

# EFL Education Journal

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## **Enhancing Students' Recount Text Reading Comprehension Achievement by Using Snowball Throwing Technique at SMPN 7 Jember Junior High School**

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**Abstract:** This research was intended to improve students' recount text reading achievement. The research design was a classroom action research. The research participants were the eighth grade students (n=43). The data was collected by interview, documentation, and test. The results show that there was improvement in students' reading comprehension achievement. They gained good scores at the end of the Cycle. The students' mean score in preliminary study was 57.3 while the mean score in the Cycle after the actions was 83.8 with the improvement of 26.5 points. Moreover, the percentage of students' participation was also improve from 55.8% to 83.2%. In addition, there was a positive response from the English teacher about implementing the action. In conclusion Snowball Throwing technique could improve students' reading comprehension achievement.

**Keywords:** CAR, Reading Comprehension Achievement, Snowball Throwing Technique

### **1. Introduction**

English is as an International language which is used and learned widely in many countries around the world. More people from various countries use English to communicate in international meetings (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:3). In the educational field, English has a great contribution because almost all text books in various disciplines are written in English. Some textbooks in Indonesia are written in English.

The role of English is as a foreign language in Indonesia. In other words English is not used in daily communication but it is intended to be learned at school. One of the objectives of teaching English as stated in the Institutional Level Curriculum for

Junior High School, Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) (BSNP,2006) is to develop the students' communicative competence both in spoken and written forms to accomplish the functional literacy. This means that in learning English, students should master all of the English skills and components. The skills consist of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Furthermore, there are also language components which consist of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar which support the development of four skills. Related to those skills, reading is one of four skills for EFL learners that is important to be mastered. Riswanto (2014) stated that reading is one of the most important academic skills for a language learner because the central role of successful teaching and learning process at all education stages is reading. In order to be successful in the process of learning, a student must acquire good reading skill.

The aim of teaching reading based on the syllabus of *KTSP curriculum 2006* for eighth grade of Junior High School in the second semester was understanding the meaning of written functional text and simple short essay in recount and narrative relating to the environment. This statement means that there are two types of short nonfunctional texts which are taught in the second semester. They are recount text and narrative text. In this case, the researcher focuses only in the recount text because it retells past event which intends to entertain or inform others what happened and when it happened.

Based on a preliminary study conducted by observing and interviewing the English teacher at SMPN 7 Jember, in learning English especially reading comprehension, it was found that the students only read the passage without knowing the meaning of the words. It was shown from the result of reading comprehension task given by the teacher. The mean score of the Students' final examination in the first semester was



57.3 with 23 students (52.3%) who achieved it. However, the teacher said that this mean score was very low because the ideal mean score was 75 and achieved by at least 70% of the total students. Nevertheless, eighth grade students' mean score was the lowest among other eighth grade classes. Besides, the students were lazy to read even when they were given a task, they just did it by cheating other students' answer because they experience difficulties in comprehending the text. Therefore, when they were given assignments individually, their score could not achieve the English minimum requirement standard score and ideal students' mean score of 75. Besides, the English teacher always used English to Explain the English lesson without Indonesian at all and the way how to the teacher spoke was unclear. As the results, most students did not understand about what was being explained by the teacher. When the researcher asked to the students' about their English teacher, they said that they often felt strained to join the English class, so it could impede their language input and production.

This condition affected their English achievement which many of the English tests always have reading texts in it. Besides, the students often felt bored during the teaching and learning process of reading class because according to the teacher's information, she mostly used lecturing technique in teaching reading and asking students to translate the text into Indonesian then answer the questions based on the text. From the result of the interview with the English teacher, it was known that there were only about 24 students who actively participated in reading activities or about 55.8% of the total students in class. In solving the students' boredom, the teacher should be more creative in creating effective atmosphere for learning that is comfortable and attractive for the students.

