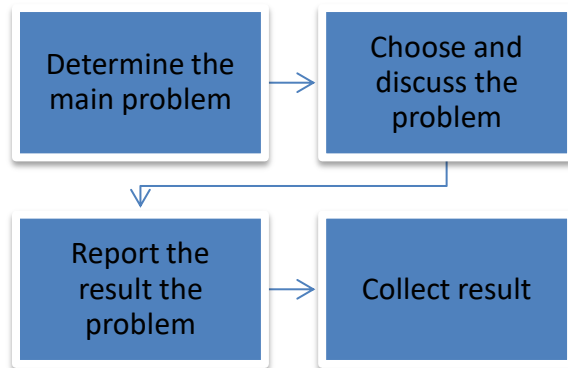
Figure 1 Discussion technique by Hasibuan and Mudjiono model

The teacher proposes a problem/text to be discussed and provides the necessary direction to students how to solve the problem. Hence they have to determine the main problem and discuss together and formulate obviously so that students can get a good understanding. Led by the leader, they must ensure that they ensure they master the topic of the problem going forward. The authority of a leader really must be supported by his group members. The group leader must be fair, and democratic. All discussions are performed in English. The students discuss an issue/text in their group while the teacher walks around from one to another group and takes care that each member has active participation. Then each group must report the results of its discussion, and the other groups give reactions, protests, or questions. As a final point, students make summaries about the results of the discussion and the teacher collects the results of the discussions from each group.

Activeness in Reading Comprehension

Some of the keys to successful learning can be seen from the activeness of students in the classroom. Hence active reading comprehension is an active effort to be able to understand written text messages, to achieve success in reading. According to Hornby (1994: 57), activeness is a trait of being active, moving or acting rapidly and energetically, "the level of activity declines with ages". Activeness is the performance of person to achieve a success. Active learning is also an effort to achieve success in learning. Thus the effort is to be able to understand the messages of the written texts, in order to achieve the success in reading. It was carried out in two cycles then the researchers completing the pre-cycle. It used Kemmis & McTaggart model by employing four phases in each cycle: plan, action, observation, and reflection.

METHOD

This research was conducted according to the action research design. Action research is a cooperative research approach that individuals use with the methodical activities they take do

towards the solution of a specific problem. Such an approach is the one in which individuals aim to examine their problems and especially the problems affecting the society by means of reconciliatory, democratic and participatory strategies (Berg, 2001).

Participants

School selection: Principles sampling, a method of purposive sampling, used in school and student collection. The criterion sampling method is a common strategy for selecting a sample that emphasize reviewing and examining all cases that meet predetermined and important criteria (Patton, 2002). In the research, the schools where the study would be lead was firstly selected. Consists of twenty boys and twenty girls in class eight at SMP Negeri 1 Wanareja. Most of them are passive within the students of the eighth grade, especially in reading lesson and in comprehending the text.

Design of the Research

The research stage that will be used in this study is the Kemmis model and Taggart (1988) distribute the action research process into four action stages in one cycle (cycle), namely: 1. Planning, 2. Actions, 3. Observe, and 4. Reflection.
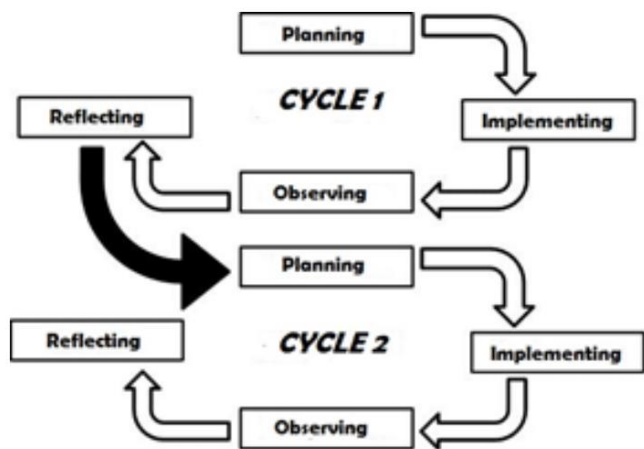

Fig. 1: Classroom Action Research Cycles

Data Gathering Tools

Observations, student notebooks, interviews, and tests used in collecting data. Observation, student notebooks, and interviews were collected during the learning process in the form of qualitative data during the reading comprehension test given at the end of each cycle to get quantitative data. The prior data was used for response research questions about how effective collaborative planned

reading in increase students' reading performance and the last data is used to response the query if Collaborative strategic reading can improve students' reading ability or not.

