

Promoting Students' Reading Comprehension Using Graphic Organizer: A Classroom Action Research

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Abstract

This research aimed to describe the process of improving students' reading comprehension of narrative text through graphic organizer strategy in SMP Regina Pacis Surakarta. It was conducted to the ninth year students, especially class VIII A as the subject of research. The researcher conducted a classroom action research. Achievement test, observation checklist and field note used as the tools of data collecting. The research findings showed that a graphic organizer strategy was appropriate for teaching reading comprehension. Students' mean score increased from **63** to **78**. The students were able to map out basic components of the story such as setting, problem, goals, action, and outcomes. The graphic organizer provides structure and organization so students were able to comprehend the story more effective.

Subject Areas

Reading Comprehension

Keywords

Narrative Text, Graphic Organizer Strategy

1. Introduction

Generally reading is a process of getting information from written words. Reading passage usually tells about the aim to grasp the author's ideas. Reading is not simply a process of getting the meaning of the printed speech. It involves the skills of the visual recognition of the word. The readers interpret what they have read and comprehended. Through reading the readers will know about the text, get the main idea of the text or get the point of the reading materials. Westwood (2001) states that Readers must use

information already to acquire to filter, interpret, organize, reflect upon and establish relationships with the new incoming information on the page. In order to understand the text, a reader must be able to identify words rapidly, know the meaning of almost all of the words and be able to combine units of meaning into a coherent message. In short, the reading process involves both the acquisition of meaning intended by the writer and the readers' own contributions in forms of interpretation, evaluation, and reflection.

To gain and understand accurate information and ideas means the reader should read which will result in the ability to understand and gain the point or main ideas in terms of the text of reading or reading material. A reader may know what the text tells about and recognize what the author wants to tell about so that the organization and style of text writing also influence someone's comprehension. The main purpose of reading is comprehension. Reading comprehension is an attempt to understand, evaluate, and also recognize the author's ideas of reading text. A reader needs comprehension to catch the content of the message or information from the text.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading is a process of getting and understanding information from the text. The reading process occurs as the readers connect with the words and illustrations provided by the author. Blachowicz and Ogle (2008) state that the readers connect ideas across sentences and paragraphs; the readers form images and predict where the author is taking them. The readers revise ideas as taking in new information. Moreover, Moreillon (2007) agrees that reading is an active process that requires a great deal of practice and skill. It means that the readers have to use their ability to get the information and understand the text well. Without reading, one cannot access written information. Westwood (2001) states that the whole purpose of reading is to comprehend the text to get the information. Most definitions of reading stress that it is a process of gaining meaning from print.

Reading may also open the students' minds by using and developing their critical thinking. In reading the reader needs comprehension. Reading comprehension is very important for the students at Senior High School. According to Cooper (1986), comprehension is a process in which a reader may construct meaning by interacting with the text. When reading, a reader should know about understanding the reading passage. In line with this, Harmer (2003) states that students sometimes have a vague understanding of reading. Reading passage seems to be too difficult for them because of some conditions. The conditions here refer to the failure of understanding the words, the sentences, the sentences' unity and organization, and the lack of interest or concentration. Mc. Manara (2009) states the problem that is often faced by the students in comprehending the text. Mc. Manara explained that the students might not be able to read the words themselves, fail to understand the relationship between the sentence and the whole meaning of the text.

Davenport (2007) states that common types of question found in reading comprehension include: 1. identifying main idea, main point, author purpose or an alternate title for the passage, 2. recognizing the tone of the passage or identifying the style, 3. comprehending information directly stated in the passage (finding supporting detail), 4. answer relational questions about the author's opinion, even if not stated directly, 5. recognizing the structural methodology employed to develop the passage, for example, sequence, vocabulary, and represent pronoun (reference), and 6. extending limited information given by the author to a logical conclusion using inference (inference meaning). From the types of questions found in reading comprehension, identifying the main idea is focused on the objective of this research.

