

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION ON HORTATORY
EXPOSITION TEXT THROUGH RECIPROCAL TEACHING STRATEGY**

**A Classroom Action Research to the Second Semester Students in the Eleventh
Grade of SMA PGRI 1 Pontianak in Academic Year 2011/2012**

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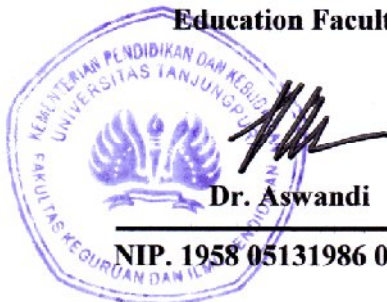


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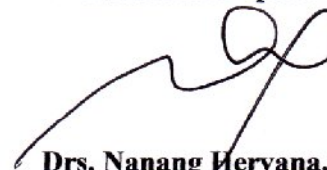
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IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION ON HORTATORY EXPOSITION TEXT THROUGH RECIPROCAL TEACHING STRATEGY

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Abstract : *This study was Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve senior high school students' reading comprehension. In this project, Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (RTS) was used to help students find meaning in English reading texts. The process of RTS comprises of reading activities such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing which typically involving interaction between students-students and students-teacher. Predicting helped the students hypothesized the general idea of the text. Questioning helped the students get deeper understanding of the text by generating questions. The students clarified unfamiliar parts in order to understand the clumsy part of the text. Summarizing monitored the students' understanding by concluding the text. After three cycles of the teaching learning processes, the students' reading comprehension improved gradually.*

Key words: Reciprocal Teaching Strategy, CAR, Reading Comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is as a foreign language and become one of compulsory subjects which students should pass on their national examination from junior high school level to senior high school. Reading is one of the four language skills that is greatly emphasized in EFL classroom setting. Unlike ESL learners who use English as the medium of communication, most EFL learners study English merely in classroom setting. In addition, they do not use English in a society. The emphasis of teaching and learning process tends to be on reading activities. It can be observed from the fact that most of teachers lead their students to read and memorize the vocabulary during the classroom activities. In other words, learners of English in Indonesia are only exposed to English when they study this subject inside the classroom, outside the English class they almost never get exposed to English. According to Dubin and Bycina (1991) cited in Hadi (2006:62), "reading is often the chief goal of learners in countries where English is taught as foreign language". In this way, it proves that reading is used as a tool to measure students' proficiency in learning English and less emphasis on other aspects of language skills such as listening, speaking and writing. In other words, reading becomes an important skill for students as if they don't have good skill in reading, they could fail in their learning.

As described above, insufficient exposure to English contributes to students' poor performance in reading. However, problems in improving students reading ability seem to be a bit difficult even though it has a very different nature from writing and speaking. For most Indonesian students who have limited exposure to oral English communication, reading becomes the first stepping stone to develop proficiency in the English language learning. Considering the importance of reading, students should be good in their reading comprehension. In fact, senior high school students face many difficulties when they try to comprehend English texts.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand any information from the text. In addition, Snow (2002:11) defines reading comprehension as "the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language." She classifies that comprehension entails three elements: the reader who is doing comprehension, the text that is to be comprehended, and the activity in which comprehension is a part of considering the purpose, process, and consequences associated with the act of reading. These three elements of reader, text, and activity are interrelated during the process of reading comprehension. To comprehend a text, the reader must have a capacity and knowledge to get meaning from the text. The text can be easy or difficult for the reader depending on their capacity and knowledge from the reader. Reading does not occur in vacuum. During reading, the reader processes the text with the regard to set the purpose of reading. Having good reading ability will help the students to understand any written text in English. Comprehension is the primary goal of reading. Anderson (2003) stated, "Comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading."

Reading comprehension is important for students in this informational age. The development of technology requires people to read since the information goes so fast. In this case, the information commonly is written in English since English as one of the international languages. If the students do not understand the content of the text, they will miss some information in several aspects which lead them failure in their lives.

The text, which is presented by the authors, commonly divided into two categories; narrative prose and expository prose. Expository texts are texts that are used by the authors to give information, to explain, or to persuade readers about an issue. Most academic text book present in expository text. Comprehending expository text is not easy task to do because it presents theories, data, facts and the information broadly unfamiliar to the students. Dymock (2005) assert that students in all grade levels struggle with expository comprehension. The teachers should aware about this issue. The teachers need to take action to solve the problem especially in the way of teaching reading English text. Teachers can help students to become more familiar with the structure of informational books, which positively affects their ability to read for meaning.