Rationality and Consistency of the Study

This study was considered successful by the author and collaborators, and the action will be stopped. The results of observations must be 60% of student activity in the teaching and learning process, questionnaires must be 60% of students stated "Yes" to learning styles and the results of interviews indicated students gave positive answers or opinions about their feelings in contributing in learning using discussion techniques. According to Sumarno in Sukidin et.al (2002: 141) in the evaluation, the criteria have a function as the standard of comparison to determine the level of the action success. The consideration has been agreed by the teacher as a researcher and collaborators who helps the teacher to observe the action.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of Discussion technique in the class.

 A. *Cycle 1: Planning and Action*

In Cycle 1 the average percentage of student activity was 55.16%. This shows that the student's activities are respectable and in accordance with the teacher's expectations. It can be seen from the table below:

No.	Indicator	Percentage	
		Action 1	Action 2
1.	active in opening the dictionary to find the meaning of new words found in the text in discussion	51 %	46 %
2.	active in comprehending every phrase, sentence and paragraph in discussion	58.5 %	61 %
3.	active in focusing or concentrating his/her mind to comprehend the text in discussion	58.5 %	68.5 %
4.	active in finding problems or difficulties in the text in discussion	33.5 %	53.5 %
5.	active in responding both questions and opinions from others in discussion	61 %	56 %
6.	active in finding the right answers in answering the reading questions through discussion	63.5 %	71 %
7.	active in holding up his/her hands to represent his/her group in answering the reading questions	46 %	41 %

8.	active in doing the instruction and tasks given by the teacher through discussion	63.5 %	66 %
	Average in Cycle 1	**54.025 %**	
	Average in each action	**50.25 %**	**57.8 %**
	Improvement	**7.55 %**	

The ratio of students' activeness in opening the dictionary to find the new words from the text is little. Even the activeness of opening the dictionary in Action 2 is lower than in Action 1. Some students became not active in understanding the text. It can be understood in the indicator of the students' activeness in opening the dictionary to find the meaning of new words found in the text in discussion in which the percentage shows 51% in Action 1, and 46% in Action 2. Also it was found that some students were confused about finding problems or difficulties that would be discussed in the discussion, particularly for students who did not bring a dictionary. That is 32.5% in Action 1, and 52.5% in Action 2. Then the average result of student activity in raising their hands to represent their group in answering reading questions is low, which is 45% in Action 1, and 40% in Action 2. There are still some students who are not active in the learning process in cycle 1. This happens because of two factors, namely from the students themselves and the limited ability of the teacher. However, the teacher tried to find a solution to increase student activity in reading comprehension through discussion techniques in the next cycle.

The shortcomings or weaknesses of teachers in the learning process carried out can be seen in the following table:

The Result of the Observation List of Teacher's Activeness at Cycle 1

No	Indicator	Category	
		Action 1	Action 2
1	Explaining the rules of discussion before the teaching and learning process	Fair	Fair
2	Following the group discussion and helping students to resolve the problem	Excellent	Good
3	Writing the purpose of teaching and learning process on the board	Excellent	Good
4	Giving questions to the students individually and in group	Good	Good
5	Giving chance or occasion to other group, if there is student's answer which has not been right yet	Good	Good
6	Giving praise as reward to the students who answer right	Good	Good
7	Using media or teaching aid to help students easier in understanding the material	Fair	Fair

First, the lack of teachers in explaining the rules of discussion before the teaching and learning process in both Action 1 and Action 2. There are two prominent shortcomings of teachers in the learning process. Moreover the teacher still used lap top and LCD in presenting the reading materials. To improve the students' activeness, teachers need improvement by discussion technique in the next cycle.