Herliansyah (2003) says that the main idea of the paragraph is what the author wants to know about the topic. From the main idea, the reader becomes knowing what the author tries to tell his or her readers. But, according to Glatthorn et al (1980), the main idea is usually expressed in a single sentence called the topic sentence. The topic sentence is the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph. The topic sentence involved topic and controlling idea. According to Wehmeier (2000) topic is a subject that you talk, write or learn about. Oxford (2003) says that the topic is a subject for discussion or study. And, controlling idea is controls what the sentences in the 16 paragraph will be discussed. A good topic sentence helps the reader identify the main idea. A topic sentence will be developed by supporting sentences. Boning (1968) says that getting the main idea is designed to assist pupils in grasping the central thought of a short passage. Such a skill is not only one of the most important of all major skills, but one must be developed from the earliest stages. And he also says that there is a number of ways in which teachers can help pupils identify main ideas. Once people can find the topic, people are ready to find the main idea. The main idea is the point of the paragraph. It is the most important thought about the topic. Therefore, the objectives of this research are (1) to find out the main reason for students' problems in finding the main idea, (2) to find out if the graphic organizer helps students' difficulties in finding the main idea and the supporting details. Therefore, this research is expected to find out whether there are any problems or not in determining the main idea and the supporting details. This research was conducted at the eighth grade of Regina Pacis Junior High School Surakarta

The main problem, in this case, is that the students may be the lack of the necessary strategies for reading to overcome those challenges. This case will be frustrating and demotivating, such attitudes often of due to unsuccessful experience in reading. This case is based on the writer's experience when the researcher teaches a teaching practice in Junior High school, where most of the students were not able to read and comprehend the text, although some students could read or pronounce the words well but the students could not understand to comprehend the text well because the students could not identify the meaning of difficult words in the text. Therefore, if the students only can read the words without comprehending or understanding the text or what the students are reading, it means that the students are not really reading. This conditions really proves how bad the students' achievement in reading. At schools, we can find some "poor and good readers." Therefore, building reading strategies played an es-

stantial role in the differences in readers' performance. According to Griffith (2008), reading strategies are defined as activities that are consciously chosen by learners to regulate their own language.

One of the first steps in this study was defining reading comprehension as the way students get the required information from a passage that has to be done as efficiently as possible. Osborne (2010) sees students' major reading problems arising when the students are so worried about understanding every single word of a text they are reading that they do not get the general idea from the passage. According to Zimmerman (2003), in order to be good readers, students use the following 7 (seven) keys to unlock meaning. It means that someone has to master in creating mental images, using background knowledge, asking questions, making inferences, determining the most important ideas or themes, synthesis information, and using fix-up strategies.

Based on the observation in the classroom and the interview with the teachers and the students, the researcher found out that the students had difficulties in the narrative text. Some of them found it easy to understand the social function, generic structure, and language feature. Most of them had difficulty in 1) deciding the general description of a text; 2) choosing the main idea of each paragraph; 3) finding the implicit information; 4) finding the explicit information; 5) finding the reference of certain word, and 6) deciding the meaning of word/ phrase/ sentence in the text. However, in the real teaching process, the teacher usually focuses on the keyword which helps them more comfortable to answer the question.

Even though reading is an important activity, students' reading skill is still unsatisfying. It can be seen from the test result of preliminary research. Besides, based on the observation, the causes from the students were (1) some students are not willing to get busy with themselves in finding the meaning using Google Translate tool; (2) the students feel bored while reading long dense text; (3) most of the students are passive in the class whenever questioned by the teacher about the content of the text; (4) and some of the students who are not interested in English lesson tend to ignore and chat with friends next to them.

Dealing with these problems, the students need effective media which can help them to answer questions about finding the implicit information and the explicit information; the reference of certain words; and deciding the meaning of word/ phrase/ sentence in the text. One of the media that can be used in teaching reading is the Graphic Organizer. It is expected that by using this media, the students can recognize and recall the topic sentences of each paragraph once the students notice and comprehend them immediately after reading a text. Therefore, in this research, the writer is interested to provide a solution to help the students improve their reading comprehension, especially on narrative text. This research was conducted by applying an appropriate reading strategy, in this research the writer used a graphic organizer that uses a graphic organizer to help students learn the major elements of the

story. The graphic organizer is a technique used after a story has been read. It includes identifying the main elements, and categorizing the main events in sequential order.

The research conducted was classroom action research. Classroom action research is a research conducted by a teacher in order to reflect upon and evolve their teaching it is a systematic, documented inquiry into one aspect of teaching and learning in a specific classroom. The purpose of teacher research is to gain an understanding of teaching and learning within one's classroom and to use that knowledge to increase teaching efficacy/student learning. Classroom action research is an approach to improving education by changing it and learning from the consequences of changes (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:229). This research took several times based on the problems that were found in the first meeting so that the teacher and the researcher can get an improvement in the way of teaching and can cover the problems that occur previously.