There are two types of exposition text, namely, hortatory exposition text and analytical exposition text. Both of the text has a common purpose, that is, to persuade the readers or audience by giving an argument about an issue. They

differ on the intention of the writer in presenting the arguments in the text. Analytical text is to discuss the issue and justify that the issue is correct. Moreover, the authors do not give solution or suggestion about the issue but they only make conclusion of the issue. On the other hand, hortatory exposition text convinces the reader or listener that some action should be taken.

Based on the writer's observation on the eleventh grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Pontianak, the teacher mostly taught reading comprehension by translating word by word and translating the part sentences to explain the content of the text. In addition, the students thought that joining English reading activity was boring and tiring since it obliged the students to deal with the meaning of each word. This situation obliged the students to focus on word recognition to get meaning of the text.

In order to encourage and activate students to read interactively, teachers need to find effective training for students to use different reading strategies, so it can help students to develop their reading comprehension. According to Rumelhart and McClland (1981), "interactive process is a form of cooperative processing in which knowledge at all levels of abstraction can come into play in the process of reading and comprehension". One of the interactive strategies that could improve students' reading comprehension is Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (RTS). In the process of interacting with others, the learning takes place in a socio-cultural environment (students to student or student to teacher) through dialogue. Reciprocal teaching is based on active socialization, wherein the knowledge constructed from the text within discourse communities through both teacher- student and student-student interactions.

Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (RTS) is an instructional strategy that is used to increase students' comprehension of text. Developed by Annemarie Palincsar and Ann Brown (1984), reciprocal teaching focuses on teaching students how to monitor their own learning as they read text through discussions that are led both by the teacher and students. The approach of RTS focuses on giving students the skills of reading to learn through a four stage process: predicting, question generating, clarifying, and summarizing (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). These steps are taught in the context of reading to learn from the text and connect one another.

Reciprocal Teaching Strategy comprises of four sub-strategies, those are, predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. In predicting, the students actively combine their own background knowledge with the information stated in the text. It provides students an opportunity to link the new knowledge they will encounter in the material to their background knowledge about what the future content of the text. Predicting is a strategy that assists students in setting a purpose for reading and in monitoring their reading comprehension. It allows students to interact more with the text, which makes them more likely to become interested in the reading material while improving their understanding (Palincsar and Brown, 1984). Predicting encourages students to think ahead and set their hypothesis based on their prior knowledge and experience for the upcoming section of the text. Students make guess on their interpretation of clues such as seeing the picture, looking at the title, or skimming the text.

Questioning is used to check the students' understanding of what they are reading and students' attention on the information in the text. It focuses the reader on asking questions regarding what he does not know, needs to know, or would like to know about the text. Doolittle et al (2006) stated, "Questioning provides a context for exploring the text more deeply and assuring the construction of meaning." By undertaking the process of question generating, students can more actively comprehend a text and monitor their comprehension.

Clarifying requires the students to be active in solving the problem caused during the reading process. Doolittle et al (2006) stated "Clarifying involves the identification and clarification of unclear, difficult, or unfamiliar aspects of a text." These aspects may include clumsy sentence or passage structure, unfamiliar vocabulary, or unclear references. When the students found difficulties part of text, the students required to reduce the confusion by re-reading or using context clues.

Summarizing focuses the student to identify the most important ideas in the text and condensing them to create another word from the author's thought. Summarizing is an effective method for comprehension because it requires students to focus on key points, not to restate everything (Hashey and Connors, 2003). To summarize effectively, students must recall and arrange in order only the important events in a text. The summary organization is based on the type of text; either narrative or expository (Lipson, 1996 in Oczkus, 2003).

These four reading comprehension strategies include in Reciprocal Teaching Strategy, they can be taught during the reading process in which the instructor give modeled how and when to use them appropriately. The use of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy could motivate the students to get deeper comprehension of the text. It is line with the purpose of this research which is to improve the students' reading comprehension on hortatory exposition text.

METHOD

This study was Classroom Action Research (CAR). According to Whitehead and McNiff (2006), "action research is the implementation of fact finding to practical problem solving in a social situation and it involves the collaboration and cooperation of researchers, practitioners and laymen". The research was done to improve the quality of action within it. It means that action research is used to improve deeper understanding of the process as well as solve the real problem in social situation.

