

IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION USING LEARNING CELL TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

This research is talking about investigating whether learning cell technique can improve students' reading comprehension in recount text. The research was conducted at SMK PGRI Indramayu. The population of this research were the students at X RPL grade of SMK PGRI Indramayu and the samples of this research consisted of 24 students. This research was conducted by using Classroom Action Research (CAR). The technique of collecting data used test and observation. This research was conducted only two cycles. The test included an objective 10 multiple choice, 5 true/false statements and 5 essay. The research finding showed that the data from two instruments, in preliminary test showed that the students reading comprehension was very low, the average in preliminary test was 50, 5. The result of students reading comprehension in cycle I was improved it was 66, 5. The result in cycle II showed improvement the student's average score was 78. Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that Learning Cell technique can improve the students' reading comprehension.

Key Words: *Learning Cell Technique, Reading Comprehension, Action Research*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the important skills to be mastered, because students will get a lot of information from various sources. We know that one of the activities that can improve knowledge and skill of students is reading, so it is important for students to do more reading. The statement has supported by Grabe and Stoller (2011: xvi) "Reading can be thought of as a way to draw information from a text and to form an interpretation of that information".

In fact, in teaching reading the students have some problems. First, according to Richard (2015:449) "readers with smaller vocabularies will require a lot more instructional support. If there are too many unknown words in a text, comprehension may be virtually impossible". Second, Rakhmawati (2015:44) affirmed that "as their reading materials become more diverse and challenging, students need to learn new tools for comprehending these texts". It means that

teacher need to help students develop reading by using material makes their interested such as textbooks, newspaper, magazine, and journal articles. The other problem in reading comprehension is students do not know the main idea of each paragraph from the text. Students often times have a difficult time grasping the most important information when reading. This problem because students do not know whether they recognize the word or not and students have difficulty in understanding word, phrase and sentence in English. According to Westwood (2008:30) "Naturally, the majority of students who are very weak at word recognition will have serious difficulties with comprehension".

Based on the problems above, The writer was intersted to investigate the students at SMK PGRI Indramayu . The X RPL grade students have a low interest on the learning English, especially in reading comprehension There were many students have difficulties to understand the text.

According to these statements that describe about difficulties in learning reading comprehension, there are many techniques that can be used by the teacher to teach reading comprehension for the students, one of them is by using learning cell technique. The writer is interested to use learning cell as collaborative technique to guide students' reading comprehension. According to Pressley et al (in Barkley, 2005), learning cell is an active learning technique for training the students to generate thought-provoking questions enhances learning. This technique is expected to make students interested in reading text.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of reading

According to Clarke et al(2014:13),"Reading is a highly complex process and therefore it may not be surprising that some children struggle to become proficient readers". Therefore, reading is something that has to be taught and learned. Johnson (2008:3) stated that —Reading is the practice of using text to create meaning". We need reading not only to understand what we read but also to respond to and assess what we read. Hirsch (2003:21) stated that —reading is also accessing and further acquiring language knowledge and domain knowledge.

2.2 Definition of reading comprehension

According to Snow (2002, p.11) reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Meanwhile, Grabe and Stoller (2002:17) stated that reading for general comprehension is its most obvious sense, the ability in understanding information of a text, and interpreting it appropriately.

2.3 The purpose of reading

According to Grabe and Stoller (2002: 11 – 15), the purposes of reading as follow

- 1) Reading to search for simple information
- 2) Reading to skim quickly
- 3) Reading to learn from the text
- 4) Reading to integrate information, write and critique text
- 5) Reading for general understanding