This Classroom Action Research has carried out to the eighth year The students had a different level of English competence. Some of them came from schools that only had sufficient basic knowledge of English, some of the students did not give English at all. Usually, these students got worse and even the worst score compared with others who came from good schools Those who came from good schools could follow the teaching and learning process in the classroom and of course, they could get much better and even the best scores in English assignments or tests. This study was conducted at the students of one of the private schools in Surakarta in the even semester of the 2016/2017 Academic Year. The students were the students of 8A. The research was conducted 4 weeks with time allocation 80 minutes in one session per week. The students had not mastered the basic reading comprehension skills, like identifying the topic, main ideas, implicit and explicit information, and word meaning.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After doing the teaching reading comprehension using GO strategy, students showed significant improvement from Pre-Test and Post-Test Cycle 1. The main idea and vocabulary skills showed significant increasing which mean scores of each are 59 points to 79 points for main idea and 66 points to 83 points for word meaning. In terms of topic skill, the median score was still 0 in Post-Test Cycle1. It means that the score of topic skill in Post- Test Cycle 1 had a wider range than in Pre-Test. The summary had slight improvement, which median score was from 15 points to 20 points.

Having implemented the research in two cycles, the researcher discussed it with the collaborator to make the final reflection. Based on the observation and the test, there was improvement in students' reading comprehension in finding in the general description of a text; the main idea of each paragraph; the implicit information; the explicit information; the reference of certain word; and the meaning of word/ phrase/ sentence in the text and classroom situation. The improvement of the students' scores occurred from cycle to cycle. The students could determine the general description of a text; the main idea of each paragraph; the implicit information; the explicit information; the reference of the certain

word; and the meaning of word/ phrase/ sentence in the text. The climate showed a positive effect in terms of the students' cooperation looked maximal and alive. The researcher who took part as a teacher gave the students

Before the research, the researcher found that the eighth-grade students had low scores in reading comprehension especially in finding the main idea. Considering the fact, the researcher proposed research by utilizing GO strategy as a solution and an interesting strategy to improve students' reading comprehension in finding the main idea. The result of utilizing the GO strategy showed that the students' reading comprehension in finding a general description of a text; the main idea of each paragraph; the implicit information; the explicit information; the reference of the certain word; and the meaning of word/ phrase/ sentence in the text improved. The improvement could be identified by comparing the mean score between pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2.

There was improvement of the students' reading comprehension in finding general description of a text; the main idea of each paragraph; the implicit information; the explicit information; the reference of certain word; and the meaning of word/ phrase/ sentence in the text from the pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. The highest score in the pre-test increased from 83 into 97 (cycle 1) and the lowest score decreased from 47 into 37 (cycle 1). The highest score in the post-test of cycle 1 increased from 97 into 100 (cycle 2) and the lowest score increased from 37 into 40 cycle 2).

Besides, the following table described the improvement of the students' level reading comprehension in finding the general description of a text; the main idea of each paragraph; the implicit information; the explicit information; the reference of certain word; and the meaning of word/ phrase/ sentence in the text. The number of students in a poor and fair level decreased and the number of students in a good and very good level increased after the implementation of the treatment.

Another point of the students' improvement was the percentage of the students who got the score above the minimum passing grade of KKM. There are 70 % of students in preliminary, 33 % of students in cycle 1, 17 % of students in cycle

The findings in the teaching and learning process showed that there was a significant change of class climate after implementing a graphic organizer strategy in reading class. Before implementing this strategy, the classroom situation in preliminary research can be described as follows: the cooperation between students looked not alive, however, after implementing this strategy, the students become cooperation got better and the students' participation became more alive. All of the students without any exception could interact between students both individually and in groups. In pre-research also showed that the teacher rarely gave motivation, help, support, and encouragement in order to get the students' interest, however after the implementation of graphic organizer strategy, the students who felt bored and not interested in the teaching and learning activity became more active after the implementation of

the strategy. There were some positive responses from the students as the teacher who worked as a teacher often gave the students motivation, help, support, and encouragement. Before implementing this strategy, the students looked not enthusiastic about doing the assignment and the students were not actively involved in the classroom activity. The teacher also gave the students some praise and appreciation during the learning process. The students thought that the teacher rarely gave them praise. Therefore, the researcher concluded that by promoting the graphic organizer strategy, most of the students could really enjoyed the reading text in English especially in narrative text and the students could take part in all activities during the teaching and learning process in the classroom so that, it could help the students to improve their score of reading comprehension in finding main idea, explicit and implicit information, identifying the reference and some word meaning.

