IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION OF GRADE XI STUDENTS THROUGH GUESSING MEANING FROM CONTEXT TECHNIQUE

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Abstract

This research aimed at proving that the use of guessing meaning from context technique can improve the reading comprehension of grade XI students of M.A Alkhairaat Tomini. The researcher used true-experimental research design which involved experimental and control groups. The sample was selected by using cluster random sampling technique. The sample were class XI IPA as the control group and class XI IPS as the experimental group. Each class has 18 and 23 students. In collecting data, the researcher used non-test (observation) and test (post-test). The data were analyzed descriptively and statistically. Having analyzed the data, it reveals that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post test. In other words, the t-counted (6.552) is greater than the t-table (2.024) by applying 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom (df) of 39. It is concluded that guessing meaning from context technique can improve reading comprehension of grade XI students of M.A Alkhairaat Tomini.

Keywords: Guessing Meaning; Context; Reading Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the fundamental ways of getting information in our society and academic setting in particular. It is an important activity in any language class, not only as sources of information, but also as means of combining one's knowledge of the language. Reading is not just sounding letters, calling words, or responding to prints. It is a communicative interaction through language between an author and a reader which requires some aspects from the reader's knowledge of the writing system, knowledge of the language, ability to interpret, appropriate knowledge of the world as assumed by the author and a reason for reading that determines the reader's style in order to encourage him or her to find the meaning from a text.

In a simple definition, reading is one of the most important basic skills in learning English beside speaking, listening, and writing. Reading activity is one of the ways to catch up information, knowing enough science concepts, knowing more knowledge, understanding

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scientific books and technology written in English. Reading is one of the four skills in language taught interestedly with the other three skills. Casdhan (1979:65) states:

> Reading is complex process; the term "reading" has two meaning. The first meaning deals with a process and the second deals with a product. As a process, reading means the way in which something is interpreted and understood, and as a product, reading is the communication of thoughts and emotion from the researcher to the reader.

According to above statement, reading is a communicative interaction through language between an author and reader which requires some aspects from the author in order to make the reader find the meaning from the text. Reading makes people know and understand the written symbols as meaningful information. Grabe and Stoller (2002) define, "Reading is ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately". It means that reading is the process of the interpretation of written or printed material. It is a process of negotiating understanding between author and reader.

Reading a scientific book is considered difficult for students, especially English text. The students find it very hard to get the information needed as they are lack of strategy or technique in reading skill. Most students only read a text without understanding what the content of the text is about. It cannot be denied that students do not get anything of what has been read. It happens because they are lack of vocabulary. As the result, they do not understand it. The common reason is also due to the lack of vocabulary items practiced in class. The students usually complained of the length of the text which is provided by the teacher.

Teacher should use a good technique in teaching in order to motivate the students to learn English. The teacher should also explore and develop effective ways or methods in teaching English, which at least can improve their skill in reading. One of those techniques is guessing meaning from context.

Guessing meaning from context is a technique of teaching reading which is used to train the students to guess the meaning of unknown words based on the context without using a dictionary. According to Ohoiwutun (2005:10):

> The students can guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context in which the words exist. They may use the meaning of surrounding words to make their guess or analyze the form of the word and the position of word in the sentence. Sometimes the meaning of unfamiliar word can be determined by understanding the whole meaning of a sentence or even a passage.

Many words or short phrases in English have a slightly different meaning depending on the context in which they are used. The aims of this technique are to give students practice in guessing unknown words, to provide them with an effective way of dealing with words they do not know and to develop their reading ability in finding the meaning without using dictionary. Further, Gani (2002:8) states, "In specific reading, the meaning of a word can be found without opening the dictionary, for example, by focusing on the use of synonym or antonym". It can be said that students could find the meaning of unknown word contextually by guessing, without using dictionary.

Williams (2002:8) states, "For helping students to find the meaning of a word or a phrase from context, the guiding of the teacher is urgently needed". It means that the role of teacher is much needed for guiding students to search the meaning of unfamiliar word based on the context.