Classroom is one of social situations. Classroom action research is done by the teacher to solve the problems in his/her teaching and learning process and to improve his/her teaching and learning process in the classroom (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988 as cited in Cohen et al. (2005). The main characteristic of action research is the spiral activity consisting of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Hopkins, 1992 in Hien, 2009). Action research uses a systematic process to collect and analyze data then to implement actions as well as to do reflection for the next action if needed. This study used a simple action research

model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2000). The action research typically involves four phases in a cycle of a research.

Thirty two students of the eleventh grade of SMA PGRI 1 Pontianak participated in this study. To collect the data, the researcher used direct observation technique, namely, observation sheet and field note, and measurement technique in form of reading comprehension test.

Observation is a technique to collect the data by observing the activity of the research process. Observation checklist sheet is one tool to gather data using a coding system or checklist that record some aspects during teaching learning activity. Observation checklist sometimes is called systematic or structured observation. Burns (2010) describes that it will be better for the researcher to use a simple checklist so that the observer is able to focus on the specific issue. In line with the description, Burns (2010) explains that observation checklist is used to restrict in order to looking at some aspects when teaching and learning process and do not devise too many questions nor have many categories". The researcher as the observer observed the implementation of the Reciprocal Teaching Strategy because it was the focus of this study.

Field note refers to transcribed note or the written account derived from data collected during observation. Burns (2010) stated, "field notes generally consist of two parts: descriptive in which the observer attempts to capture a word-picture of the setting, actions and conversations; and reflective in which the observer records thoughts, ideas, questions and concerns based on the observations as a source to make reflection. The researcher's purpose in using field note in this study was to record the situation, students' actions, and behavior during the implementation of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy. In this case, the researcher made notes that were not found in observation sheet.

Reading comprehension test was used to measure the students' improvement during the implementation of RTS. The researcher developed multiple choice test item and matching test item to know the students' progress. Both of them consisted of 10 items. The data from reading comprehension test was used to describe students' ability in comprehending the hortatory reading text.

RESULT

This study was conducted in three cycles of. To obtain the information about the students' improvement, the writer recorded the activities during the implementation of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (RTS) in teaching reading hortatory exposition text. The teacher divided the class into several groups which each group consisted of four members. At the first time, the teacher modeled the four sub-strategies of RTS, namely, predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. The teacher told the students how to use each strategy.

In predicting, the students could predict the text by looking at the title, seeing at the picture or illustration if any, or skimming the text to get the general idea of the text. Predicting helped the students know the future content of the text. In the case of genre of the text, in hortatory exposition text the students could find the thesis of the text as the general idea. Thesis commonly discusses the general

description of a certain issue which the author wants to rise up it. The thesis provides an issue that something should or should not be the case and indicates the position of the writer.

In finding the thesis statement, the students used predicting to hypothesize the general idea of the text. Effective readers use pictures, titles, headings, and text, as well as background knowledge to make predictions before they begin to read. Predicting involves thinking ahead while reading and anticipating information and events in the text. After making predictions, students can read through the text and refine, revise, and verify their predictions.

The students' ability in understanding thesis statement by predicting improved gradually from cycle 1 to 3. To support the statement, the data from reading comprehension test showed that the students mean score in answering questions about understanding thesis in hortatory exposition text improved each cycle. It was 65.62 in cycle 1 and it improved up to 75 in cycle 2 and became 78.12 in cycle 3. It can be concluded that the predicting could improve the students' comprehension in understanding thesis statement.

In questioning, the teacher asked the students to find the arguments and important information before creating the questions. The teacher then explained the students how to generate question and defining the argument of the text. The teacher asked the students to use 5W1H (what, who, where, when, why, and how) question words to help the students got deeper understanding of the arguments in the text. Before generating questions, the teacher asked the students to define the subdivision of argument, namely, assertion, reason, and evidence.

Based on the students' worksheet in the first action, many students had difficulty in generating questions even though they could find the assertion, reason, and evidence. The weakness commonly arose in the structure of the question and the use of 5W1H formula appropriately. That problem could be reduced in the second cycle and the third cycle. The teacher explained the students how to create questions correctly based on the text. As the result, the ability in defining the arguments and creating the questions improved.

Based on the data from reading comprehension test, the students' ability in understanding arguments improved in each cycle. It was because they could recognize the questions which the answered stated in the text. The students' mean score in answering argument questions was 60.15 in first cycle, 6.45 in the second cycle, and improved to 69.14. In conclusion, the students' ability in understanding argument improved in each cycle.