Based on the observation from the preliminary research, cycle 1, and cycle 2. There were significant changes in the classroom situation, they are in the cooperation between students, the effect of the motivation from the teacher on students' changing of behavior, the involvement and active participation of students, and the reward and praise given by the teacher to the students. Those changes in the classroom situation will bring some great effects and influences on students, especially in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the teacher should not ignore those important activities in order to have a fun teaching and learning process in the classroom.

The strength when graphic organizers strategy is implemented in teaching reading comprehension are: (1) Graphic organizer helps the students to understand the information of the text easily, (2) Graphic organizer helps the students to determine the main idea of the text in each paragraph, (3) Graphic organizer helps the students to determine the explicit information of the text, (4) Graphic organizer helps the students to determine the implicit information of the text, (5) Graphic organizer helps the students to determine the reference, (6) Graphic organizer helps the students to determine the word meaning, (7) Graphic organizer helps the students to determine the cooperation between students, (8) Graphic organizer helps to create the classroom situation became more interactive and alive, (9) Graphic organizer helps the students to join the reading activity more active. Meanwhile, the weaknesses of the graphic organizer strategy are : (1) Graphic organizer takes a long time to be applied and (2) Graphic organizer makes the class quite noisy when the students have a group discussion.

Based on the findings of the research, it can be theorized that the use of a graphic organizer can improve the students' reading comprehension. The improvement is identified from scores to scores in each cycle. Jiang and Grabe (2007, p. 4) stated that: In the literature of GO research, not all GOs are constructed to reflect the discourse structures of a text. Many GOs create a very general frame for listing and sorting information from a text without requiring recognition of how the discourse structure of the text organizes information. If GOs that represent the discourse structures of a text consistently facilitated reading comprehension, then the problem of ineffective GOs may rest with the types of GOs that do

not represent the specific discourse structures of a text. In other words, GOs that do not represent the discourse structure of the text may be less effective than the ones that represent the discourse structures.

Based on the theory above, graphic organizers that represent the discourse structure of a text would be useful to improve students' reading comprehension. Whereas graphic organizers that don't represent the discourse structure of a text would be less useful to improve students' reading comprehension.

Graphic Organizer is a kind of technique that is implemented to promote the students' reading comprehension. In this case, a short story element graphic organizer is used to improve the students' reading comprehension, such as the main idea, explicit information, implicit information, reference, as well as word meaning. This argument is supported by Adler (2004) students use graphic organizers to graphically ideas and relations in narrative text. Graphic organizers can help students focus on text structure as they read, provide students with tools they can use to examine and show the relationship in a text, and help students write well-organized summaries of the text.

In addition, Hall and Meyer (2003), point out graphic organizers can be effective learning tools when implemented within a substantive instructional content, particularly an interactive and collaborative approach involving teacher modeling, students and teacher discussion, and practice with feedback. It means that graphic organizers can be used well if teachers and students are actively involved in the process of implementing graphic organizers. The students can comprehend the text if they know the elements of the text. Once the students know the element of the text, they understand the text. By using short story element graphic organizer, the students' reading comprehension in finding the main idea, explicit information, implicit information, reference

Furthermore, the students improve their vocabulary as they fill in the blank graphic organizers. During the process of filling the graphic organizer, the students put the extracted meaning from the passage in simple words. This makes students have to find similar ideas to replace the original words from the given text.

Moreover, Liliana in Praven Sam D. (2013, p.2) states graphic organizers are representations, pictures or models used for processing textual information. The graphic organizer facilitates understanding of knowledge where there is a large amount of information to work with, in a given limited time. There are various functions of graphic organizers. In reading comprehension, they assist learners to: (1) clarify and organize information into categories, they are main idea, supporting details, topic sentence, facts, opinion, etc.); (2) organize information in a paragraph for better understanding; (3) construct meaning of difficult words and sentence dividing into lexis. ; (4) understand the context by associating with prior knowledge; (5) identify the conceptual and perceptual errors that may occur in the course of reading a passage.