Based on the students' problem and the way to solve it, the researcher formulates her problem statement as: *"Can the use of guessing meaning from context techique improve reading comprehension of grade XI students of M.A Alkhairaat Tomini"* The objective of this research is to prove that the application of guessing meaning fromcontext technique can improve reading comprehension of grade XI students of M.A Alkhairaat Tomini.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher used true-experimental research design. The sample consisted of two groups, experimental group and control group. The researcher gave pre-test and post-test to both groups, but the treatment was conducted only to the experimental group. Then, the control group was taught by using a conventional teaching. The design of this research taken from Best (1981:70) is as follows:

experimental group	T1	X	T2
control group	T1		T2

Where :
T1 = pre test
T2 = post test
X = treatment

Population is a group of people, things or event which are going to be investigated as Creswell (2005:145) defines, "Population is a group of individual who have the same

characteristic." The population of this research refers to grade XI students of M.A Alkhairaat Tomini which consists of two classes, those are class XI IPA and XI IPS. The total number of the population was 41 students. The researcher used random sampling technique to select the sample of this research. As the result, class XI IPS was chosen as the experimental group while class XI IPA was the control group.

Referring to the title of the research, the researcher used two variables, they were dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable of this research is the students' reading comprehension and the independent one is guessing meaning from context technique.

In conducting this research, the researcher used two instruments, namely non test and test. The test was in the form of written test consisting of pre-test and post-test. On the other hand, the non test covered observation. The scoring system of the test used in both pre-test and post-test can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. The Scoring System

No	Test	Number of Items	Scores	Points
1	Multiple Choice	10	10	10
2	Essay	5	10	10
	Total	**15**	**20**	**20**

Table 2. The Scoring Rubric of the Essay Test

No	Description	Scores
1.	Correct content, grammar, and spelling	3
2.	Correct content and grammar; Incorrect spelling	2
3.	Incorrect answer	1
4.	No answer	0

Adapted from KTSP 2006

The test administered in both pre-test and post-test was the same. The test can be seen in the table above. In multiple choice tests, each correct test is scored 1, where the maximum score is 10. In addition, in essay test, the way to score is the same as in the multiple choices, but the score of essay test is 2 points in each item. If all items are correct, the score is 2, but if one of the items is incorrect or more, the score is less than 2 point where the maximum score is 20.

In analyzing the data of this research, the researcher analyzed the data by using statistical analysis. It was used to analyze the test instrument result (pre-test and post-test).

Firstly, the researcher computed the individual score by using the formula as proposed by Sutomo (1985:123) as follows:

$$\text{individual score} = \frac{\text{obtained score}}{\text{maximum score}} \text{x } 100$$

After finding out the students' score, the researcher computed the students' mean score using the formula by Arikunto (2006:313) as follows:

a. The formula used for experimental group: $M_x = \frac{\sum x}{N}$

b. The formula used for control group: $M_y = \frac{\sum y}{N}$

Where:
M_x = mean score of deviation of experimental group
M_y = mean score of deviation of control group
$\sum x$ = sum scores of experimental group
$\sum y$ = sum score of control group
N = number of students

Then, the researcher used the square deviation by using the formula as suggested by Arikunto (2006:312) as follows:

a. The formula for experimental group: $\sum_x 2 = \sum_x 2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{N}$

b. The formula for control group: $\sum_y 2 = \sum_y 2 - \frac{(\sum y)^2}{N}$

Finally, the researcher computed the t_{value} by using the formula proposed by Arikunto (2006:311) as follows:

$$t = \frac{M_{x-M_y}}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum_x 2 + \sum_y 2}{N_{x+N_y-2}}\right)\left(\frac{1}{N_x} + \frac{1}{N_y}\right)}}$$

Where:
t = significant difference between experimental and control groups
M_x = mean score of deviation of experimental group
M_y = mean score of deviation of control group
$\sum_x 2$ = sum of square deviation of experimental group
$\sum_y 2$ = sum of square deviation of control group
N_x = number of students in experimental group
N_y = number of students in control group

FINDINGS

The data of this research are analyzed descriptively and statistically. The researcher used descriptive analysis to describe the result of the observation while the data from the pre-test and post-test are analyzed statistically.

