

Improving the Eighth Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement and Their Active Participation through Roundtable Technique

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Abstract: This research was intended to improve the eighth grade students' reading comprehension achievement and their active participation through roundtable technique. The design of this research was classroom action research. The research subjects were the students of grade VIIIA of SMPN 6 Situbondo. The research data were collected by reading comprehension test, observation, interview and documentation. This research was conducted in one cycle with two meetings. The mean score of the students' reading comprehension test was 76. The average percentage result of the students' active participation was 80%. This means that the use of roundtable technique was able to help the students to improve their active participation as well as their reading comprehension achievement in the teaching and learning process of reading comprehension.

Keywords: Roundtable Technique, Reading Comprehension Achievement

1. Introduction

English plays an important role especially in the international communication and in the development of education. Moreover, in some countries, English is a foreign language that has been taught in the formal school. One of the ways to help Indonesian people in mastering English is to put English as a compulsory subject in all school levels in Indonesia, from *SMP* to university levels.

Currently, Indonesia is improving a new curriculum, that is, 2013 Curriculum (*K13*). The objective of teaching English according to *K13* is to develop students' skills and the language components. Both the language skills and language

components should be taught to the students in teaching learning process. In English, there are four skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The students are expected to have ability in those language skills which cover receptive and productive language use. Besides learning the skills, the students also learn the English language components which include pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

Reading is one of the basic skills in English which is not simply translated word by word but it needs to be acquired during the language course. Therefore, when the students learn to read, they are not only expected to read the text in a good pronunciation or to find the meaning of each word within the text, but they should also be able to comprehend the reading texts during the process of reading. So, reading comprehension is a process in understanding the content of reading by constructing and gaining meaning from the text. Although reading is very important, the eighth grade students of SMPN 6 Situbondo still have difficulties in mastering reading.

Based on the result of the preliminary study in the form of an informal interview with the English teacher of SMPN 6 Situbondo, it was known that grade VIII A still got difficulties in reading comprehension. The teacher stated that only 11 of 25 students could reach the standard score of the standard minimum requirement of 75 of reading. The mean score of this class was 64.36 and it could be said that most of the students did not achieve the standard requirement score of reading. It means that grade VIII A had a difficulty in reading comprehension.

The teacher said that the students were lack of vocabulary to comprehend word meaning, sentence meaning and paragraph meaning. This condition made the

students uncomfortable and bored to join the English Reading Comprehension class. The English teacher of SMPN 6 Situbondo taught the students by using Make a Match, Task Based Approach, pairing, and individual work. It is clear that the English teacher never used Roundtable Technique in teaching reading comprehension. Besides, the students' participation in following the teaching learning process of reading comprehension was still passive, it could be seen that not all of the students showed active involvement in joining the reading class. Some of the students did not pay attention while the teacher was explaining the lesson. Moreover, they seldom answered the questions from the teacher. It seemed that they showed less motivation in following the teaching learning process.

To overcome those problems, one way to make the students able to improve their reading comprehension achievement was by making the students actively involved themselves in the reading comprehension class. The teacher could use activities in cooperative learning, especially in Roundtable Technique to promote the students' active participation in the teaching and learning process so that the students' reading comprehension achievement would be much better. Therefore, Roundtable Technique was used in this research to improve the eighth grade students' reading comprehension achievement and their active participation through at a junior high school.

2. Literature review: the theoretical and conceptual frameworks

2.1. Reading achievement in ELT (English Language Teaching)

The purpose of reading achievement, according to Hughes (2003:13), is to measure how successful the individual students, group of students, or the scores themselves to achieve the objectives. It can be acquired by giving test that is appropriate with reading skill to be assessed. In other words, reading comprehension achievement

relates to do something successfully with skills, knowledge, and efforts in comprehending the meaning of the text that is done by reading the text.

2.2. Types of Cooperative learning in reading classes

Jollifie (2007:3) states that cooperative learning requires pupils to work together in small groups to sport each other to improve their own learning and that of others. It means that cooperative learning approach is a teaching technique that focuses on cooperation rather than competition of each member in a group. In addition, Olsen and Kagan (1997:88) give the examples of Cooperative Language Learning activities they are, Three-step interview, Roundtable Technique, Think-Pair-Share, Solve-Pair-Share, and Number Heads.

However, in this study the researcher used Roundtable Technique to improve the students' reading comprehension achievement. It was suitable to be applied because of some reasons: (1) Roundtable Technique was not applied by the English teacher before, (2) Roundtable Technique could develop high level of thinking while reading, (3) the role of this strategy was doing the exercises in groups, (4) this technique gave much time to the students to be active in the English teaching and learning process and (5) it also developed critical thinking and learning to solve problems.

2.3. Review of previous studies

Previous studies on using Roundtable techniques include the research conducted by Sundana (2013) of which the result showed that the mean score of the students' vocabulary test and the percentage of students' active participation showed improvement. In other words, the above previous study showed that the use of Roundtable Technique can improve students' reading comprehension achievement and their active participation in teaching learning process at a junior high school.

3. The method

3.1. Research context

The research was conducted in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) rather than English as an additional language (EAL). This is because in the school of where this research took place, English was only one of the compulsory subjects other than English such as Mathematics that had to be learnt by the students at the school. This research was conducted at a junior high school (SMPN 6) in Situbondo.

