IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH STORY MAPPING STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to prove whether or not the implementation of story mapping strategy can improve reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Palu. This research applied quasi-experimental research design in which the sample consisted of two groups which were experimental and control groups. The sample is selected by using cluster sampling technique which consisted of 30 students as experimental group and consisted of 30 students as control group. The experimental group was given treatment by applying story mapping strategy in teaching reading, while the control group was taught by using general way as the teacher applied. The instrument of data collection was a test. The result of the data analysis shows that there is a significant difference between the result in the pretest and the posttest. By applying 0.05 level of significance and 58 degree of freedom (df), the researcher found out that the value of t-counted is 5.11 and t-table is 1.672. The t-counted value was higher than the t-table value, which means that the research hypothesis is accepted. In other words, the implementation of story mapping strategy can improve reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Palu.

Keywords: Improving, Reading Comprehension, Story Mapping Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the ways for gathering up information, knowing enough science concepts, knowing more knowledge, studying new words, understanding scientific books, and technology written in English language. Most communities also read to get pleasure such as reading novel, short story or funny story. After reading they may have satisfaction and comfort. Reading cannot be separated from daily activities. People read from many kinds of written materials such as newspapers, magazine, novels, comics and the academic book. Through reading people can get a lot of information, knowledge, enjoyment, and even problem solution. Therefore, the ability to read the text in any form will bring great advantages to the readers. All those need reading skill enough. Reading can be basic ways of having information in our society and academic setting in particular. According to Nunan (2005) “Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning.” Reading is process of understand...
and comprehend a written text. People need to read in order to get information and get the knowledge from what they read. Reading is an essential skill for all students in all stages. It is a process on how readers get information from what they see on text or symbols. Oakhi et al., (2015) state, “Two main components in reading: word decoding and language comprehension. Word Reading (decoding) refers to the ability to read single words out of context. Language comprehension refers to our ability to understand words, sentences, and text.” The habit of reading can helps students to receive knowledge and information from various resources. Reading will require the reader to think and understand the meaning of whole contents of reading. Panel (2010) defines reading comprehension as “The process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.” Reading comprehension is defined as the language learners’ ability to understand and comprehend a written text to find the main idea and specific information. Comprehension refers to the ability or the skill to understand. Comprehension is the ability to grasp the meaning of the material. This may be shown by translating material form, by interpreting material (explaining and summarizing) and by estimating future (predicting consequences or effects). There are four levels of reading comprehension namely: literal, interpretative, critical, and creative reading comprehension.

There are many text types that can be used by the teachers in improving students’ reading comprehension. One of these types is narrative text. According to Herman (2005) “Narrative is imaginative story or personal experience in which contains a message or moral value for reader.” A narrative text describes an event, feeling, or experience in story form or in the order the details of the event happened. Narrative deals with problematic events which lead to a crisis or turning point of some kind, which in turn finds a resolution. The writer usually uses one person point of view and it has beginning, climax, and ending which are gathered into the plot of the story. Parera (1993:5) states that a narrative is one of the forms of developing writing, for example characters told the history of something based on the development in writing from time to time. This emphasizes that narrative text prefers telling specific events or situation of specific object, rather than focusing on general. Therefore, general topic is seldom involved in narrative text as long as it does not really attract the readers, even sometimes it is boring. Narrative is also one of the most powerful ways of communicating with others because readers not only understand the event, but also they can almost feel it. The action, details, and dialogue put the readers in these seem and make it happen for them. The logical arrangement of ideas and sentence in narrative text is constructed chronologically.

Based on the 2013 Curriculum, the eighth grade students of junior high school should comprehend procedure text, descriptive text, recount text, and narrative text in reading skill. On standard competence in second year semester, the students are able to comprehend the meaning of written text and simple short essay in form of narrative and report text to interact in daily life context. Therefore, the students are able to understand the meaning explicitly which is stated in narrative text especially in the first level of reading comprehension which is literal.

From the preliminary observation, researcher identified some problems of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Palu when the students were studying English. The first, they lacked vocabulary so that they had difficulty in comprehending the idea of reading a text. As a result, most students considered English as a difficult subject. Second, students had difficulty to understand the context and get information from the text so they failed to understand reading materials such as story. To solve those problems above, story mapping is one of the strategies that can be used in teaching reading. Story mapping is a strategy that uses a graphic organizer to help students learn the elements of a book or story. The map illustrates ways to show an overview of story. It also tells the information about its generic structure, such as characters, setting, problems, and solution. It helps students easily to comprehend the text and they will feel more joyful in learning English. The students can comprehend narrative text better because they have a graphic or a schema to put the chronological event of the story and the other
“The origin of story maps lies within story grammar research. The term story grammar refers to the hierarchical rules or psychological structures that people use to create and remember stories, the skeleton underlying a story, so students can speak. These psychological models of comprehension and memory are used by both adults and children to encode and store in formation in their long-term memories.” Based on the definition above, story mapping would be effective for the readers recognize the story in their long-term memories. It may be practical way for them to organize the story content into a coherent whole. By identifying story characters, setting, problem and solution, students read carefully to learn the details. Tabatabei (2012) states, “Story mapping also called story grammar is a visual representation of the story by writing the important elements (e.g., character, setting, goal, etc.).” Story mapping identifies the main elements, and categorizes the main events in sequential order. A graphic representation is often used to illustrate the story structure and sequence of events. It also can be referred as word mapping or idea mapping. They are strategies which designed to show the concept or key words of a story are related one another. The result is shown through graphic representation.