2.4 Description of Learning Cell Technique

The learning cell was developed by Goldschmid (1976: 20-21) “The effectiveness of the learning cell was first explored in a large psychology course 250 student where four learning options were compared: seminar, discussion, independent study (essay) and learning cell. Student in the learning cell options performed significantly better on an unannounced examination and rated their ongoing learning experience significantly higher on a “morale barometer” A final comprehensive course evaluation also indicate the superiority of the learning cell method over the other three options. A more extensive “field test” was subsequently conducted to evaluate the usefulness of the learning cell in a number of other disciplines at the university”. The learning cell is one way of learning groups, particularly in the small groups. In this lesson the students set as a partner. One of them acts as a tutor, facilitator/trainer. And the other act as a student, trainee or a person who needs help. This technique is a practice way to doing learning together of the student to student / the same of student in class. According to Barkley, et al. (2005: 140), “learning cell is an effective to engage students actively in thinking about content to encourage students

to generate thought-provoking question, and to teach students how to check their understanding”. The process of learning new things will be more effective if students in an active condition, rather than receptive. One way to create the conditions learning like this is to stimulate students to learn their own lesson material.

2.3 Procedure of Learning Cell Technique

The guidelines for learning cell as follow: Barkley, et al. (2005: 141) state there are five steps of learning cell technique:

- a. Ask students to individually develop a list with a major points raised in a reading or other learning assignment
- b. Form students pairs, or simply ask students to collaborate with a student's sitting nearby
- c. Explain the process by which you want partners to alternate asking and answering each other's questions.
- d. Students A begins by asking the first question and students B answer the question. Students A offer corrections and additional information until a satisfactory answer is achieved.
- e. Students B ask the next question and students A answer, and the process repeats until all questions have been asked and answered.

3. METHOD

According to Kemmis and Mc Taggart (as cited in David Nunan, 1992: 18) “Classroom Action Research is a group activity, and a descriptive research carried out by a teacher in his or her own classroom, without the involvement of others, which is aimed at increasing our understanding rather than changing the phenomenon under investigation, would not be considered by these commentators to be action research.”

This research method used an action research, the writer conducted the research in two cycles (cycle I & cycle II). In each cycle, the writer used learning cell technique in teaching reading to students. In this study, the writer gave the pre-test and post-test to students for data collections, the purpose is to measure students' abilities and skills in reading comprehension.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in SMK PGRI Indramayu of X RPL consisted of 24 students. This research was conducted in the second academic years of 2018/2019. It means that it was conducted in the second semester. Based on three tests that have been conducted in preliminary test, test in cycle I, and test cycle II during the research, there were twelve students got score under average in preliminary test, then eleven students got score under average in the first cycle. In second cycle, the students who got score under average were fourteen students. The number of student who got the score higher than average showed that their reading comprehension was good enough.

The mean of pre-test I was 50, 5 and the KKM is 75. Then, in the post-test I students' mean score was 66, 5. However, the score only has improvement 8, 3 % from the KKM. It is still low. In the cycle 2, the students mean score are higher than KKM.

From the students' percentage, in the pre-test 0 % students pass the KKM. However, it was really low percentage from the researcher expectation, 90%. In the post-test I also shows that students' percentage was low. Then, in the post-test II, the percentage was higher than 8, 3% the percentage of post-test II was 100 %.

The improvement of students' number who can pass the KKM. in the both pre-test and post-test 1 showed that the number of students who can pass the KKM is lower than 90%. Finally, in the post-test II, students 'number percentage was higher 100 % from the researcher expectation.

Twenty four students have done the test in two cycles that conducted by the writer as the data to be analyzed in order to measure students' reading comprehension in X RPL. The data showed that the improvement was happen even the improvement was not significant enough. The change from the preliminary test in cycle 1 is only 16 points. It means that the improvement that reached by the students wasn't represent the satisfaction condition. So that's why the writer decided to conduct second cycle in this research. The average score was change into 78 in cycle II. The average score of this cycle improved better than cycle I.

There were some significant improvements from the cycle 1 to the cycle 2. The writer felt that the implementation of learning cell technique to

improve student' reading comprehension in recount text was effective and successful. Based on the theory in the chapter 2 pages 18 of the research, stated by Barkley, et al. (2005:140), "learning cell is an effective to engage students actively in thinking about content to encourage students to generate thought-provoking question, and to teach students how to check their understanding".