3.2. Research design

The design of this research was Classroom Action Research because it was intended to improve students' reading comprehension achievement as what Elliot (1991:69) defines that action research is the study of social view to improve the quality of action within it. In selecting the research area and the research subjects, the researcher used a purposive method as what Fraenkel and Wallen (2006:112) note that a purposive method is a method in choosing a research based on a certain purpose or reason.

3.3. Research participants

The research participants were the eighth grade students who had the lowest mean score in reading comprehension achievement as informed by the English teacher in the interview. Besides, most of the students were not active in the teaching and learning process of reading.

3.4. The research data and analysis

In this research there were four methods used in order to collect the research data. The researcher used reading comprehension test, observation, interview and documentation. In this research, reading comprehension achievement test was

administered at the end of cycle. The test conducted in this research was in the form of multiple choices. There were two types of reading comprehension texts with 20 items for multiple choice tests. Meanwhile, the observation in this research was intended to know the students' active participation in the teaching and learning process of reading comprehension. In this research, observation was conducted by using observation checklist. The indicators observed were: 1) working in group cooperatively, 2) doing the exercise of reading comprehension in descriptive text by using Roundtable Technique, 3) asking questions relevant to the topic given, and 4) asking question in the teaching and learning process of reading comprehension by using Roundtable Technique. The students were indicated as active ones if they could fulfill at least three indicators of observation checklist.

In addition, McMillan (1992:132) states that interview is a form of data collection in which questions are asked orally and the subjects' responses are recorded. In this research, the interview was conducted as preliminary study with the English teacher of the eighth grade of SMPN 6 Situbondo on July 22, 2016. Furthermore, Elliot (1991:78) explains that documentation can provide information which is relevant to the issues and problems under investigation. In this research, documentation was used to get the supporting data about the names of the research subjects, and the students' previous reading comprehension scores from the English teacher. The results of the observation were analyzed by using descriptive statistics to find the percentage of the students' participation and the mean score of their reading comprehension achievement (Ali 1993:186).

4. Research Results and discussion

During the two meetings in using Roundtable Technique, the students were asked to do group work and individual work. In group work the students did the exercise

through Roundtable Technique. The question of reading was posed in the form of “Multiple-Answer” question. In answering the “Multiple-Answer” question, each member of group had an opportunity to get different right answers. The “Multiple-Answer” question was intended to make a summary of the text given. After that, the teacher gave individual work that was about word, sentence, paragraph and text comprehensions. By doing the group and individual work the students were expected to understand the whole text. The students did their jobs well in both meetings that made them ready for reading comprehension test on the third meeting.

In the first meeting there were 18 active students (72%) and 7 passive students (28%) during the teaching learning process. In the second meeting, during the teaching learning process of reading comprehension through Roundtable Technique, there were 22 active students (88%) and 3 passive students (12%). Thus, the average result of the students’ active participation in cycle 1 was 80% while 20% was categorized as passive students. Thus, it can be concluded that the students’ active participation in Cycle 1 was successful with the target percentage, that is 75% as minimum percentage. Therefore, the students’ active participation in the teaching learning process of reading comprehension through Roundtable Technique achieved the target. The result showed that 20 students got score ≤ 75 or higher and the average was 76. The percentage of the students’ who were successful on the test was 80%. The result indicated that the students’ reading comprehension achievement test had achieved the standard target score at least 75 and the percentage, that is 75%.

In teaching learning process, both the researcher and the teacher worked cooperatively to monitor and guide the students’ during the lesson. The students also gave their effort to work in group to improve their reading comprehension

achievement. During the discussion, the researcher gave opportunity to each group to share their results with class, this treatment encouraged them to be more confidence and be active in class. Crandall 1987 in Arnold (1999:233) mentions that cooperative learning provides comprehensible input and output.

In Roundtable Technique, students are expected to have good group interaction. On the second meeting, every students tried to give their contribution by sharing knowledge to do the exercises together, then it could make them do the reading comprehension test better. Millis (2005:6) states that roundtable technique is a technique which is useful for brainstorming, reviewing, or practicing skill where each student in turn write the answer on a single sheet of paper and a pen passed around the group. In this case, the teacher used Roundtable Technique to help the students in improving their reading comprehension skill.

In this research, the students were asked to summarize a descriptive text in relation to multiple answer question. Each member, in turnswrote the answer on a single sheet of paper and a pen passed around the group. the members helped one another when a partner had difficulty. This activity could build positive interdependence among team members, because Roundtable Technique develops high level of thinking that makes the students express their ideas in understanding the meaning of the text in the form of group which could increase students' confidence and self-esteem, because each student can gave contribution to their Roundtable group members and that could be motivate them to be active in doing Roundtable Technique. Roundtable technique can be used to teach reading comprehension of descriptive texts. This statement is supported by Kagan (2009:10.21) who states that roundtable can be used repeatedly in many subjects, at a variety of places in the lesson plan.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it could be concluded that teaching reading comprehension through Roundtable Technique could improve the students' reading comprehension and their active participation in the teaching and learning process of class VIII A at SMPN 6 Situbondo. Therefore, it is suggested that the English teacher apply Roundtable Technique in teaching reading comprehension. It is due to the fact that Roundtable Technique can improve the students' reading comprehension and the students' active participation during the teaching learning process.

The future researchers should use these results as information to conduct a further research dealing with the use of Roundtable Technique in teaching reading comprehension to the students. The research design can be an experimental research on the effect of using Roundtable Technique on the students' reading or writing achievement.

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