In clarifying, the students noted the words, phrases, clauses, or sentences which were unfamiliar to them. In this step, the teacher asked the students to write and discuss their difficulty to the other students and the teachers. The teacher also asked the students to guess from the context what the meaning of the phrase or words would be. Moreover, the teacher asked the students to identify language feature of hortatory exposition text which included the use of present tense, modality system, and connective words. The ability in understanding the linguistic feature needed to help the students understood the text better.

The data from reading comprehension test showed that the students ability in understanding linguistic feature improve from one cycle to other cycles. The

improvement of the students' mean score in understanding the use of simple present tense was from 60.93 in cycle 1 improved up to 67.18 in the second cycle and became 72.65 in the last cycle.

In summarizing, the students extracted the important information which presented in the text. By summarizing, the students knew the author's purpose in writing the text. The summary organization is based on the type of text, either narrative or expository (Lipson and Cooper, 2002). When summarizing a story, students may use the setting, characters, problem, events, and resolution to guide their summaries. A nonfiction text, hortatory exposition, requires them to determine important points and arrange them in a logical order. In hortatory exposition text, the teacher asked the students to find out what the author suggest referring to the issue in the text.

When the students summarized, they also could find the key point and important information of the text to help them understand better about the text. The author proposed the recommendation as the purpose of writing the text. Moreover, the students' ability in summarizing improved in each cycle. The data from reading comprehension test showed that the students could understand the recommendation of the text. The students' mean score in understanding the linguistic feature also improved. In cycle 1, they got 67.70 and it improved till 70.83 in cycle 2 and became 75 in cycle 3.

From the observation sheet in the first cycle the researcher found that most of students did the instruction from the teacher. They moved from their seat to form group discussion in less than 4 minutes. The students paid the teacher explanation about hortatory exposition text. Most of the students identified the generic structure of the hortatory exposition text. They also made prediction based on the clue of the text such as by looking the picture, seeing the title, skimmed the text. In this session there were almost of the students used dictionaries as their aids in accomplishing their task.

The students listed the arguments of the text before making the questions. The members in each group generated the question to the other member, and then they discussed the right answer for those questions. The students then clarified their difficulties on words, clauses, phrases, or sentences to the teacher or the other students. From that situation, the writer concluded that the students were actively involved in the discussion.

In cycle 2, the data from the observation sheet also showed that the students were active in identifying the linguistic feature of hortatory exposition text. Almost all the students made prediction from the text. The students got involved in that activity, the teacher asked the students to find out the use of linguistic feature of hortatory exposition text, such as the use of present tense, modal, and connective words. Then, the teacher asked the students to write down to their worksheet.

In cycle 3, the data from the observation sheet described that the students more enthusiast during the teaching learning process. The students paid attention to the teacher's explanation. The data from the observation sheet also showed that the students were active in giving attention to identify the schematic feature and linguistic feature of hortatory exposition text. Almost all of the students got

involved in making prediction, generating questions, clarifying their understanding, and summarizing the text.

From the field note the writer found that the teacher gave brainstorming in order to enhance students' interest in learning. The teacher guided the students in applying RTS and the students gave response by asking how to fill the parts of the RTS worksheet. On the other side, there were many students made noise while working in group, they were active talking and chatting with their friends. From the situation, the researcher assumed that the teacher did not arrange well the classroom during the teaching learning process.

The data from the field note showed that the teacher had decreased the weaknesses from the cycle 1. The teacher guided the students the ways how to get the argument from hortatory exposition text by finding the assertion, reason, and evidence in the paragraph. The teacher always moved around in order to check the students' work and to keep closer with the students. At the end of the lesson, the teacher together with the students summarized the lesson had been learned.

The data from the field note showed that the teacher had decreased the weaknesses from the cycle 2. The teacher guided the students the ways how to understand the argument from hortatory exposition text. The teacher moved around in order to check the students' work. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asked the students to summarize the lesson that had been learned.

At the completion of this research, students' worksheet, students' reading comprehension test, field note, and observation sheet were used to monitor the students' improvement during the application of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy in the teaching learning process. The students' worksheet and reading comprehension tests were used to collect data about possible changes in students' use of the strategies each cycle. The observation sheets and field notes added the data collection of this research referring to the students and teacher activity.

The researcher observed that as students began to become comfortable working with the strategies in their reading groups, they were willing to discuss the content of the text by applying sub-strategies of RTS. With practice, students showed improvement in their ability to understand hortatory exposition text.