Learning cell technique was interesting teaching aid to improve students' reading comprehension in recount text. Through learning cell technique, the students got many ideas and opinions, the students could get various vocabulary items which came from their own opinion. By using learning cell technique as media, the teaching and learning reading comprehension in recount text were enjoyable, interesting, engaging, and challenging. The students and the teacher were helped by this technique. So, the students and the teacher felt happy after teaching and learning activity.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

This research focuses on three things. Those are first on how the students' reading comprehension is. Secondly, how the teacher implements the learning cell technique to reading comprehension. Lastly, how the learning cell technique improve students' reading comprehension. This research was conducted in two cycles and it was hold in class X RPL of SMK PGRI Indramayu.

According to the findings data of two instruments and the data from preliminary test, the writer concluded that the students' reading comprehension in the first time was very low. There were most of students in the classroom who got score under average when they were given preliminary test and the average in the preliminary test was 50, 5. Knowing that result, then, the writer tried to implement the learning cell technique to them. Then, the average in the cycle I has improved than in preliminary test although the improvement was not really significant, the average in cycle I was 66, 5.

In implementing the learning cell technique, the writer's weakness was in maintaining eye contact with the students and giving the instruction too fast so that made the students still confuse about what they will do.

Also, lack of humor made the teaching and learning process was not interest and little bit bored. Having discussed this first observation result in cycle I with the observer, then, the writer tried to change her way in implementing the learning cell technique in the classroom. It can be done by managing eye contact with all of students and also add a little bit humor so that the students can enjoy the way the writer taught. It can be showed from the progress score in cycle II, the average of students in cycle II was 78 it showed that there were improvements of students' activities in each cycle, by showing the condition of the students in the classroom while the cycle II take place was different with the previous one.

The students more understand with what they should do with the writer's instruction and with the technique. And also, the students more relax with the writer since the writer gave them a little bit humor. Having known the condition of students' reading comprehension and also how the writer implement the learning cell technique, then, the writer tried to conclude on how the learning cell technique improve students' reading comprehension.

5.2 Suggestion

The writer would like to give some suggestion that might be useful in applying the Learning Cell technique in improving the students reading comprehension to the teacher, the students and the further research:

1. The Teacher

The teacher should realize that there are many strategies techniques for teaching reading comprehension; one of them is Learning Cell technique. The teachers can develop their strategy to teach students in the teaching and learning process. It will be better to the teachers if they use any kind of techniques to be used for teaching the students in class. Generally, teachers should be creative and innovative to avoid the monotone teaching technique in the class. And the teacher should have many ideas to make the students active and enthusiastic in order that they feel comfortable and spirit in the class.

2. The Students

The students are expected to focus their attention during the teaching and learning process so that they can get the point of learning. The students also need more practices in improving reading comprehension so that they can comprehend English texts better. They should find an environment that can support their learning process. When they find difficulties, they can share with their friends or teacher freely. They should also motivate themselves to study hard so they can reach better achievement. Furthermore, the students may use the Learning Cell technique as a means for practicing their reading comprehension. But the writer also suggested the students to try find out the appropriate strategy as a learning method in reading activities based their comfortable because each students has different style in learning activities.

3. The Further Research

Even though this research showed the positive effects towards the learning cell technique improves students' reading comprehension. The writer aware that there are some came up short as mentioned before, further, it will be better to investigate more about this strategy. The writer also suggests some points for the further researchers such as the research can be conducted to find out the other aspects about the use of this strategy, for example the effects of this strategy to the students 'responsibility, etc. The writer hopes other writers can use it as a reference to conduct their research on the same field. The last, the writer hopes there will be an improvement for the next study. It is really possible that there is another more effective way to teach reading comprehension.

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