The researcher did the observation in the first meeting. The observation was intended to find out the real condition of teaching-learning process in the classroom. This process included students' performance in learning English and teacher's technique in teaching reading to the students. During the observation, she found that the English teacher did not use guessing meaning technique in teaching reading. When the researcher observed the students, she found that the students got difficulties to find out the meaning of the text because they are lack of vocabulary.

After conducting the observation, the researcher gave the pre-test to the experimental and the control groups. The aim of the test was to find out and to measure the students' ability in reading comprehension. The result of both groups can be seen in the table 3.

The mean deviation of the pre-test and post-test was computed by using the formula as presented in the following:

$$M_x = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

$$= \frac{575}{23}$$

$$= 25$$

Table 3. Score Deviation in Pre-test and Post-test of the Experimental Class

No	Initials	Scores		X	X^2
		Pre-test	Post-test		
1	ARS	60	75	-15	225
2	AKR	55	80	-25	625
3	AFD	50	75	-25	625
4	ALF	65	80	-15	225
5	ASR	50	90	-40	1600
6	AHR	70	75	-5	25
7	EFS	55	80	-25	625
8	ANZ	50	85	-35	1225
9	GRH	60	100	-40	1600
10	HRT	55	80	-25	625
11	FBR	50	85	-35	1225
12	MSP	70	85	-15	225
13	MJL	70	90	-20	400
14	NAF	80	90	-10	100
15	NAI	60	100	-40	1600
16	NAT	60	85	-25	625
17	RSD	55	80	-25	625
18	SFD	80	90	-10	100
19	SRK	70	100	-30	900
20	LFT	65	90	-25	625

21	TSH	50	90	-40	1600
22	VPT	60	80	-20	400
23	ZFK	55	85	-30	900
	Total Score			**x = 575**	**x^2=16725**

After finding the mean deviation of pre-test and post-test, the sum of square deviation is compute as shown below:

$$X^2 = \sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{N}$$

$$= 16725 - \frac{(575)^2}{23}$$

$$= 16725 - \frac{330625}{23}$$

$$= 16725-14375$$

$$= 2350$$

Based on the computation above, it is found that the mean deviation of the experimental class in the pre-test and post-test is 25 and the sum of square deviation is 2350.

Table 4. Score Deviation in Pre-test and Post-test of the Control Class

No	**Initials**	**Scores**		**Y**	**Y^2**
		Pre-test	**Post-test**		
1	ARS	70	75	-5	25
2	ARF	50	55	-5	25
3	FZA	40	50	-10	100
4	FLF	40	50	-10	100
5	FTN	65	70	-5	25
6	JFS	45	50	-5	25
7	LLR	40	65	-25	625
8	MYS	60	65	-5	25
9	MFS	50	55	-5	25
10	MAZ	45	60	-15	225
11	RFN	55	65	-10	100
12	RZF	60	65	-5	25
13	SRY	65	70	-5	25
14	SND	70	75	-5	25
15	SAF	65	75	-10	100
16	ZHM	60	70	-10	100
17	FRY	70	75	-5	25
18	ISF	70	80	-10	100
	Total Score			**y = 160**	**y^2 = 1700**