B. Cycle 2: Planning and Action

Cycle 2 of 70.16% showed good student activity, and the results increased compared to Cycle 1. This was reinforced by the survey results which showed the figure of 70.94%. These results show an increase in Cycle 2. It can be seen bellow;

No	Indicator	Percentage	
		Action 1	Action 2
1	active in opening the dictionary to find the meaning of new words found in the text in discussion	62 %	64.5 %
2	active in comprehending every phrase, sentence and paragraph in discussion	71 %	72 %
3	active in focusing or concentrating his/her mind to comprehend the text in discussion	84.5 %	84.5 %
4	active in finding difficulties in the text in discussion	54.5 %	67 %
5	active in responding both questions and opinions from others in discussion	69.5 %	72 %
6	active in finding the right answers in answering the reading questions through discussion	82 %	84.5 %
7	active in holding up his/her hands to represent his/her group in answering the reading questions	62 %	64.5 %
8	active in doing the instruction and tasks given by the teacher through discussion	77 %	82 %
	Average in Cycle 2	**72.15 %**	
	Average in each action	**70.4 %**	**73.9 %**
	Improvement	**3.5 %**	

From that table, it indicated by the percentage of student activity in each indicator in Cycle 2 is higher than in Cycle 1. The student activity in Action 1 in Cycle 2 is generally good, but student activity in Action 2 is better than in Action 1. However, there are still deficiencies or weaknesses in the learning process carried out by the teacher. See this table below;

No	Indicator	Category	
		Action 1	Action 2
1	Explaining the rules of discussion before the teaching and learning process	Good	Good
2	Following the group discussion and helping students to resolve the problem	Excellent	Excellent
3	Writing the purpose of teaching and learning process on the board	Excellent	Good
4	Giving questions to the students individually and in group	Excellent	Excellent
5	Giving chance or occasion to other group, if there is student's answer which has not been right yet	Excellent	Good
6	Giving praise as reward to the students who answer right	Good	Good
7	Using media or teaching aid to help students easier in understanding the material	Good	Fair

The teacher's skill in teaching reading comprehension had still weaknesses both in Action 1 and Action 2. In this case the teacher was necessary to explain the rules of discussion more detailed and clearly to make students more active in comprehending the text. Then teacher's weakness was in give praise as reward to the students who answer right. The third was the teacher's weakness in using the teaching and learning media. Therefore the teacher is necessary to use the media well, and as maximal as possible in teaching reading comprehension to improve the students' activeness in the learning process, so that they have good skills in the reading learning. The skill in Cycle 2 had improvement exceedingly, that was when it was associated with the teacher's skill in Cycle 1. The complete result of observation of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 can be seen in following table:

The Result of the Observation List of Students' Activeness

At Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

	Cycle 1		Cycle 2	
	Action 1	Action 2	Action 1	Action2
Mean	**50.25 %**	**57.8 %**	**70.4 %**	**73.9 %**
Average	**54.025 %**		**72.15 %**	

Improvement	18.125%

It can be seen that the percentage of student activity in Cycle 2 is compared to the increase in student activity in Cycle I. The percentage shows 72.15% in Cycle 2.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of discussion technique can improve the students' activeness in reading comprehension. It also proved that the implementation of discussion technique in class reading, especially in comprehending the text can make students' mind relaxed in thinking and not depressed. The materials and motivation are very increased to use, so that it can make it easier for teachers to achieve learning objectives and deliver learning materials. Thus it can make students solve the problems they face in reading comprehension. It can be seen from the result of the students' activeness observation in every cycle. The result of the observation list of students' activeness at Cycle 1 is 54.025 % and at Cycle 2 is 72.15 %. It means that there was improvement 18.125% in Cycle 2.

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