The researcher chose to use a technique of snowball throwing to improve students' reading comprehension because this model has some advantages. Safitri (2011) states that one of the advantages of Snowball Throwing technique is to help students to understand deeply the subject matter being learned. This is because the students receive an explanation from their friends who are specifically prepared by teacher. Another opinion comes from Suprijono (2009) who states that this technique trains the student's discipline and shares and exchanges knowledge.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1. Theoretical framework on reading comprehension in ELT*

To gain the effectiveness of teaching and learning reading, it needs an appropriate learning method and technique. Nowadays, many learning techniques are very attractive, and many of these techniques are created to make the students more active in learning. One of the appropriate learning methods is cooperative learning. According to Dooly (2008) the task in cooperative learning ensures that every group member has learnt something then they will be responsible for explaining it to other member. Therefore, by conducting cooperative learning method, students will have a chance to share knowledge or information from the text they read and discuss it with their friends in a group. One of the techniques in cooperative learning method is Snowball Throwing technique. Snowball throwing technique is a technique that allows students to make question by themselves that is formed like a ball then throw it to their friends. Each student must answer question of the balls obtained (Suprijono 2009; Widodo 2009; Mukhtari 2010 ; Hamid 2011; Farhan 2011; and Sembiring 2012). This technique can assist students' comprehension in reading because students will help each other by answering others' questions about the reading text and discuss together in cooperative way. This model is amusing the



students. So, it makes the students actively participate in the class and improve the students' reading comprehension at the same time.

## 2.2. *Conceptual review*

In this research, snowball throwing was used as the technique for teaching reading comprehension in understanding recount text to solve the problems faced by the students. It used recount text because it was stated in the syllabus of 2006 curriculum in the second semester. The writer adapted the procedure of teaching reading comprehension by using snowball technique from the previous research. The procedures were: First, teacher introduced the objective of the learning material. Second, the teacher formed groups and called the chairmen of the groups to explain the material. Third, the chairmen of the groups came back to each group then explained the material presented by teacher to their friend. Fourth, each student in a group had to write one question concerning the material from the explanation of his chairman of the group. Fifth, the paper questions were formed like a ball thrown from one student to another student in groups for 15 minutes. Sixth, the students who received the question paper had to answer it in the spherical paper interchangeably, and the last was evaluation. In this research, the fifth procedure was changed into asking students to throw the question paper to other groups. Then the sixth procedure was also changed into the students answered the question from other groups and the teacher would give a prize for the best groups' score. These two steps were considered to give better activity in incorporating group competition in teaching and learning process. Tauer and Harackiewicz (2004) states that the combination of cooperative and competitive group learning can improve the students' intrinsic motivation consistently. Furthermore, it facilitates enjoyment and performance of students.

## *2.3. Review of previous studies*

In addition, there was a relevant research in the same topic. For example, Nuryati, et al (2015) from Pasir Pangairan University in Riau conducted a Classroom Action Research entitled Improving Students' Reading Comprehension in Recount Text by Using Snowball Throwing at Grade VIII SMPN Pagaran Tapah Darussalam Provinsi Riau. The result of their study proved that snowball throwing technique could improve the second year students' reading achievement. The average of pretest score was 61 with no student (0 %) reached 65 (Passing grade) in the pretest, then it increased into average score 71 in the posttest in Cycle I and in post test 2 it increased into 81. From the previous research finding, it was known that snowball throwing technique could improve students' reading comprehension at grade VIII in understanding recount text.

## **3. The Study**

### *3.1. Research design*

This research was a classroom action research. The objective of this research was to improve the eighth grade students' recount text reading achievement and participation at SMPN 7. The area of this research was SMPN 7 Jember. This school was chosen purposively because the use of Snowball Throwing technique had never been applied in teaching learning process in this school. Besides that the researcher had done the teaching practice program in SMPN 7 Jember and the headmaster had already given permission to the researcher to conduct the research at the school. The population of this research was the eighth grade students of SMPN 7 Jember.

### *3.2. Research context*

The research was conducted in the context of EFL (English as a foreign language) where the students learning the language did not use English to communicate with their friends, parents and even their teachers outside their classrooms. The school community was not relatively quite conducive to English language learning because the people at the school do not speak English.