The Reciprocal Teaching Strategy consists of four sub strategies, those are predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. The application of prediction could improve the students' understanding in finding the thesis. Predicting is a strategy that assists students in setting a purpose for reading and in monitoring their reading comprehension (Palinscar and Brown, 1984). It allowed students to interact with the text by combining their background knowledge with the new information being possessed from the text. To help students in understanding the thesis, the students could identify the topic, see the title, look at the picture if any and skim the paragraph. Predicting helps students anticipate events, actions, and problems in the text (Oczkus, 2003). The result of this research showed that the students' ability in understanding thesis improved gradually in each cycle.

As was documented while the strategies were being applied, the writer's observations showed that the main challenge that students faced during teaching

learning process was in understanding the arguments presented by the author in the text to generate questions. Finding the subdivision of the arguments helped the students to generate questions easier. In the first action, the students seemed confused in finding the subdivision of arguments and constructing the questions. The teacher taught the students how to generate questions about the text. The students required more practice writing questions in order to improve their understanding of the text. As for generating questions, Rosenshine, Meistry and Chapman (1996) mentioned that when students generate questions, they become more interested in the text, which is necessary for understanding it. Most of the difficulty arose for students understood the arguments to create questions and find the subdivision of arguments.

The students also made an improvement in each cycle in understanding the recommendation. To summarize effectively, students must recall and arrange in order only the important events in a text (Palinscar and Brown, 1984). The summary organization is based on the type of text, either narrative or expository (Lipson and Cooper, 2002). When summarizing a story, students may use the setting, characters, problem, events, and resolution to guide their summaries. A nonfiction text requires them to determine important points and arrange them in a logical order. In hortatory exposition text, the teacher asked the students to find out what the author suggest referring to the issue in the text. They summarized the text by finding the recommendation.

It was found that the findings were in line with the previous studies. Hashey and Connors (2003) conducted an action research study on Reciprocal Teaching over a period and saw great improvement in the quality of their classroom discourse and the reading comprehension level of their students. In addition, studies which were conducted by Melinda (2007) and Arif (2010) proved that the use of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy was effective in teaching reading comprehension. This research also proved that RTS is a strategy that can help students to comprehend hortatory exposition text.

The students' improvement above showed that Reciprocal Teaching Strategy could improve the students' ability in understanding hortatory exposition text. In implementing the RTS, the observation sheet and field notes showed that there were some weaknesses. Class management of the students showed as one of the weaknesses. Because there were large students, the teacher got a little difficulty to manage them. The teacher should control them to still focus during the learning process. Some students kept chatting with other friends in the group. This situation could be reduced by motivating them and asking them to work in group seriously.

Second was time management. In implementing the RTS, the teacher needed two meetings in a cycle. This made ineffective because the learning material should be stopped before it has been finished. The teacher should reminded the students about the learning material which discussed in previous meeting. Some students got difficulty in remembering the previous meeting.

Third was the students' background knowledge about English. Many of the students learned English only in the school. They felt difficulty in

understanding words. In addition, many of the students did not have dictionary to support them in learning English.

CONCLUSION

This session puts forward the conclusions as the answer of the research problems. Based on the results of the discussion obtained from the data analysis presented in previous session, some conclusions are then formulated. The conclusions are developed on the basis of research analysis and findings taken from reading comprehension test, field note and observation sheet.

The researcher found out that the implementation of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy in teaching reading hortatory exposition texts could improve students' reading comprehension. By predicting, students could improve their reading comprehension in understanding thesis statement of hortatory exposition text. Predicting the text helped the students understand what issue addressed by the author. In predicting the thesis, the students analyzed the topic of the first paragraph, seeing the title, looking at the picture if any, and skimming the paragraph to get the general description of the text. Students also could improve their reading comprehension in understanding argument. Through questioning the students could use 5W1H (what, who, where, when, why, and how) question words to help them understood the arguments of hortatory exposition text. Clarifying helped students to comprehend the use of simple present tense, modal, and connective words in hortatory exposition text. Through summarizing, students could improve their reading comprehension in understanding hortatory exposition text. The students summarized hortatory exposition text by pointing out the important information, analyzing the author suggestion or solution of the issue presented in the text.

In addition, RTS could engage students' motivation in teaching and learning process, particularly in reading activity. It also encouraged students to be more active in the teaching learning process. The students worked cooperatively with the others. The students work in group and learn through the interaction.

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