The mean deviation of the pre-test and post-test is computed by using the formula as presented in the following:

$$M_y = \frac{\sum y}{N}$$

$$= \frac{160}{18}$$

$$= 8.88$$

After finding the mean deviation of pre-test and post-test, the sum of square deviation is computed as shown below:

$$y^2 = \sum y^2 - \frac{(\sum y)^2}{N}$$

$$= 1700 - \frac{(160)^2}{18}$$

$$= 1700 - \frac{25600}{18}$$

$$= 1700 - 1422.2$$

$$= 277.8$$

Based on the computation above, it is found that the mean deviation of the control class in the pre-test and the post-test is 8.88 and the sum of square deviation is277.8. After having the sum-squared deviation of the mean in control and in experimental groups, the researcher computed $t_{counted}$ to find out the significant difference of the two groups.

$$t = \frac{Mx - My}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum x^2 + \sum y^2}{Nx + Ny - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{Nx} + \frac{1}{Ny}\right)}}$$

$$t = \frac{25 - 8.88}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{2350 + 277.8}{23 + 18 - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{23} + \frac{1}{18}\right)}}$$

$$t = \frac{16.12}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{2627.8}{39}\right)\left(\frac{23 + 18}{414}\right)}}$$

$$t = \frac{16.12}{\sqrt{67.37 \times \left[\frac{41}{414}\right]}}$$

$$t = \frac{16.12}{\sqrt{(67.37) \times (0.09)}}$$

$$t = \frac{16.12}{\sqrt{6.06}}$$

$$t = \frac{16.12}{2.46}$$

$$t = 6.552$$

DISCUSSION

Related to the result of students' pre-test of the experimental and control groups, it is found that only 8.6% students got high score in experimental group and there are no students got high score in control group. The standard score was 75. In doing the pre-test,

most of students did not answer the questions in the text properly. Based on the description, the most difficult one for students in reading text is the students had difficulties in understanding an English text because the students did not know the meaning of the text.

To solve the problem, the researcher use guessing meaning from context technique in order to improve students' reading comprehension. In the first treatment, the researcher explained the technique to the students including the procedure of guessing meaning technique, how to find the main topic and main idea of the text, and how to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words contextually. Then, the researcher distributed the texts to the students, after having the texts, the students were assigned to identify the main idea of the text and to answer the meaning of unfamiliar words they did not know. Last, the level of reading text given by the researcher was in harmony with the level of reading comprehension the students had. Harmer (2007) explains that the success of reading activity will often depend on the level of text that the students are going to work with.

After conducting the treatment, the researcher gave the post-test to the students. The researcher found that there were 23 students (100 %) who got the higher score in experimental group and only 5 students (27.7%) who got higher score in control group. In addition, there is none of the control group students who got score equal or higher. It happened because the researcher used guessing meaning from context technique during eight meetings to the experimental group.

Having seen the problems in comprehending the text by the students, the researcher relates this study to the previous study that has been conducted by Nursamsia (2009) who conducted the research at Mts Al-Khairaat Mepanga which entitled "Improving reading comprehension of the second year students of Mts Al-Khairaat Mepanga through guessing meaning from the contextual technique"

The research basically focused on the effectiveness of this technique, especially how the students can solve their problem in reading text by using guessing meaning from context technique. The result of her research showed that using guessing meaning from context technique can improve students' reading comprehension. She found that the most difficult one for students in reading text is the students had difficulties in understanding an English text because the students did not know the meaning of the text. In short, after applying the treatment, the researcher found that the students' score was increased from the pre-test to the post-test. By comparing the result of the pre-test and the post-test, the researcher concluded that guessing meaning from context technique can improve students' reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

After applying the treatment and comparing the students result before and after the treatment, the researcher concludes that the t-counted value (6.552) is higher than t-table value (2.024). It means that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test. This shows that the use of guessing meaning from context technique can improve reading comprehension of grade XI students of M.A Alkhairaat Tomini.

In order to promote the teaching quality of English, the researcher would like to share the following suggestions for those who are involved in the teaching and learning process. It is suggested that teachers should provide learning experience to the students by using a good medium which students feel much comfortable when they are asked to read the text. The teachers should apply an interesting technique that makes the students understand the materials. For students, to improve their ability in reading comprehension, they have to practice the technique which has been taught by their teacher.

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