### *3.3. Research participants*

The participants of this research were the eighth grade students of a junior high school (SMPN7) in Jember. The research participants or the respondents of this research were chosen by considering the results of their reading comprehension test in the first semester with the lowest mean score. At the school and at home, they did not use English to communicate with their teachers, friends and parents. Rather they used languages other than English, such as Bahasa Indonesia (their national language) and their own mother tongues, for example Javanese. Even, they did not use English to discuss a particular topic of the English lesson with their friends of the same group in the classroom.

### *3.4. Research data and analysis*

The research data were collected by using reading comprehension test that was used to measure the students' reading comprehension achievement. The test was given after the teaching learning process by using Snowball Throwing technique and observation. Some other data of this research were collected by interview and documentation. Since the research design was classroom action research, the reading test was given in the end of the Cycle. Then it was analyzed by using descriptive statistics to get the percentage of the students who reach the class mean score of  $\geq 75$  or the percentage of the students who actively participate in the

teaching learning process (*Adapted from Ali, 1993:186*) and the total number of the students who reach the class mean score of  $\geq 75$  or the total number of the students who are categorized as active students. The criteria of success are If 70% of the students got the class mean score of  $\geq 75$  and 70% of them were active, the second Cycle would not be done. It meant that the research would be stopped. If less than 70% the students got the class mean score of  $\geq 75$  and less than 70% of the students were active, the research would be continued to the second Cycle.

The researcher used teacher-made test in this research. A reading comprehension test was given at the end of each Cycle. The test that was administered in this research was an objective test in the form of multiple choices. The total number of the test items in this research was 25 numbers which consisted of four reading texts. Two of them had titles while the others were not. It was because two test items asked about what the suitable title was. Dealing with the scoring, each correct answer of the item was scored 4 points. Therefore, the total score was 100. Wrong answers were scored zero. The time allocation for each meeting was 2x40 minutes and the time given for doing the test was 75 minutes. Each item took three minutes to do. The test was done in each Cycle after the action was given.

The activities of the research used the classroom action research procedures. They are firstly, the researcher conducted a preliminary study by interviewing the English teacher of the eighth grade students of SMPN 7 Jember to get the supporting data. After that the researcher apply the classroom action research procedure by Kemmis and Mc Taggart ( 1988) , they are : First, planning the action. Here, the researcher selected the topic and sub topic which were suitable for the eighth grade students then constructed the lesson plans. Second was implementing the action. Here, the researcher taught the students by using Snowball Throwing technique. Next,

conducting observation to monitor the teaching learning process followed by evaluating the results of the action. The last was analyzing the results. In this stage, the researcher administered the post test then did a reflection : a) if Cycle 1 failed to achieve the research objectives, the action was proceed to the second Cycle, b) if Cycle 1 succeeded in achieving the research objectives, the action was stopped, c) if the result achieved the research objectives in Cycle 1, if the researcher wanted to know the consistency of the results, the actions could be continued to Cycle 2.

#### **4. Research result and Discussion**

The actions in this research were done in three meetings including reading comprehension test. In this research, the researcher carried out the action by teaching reading through cooperative learning method with Snowball Throwing technique and the English was teacher as the observer collaboratively with the researcher. The subject of the research was the VIII G class at SMPN 7 Jember. The first meeting was done at January 14<sup>th</sup> 2016 and the second meeting was done at 16<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The Cycle was ended by administering the reading comprehension test on 21<sup>st</sup> of January, 2016.

From the results of classroom observation in Cycle 1, it was known that in the first meeting there were 32 out 42 students (76.1 %) who actively involved in the teaching and learning process of reading. While in the second meeting, there were 37 out of 41 students (90.2%) who actively involved in the teaching and learning process of reading, so that the average of the students' participation from the first and the second meeting was 83.2%. Based on the result of interview with the English teacher, the students' participation before the action conducted was about 55.8 % or about 24 students. This means that there were as many as 27.4% improvement after the actions conducted by snowball throwing reading activities. It

means that process evaluation has already achieved at least 70% students participated in the reading activities. Besides, they were enthusiastic to make the questions then answer the questions after they threw their questions paper to other groups. They were also asked questions to the researcher dealing with the reading text or questions formulation.