There was a significant change in class climate after implementing a graphic organizer strategy in reading class. Before implementing this strategy, the classroom situation in preliminary research can be described as follows: the cooperation between students looked not alive. It happened because the teacher dominantly took part in the teaching and learning process, the students were rarely invited in group work or discussion. This situation stressed the students. All of the students without any exception could interact between students both individually and in groups. In pre-research, it also showed that the students felt bored and not interested in the teaching and learning activity because the teacher rarely gave motivation, help, support, and encouragement in order to get the students' interest. The students looked not enthusiastic about doing the assignment and the students were not actively involved in the classroom activity. The students thought that the teacher rarely gave them praise. Therefore, the researcher concluded that by promoting the graphic organizer strategy, most of the students could really enjoyed the reading text in English especially in narrative text and the students could take part in all activities during the teaching and learning process in the classroom so that, it could help the students to improve their score of reading comprehension in finding main idea, explicit and implicit information, identifying the reference and some word meaning.

After the research, the researcher found that the class climate changed. The findings showed that the graphic organizer strategy can improve the class climate. There was a significant change in the classroom situation, they are: in the cooperation between students, the students can have good cooperation with their friends well, there was some positive response from the students. The students could participate and take part actively in the teaching and learning process. The students paid attention to the teacher's explanation and they looked excited to join the reading class. The effect of giving the motivation from the teacher on students' changing of behavior, made the students happier and it aroused the involvement and active participation of students. Those changes in the classroom situation bring some great effects and influences on students, especially in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the teacher should not ignore those important activities in order to have a fun teaching and learning process in the classroom.

The various techniques in applying graphic organizers had important part in creating an effective teaching and learning process. Different techniques in applying graphic organizers made the students familiar with graphic organizers and created an effective way of teaching. It is also made the students interested in the following lesson and reading text using graphic organizers. It is in line with Chiang (2007) who states that graphic organizers may take the class more interesting because the teacher has the flexibility to flow from one topic to the next and can answer questions that may lead students to another part of the context in the reading.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that graphic organizer strategy can improve the class climate because it encourages the students to understand the text, there is interaction and co-

operation between students in reading activity, the students became actively involved in the teaching and learning activity, and the classroom situation become lively, attractive, fun, and interactive.

The new given technique provides students with different options of interest. The condition generates students' willingness to ask and respond to the question. Furthermore, graphic organizers provide more chances for students to develop themselves actively. This condition helps the students in participating during the class.

Classroom climate cannot be separated from the students' achievement in the teaching and learning process. It is a consideration whether the students can achieve the learning objective well or not. Classroom climate is the most very important part of teaching. It is indispensable to create a climate that supports the learning process. Classroom climate sometimes is referred to as the learning environment, as well as by terms such as atmosphere, ambiance, ecology, and milieu. Classroom climate can be defined as the classroom environment involving the shared perceptions of the students and the teachers. The climate can be seen from the students and the teachers' perception in the learning process. Good perception will happen when the students looked enthusiastic and active in the teaching and learning activity and the teacher also creates various activities by using some interesting media and materials. The school and the class climate is linked to academic achievement. The positive and negative climates in the teaching and learning process impact the students' achievement and score.

There are several variables that contribute to a positive classroom climate. (a) cooperation, the extent to which students cooperate with each other during class activities; (b) teacher support, the extent to which the teacher helps, encourages, and is interested in the student; (c) task orientation, the extent to which the class must stay on task and complete assignments; (d) involvement, the extent to which students participate actively in his or her class activities or discussions; and (e) equity, the extent to which the teacher treats all students equally including the distribution of praise and questioning.

5. CONCLUSION

Graphic Organizer is a method used to make language learners easier to see the whole pictures of reading text. It encourages people to transfer written ideas into images that are more easily processed by the brain. This method is easy to understand and no need to follow any particular pattern. Using color and symbols as well as no particular pattern required, Graphic Organizer encourages language learners to focus on the details of the story. It is expected when learners can identify the details of a story, they can identify the topic, share the story with their own words, inference and make a connection to the information provided, and even give solutions or ideas to reading text.

The results of students' reading comprehension improvement in this research are Main Ideas and Vocabulary skills have an indication to improve but they are no statistically significant improvement while Topic and Summary skills are robustly improved through using Graphic Organizer. The catego-

ries (Memory, Translation, Interpretation and Application) in the rubric of Tony Stead were assessed and the results are all significant to improve learners' reading comprehension through Graphic Organizers.

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