From the results of reading comprehension test conducted through Snowball Throwing technique, it was found that the mean score of students' reading comprehension achievement through Snowball Throwing technique in Cycle 1 was 83.8 and it was achieved by 60.5% (26 students) out of 43 students. This mean score had improved from the previous mean score of 57.3 with the improvement of 26.5 points. In addition, the Cycle of this research was considered to be successful if 70% of the total students achieved the class mean score of reading test at least  $\geq 75$ . In fact, there were 76.7% (33 students) out of 43 students having reading comprehension achievement score at least  $\geq 75$ . This indicated that the targeted percentage of students gaining score at least  $\geq 75$  had been achieved. It means the actions in Cycle 1 were successful and the actions were stopped.

Based on the result of observation, it can be said that snowball throwing technique could improve students' active participation. Snowball throwing activities could motivate them to be interested and active during the teaching and learning process such as making and answering questions, doing the tasks, and asking questions to the teacher. Moreover, the students enjoyed the activity of throwing the balls. They laughed, shouted, and they enjoyed it very much because they felt like playing a game. It is in line with the argument of Hamid (2011) Snowball throwing technique is very interesting to be applied in a classroom because it is challenging, pleasing, moreover it can encourage the responsible of the students to answer questions.



Therefore, the use snowball throwing as the technique in teaching and learning process made the VIII G students interested and motivated to participate actively in the class. They discussed together in finding the general and specific information from the clues given by the researcher. When they had found the clues in the reading passage, they began to make questions from what they got. The leaders of the groups also took their responsibility to help the members in formulating the questions such as writing down all the possible questions from each member in a piece of paper then consulted it to the teacher. Besides, they could help each other in finding the answer from the question paper since their correct answer would be scored then there would be a gift for the highest score among the groups.

Therefore, snowball throwing technique could improve the VIII G students' recount text reading achievement because this technique maximizes the use of cooperative learning. It meant that snowball throwing technique could solve students' problem in finding some general and specific information in cooperative way. It was supported by Nuryati, et al's statement (2015), the important factor that influenced the students' reading comprehension achievement was cooperation in discussion. That is why students were actively discussed their reading problem so that the learning process could run well. Besides, in groups, students shared their knowledge or understanding about the reading material as it was in line with Suprijono's (2009) idea that this technique trained the student's discipline and shared and exchanged knowledge. Regarding the results of this research, it can be reported that using Snowball Throwing technique can improve the eighth grade students' recount text reading achievement at SMPN 7 Jember in the academic year of 2015/2016. Similarly, using Snowball Throwing technique can improve the eighth grade students' participation at SMPN 7 Jember in the academic year of 2015/2016.

The results of actions in Cycle 1 had already fulfilled the success criteria, and therefore, Cycle 2 was not carried out. Although the use of snowball throwing as a learning technique succeeded in improving the students' reading achievement, the problems were still found in applying the action. The problems were some students got mistakes in writing the question sentences with grammatical structures. Especially in adding the auxiliary word "Did" and "Was" and changing the past form into present form. Besides, in the beginning of the lesson, some students were not ready to start the lesson. They were very noisy when the researcher tried to start the lesson. As the consequence, some students did not understand what they should or should not do. It might happen because the English teacher was not there in the beginning of the lesson while mostly students were easier to be disciplined by the English teacher. Furthermore, the students were very noisy when they threw the ball. This happened because they threw all at once randomly.

## **5. Conclusion**

Based on the results of the research that have been discussed before, it can be concluded that the use of Cooperative Learning method with Snowball Throwing technique can improve the students' reading comprehension achievement with 26.5 improvement points.

The English teacher at the school should use Cooperative learning method by using Snowball Throwing technique in teaching reading comprehension not only for Recount text, but also other genres. Besides, it can be used as an alternative technique to motivate the students to be more active in learning reading. The English teacher is also supposed to try to teach some English skills and language components by using this technique. The results of the research are expected to be useful for other researchers as the references to conduct a further research dealing

with the improvement of reading achievement using other text genres and different research design. The future researcher is also suggested to conduct a research which is intended to improve not only reading, but also other skills of English or even a certain language component.

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