In addition, according Mediola (2013), story mapping strategy provides some advantages to the students in reading. First, students will be more easily understand about the elements of story. Second, it enables students to store information on their personal schema more effectively and facilitates the recall of story elements more completely. Third, it enhances the students’ ability to interpret the story by visualizing story characters, and setting. Fourth, it can increase the students’ comprehension of selection by organizing and sequencing main story events. Fifth, it will increase the students’ awareness that story characters and events are interrelated. Sixth, the students’ knowledge continually applies when they predict what might happen next is one story after another. Furthermore, story mapping strategy also had some weaknesses. First, the lazy and shy students will be passive, they will just see and lazy to explore the mapping. Second, it takes a long time to teach a long word and it will get difficulties for the students if they do not understand about the meaning of sentence in the text.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

In conducting this research, the researcher applied quasi-experimental research design that intended to find out whether or not the implementation of story mapping strategy can improve students reading comprehension. Moreover, in quasi-experimental design, both groups were applied both pretest and posttest. However, the treatment was given only to the experimental group. The research used a design which is proposed by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007:283) as seen below:

Experimental  \[ O_1 \quad X \quad O_2 \]
Control  \[ O_3 \quad O_4 \]

Where \( O_1 \) and \( O_3 \) are pretests, \( X \) is treatment, and \( O_2 \) and \( O_4 \) are posttests.

The population of this research was of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Palu. Then, there were 274 students in nine parallel classes. In addition, the samples were the students of VIII F as the experimental group and VIII C as the control one. In addition, both experimental and control groups were homogeneous. In this research, instruments were used to obtain the data. The instrument was a test. The test consists of pretest and posttest. Instrument refers to a tool which used by the researcher to collect the data. In this research, the researcher used a test as the instrument. The instrument was a test. The test consists of pretest and posttest. On the pretest and posttest, the researcher gave two models of tests; multiple choice test and essay test which consist 10 number of multiple choice and 5 number of essay tests. In scoring of multiple choice, if the students has one correct answer the point is one, but if the answer is wrong the students score is zero. Next, the scoring of essay test, the highest score was five if the students correct answer, grammar, and spelling. In relation to this research, the researcher used dependent and independent variable. Then, the students reading comprehension was as the dependent
variable while the implementation of story mapping strategy was as the independent variable.

FINDINGS

In this research, the researcher focused on the first level of reading comprehension which was literal reading comprehension. It is the ability to understand exact words, meaning and characters. It is also the basic level which is needed to comprehend the text. This level involves what the author is actually saying. The reader needs to understand ideas and information explicitly stated in the reading materials. Some of this information is in the form of recognizing and recalling facts, identifying the main idea, supporting details, categorizing, outlining, and summarizing. They can find it directly from the text, because answer is already there. The characteristics of this level are: facts and details, role learning and memorization, surface understanding only, and tests in this category are objective. Moreover, the researcher used two kinds of narrative text in teaching reading comprehension such as fable and fairy tale. Fable is a short allegorical narrative making a moral point, traditionally by means of animal characters who speak and act like human beings. The main aim of fable is to provide entertainment long with a moral lesson to the audience. Then, fairy tale involves some elements of magic and good triumphing over evil. The purpose of fairy tale is to take the audience to a beautiful fantasy world, providing entertainment.

The tests were administered to both experimental group and control group. The pretest itself was given to both of experimental group and control group. The pretest was conducted at the beginning of the meeting to find out the prior knowledge of the students. The posttest was given after the treatment. In this posttest, the same instruction was applied as the pretest. It is aimed to measure the comprehension of both groups and to see whether the treatment that applied to the experimental group is effective to improve the students reading comprehension. In conclusion, the pretest was administered to measure the prior knowledge of students both in control group and experimental group while the posttest was administered after conducting the treatment to see the significance effect after the students got treatment.

This research was conducted in eight meetings divided into three main sections. The pretest which was given at the first meeting, six meetings were for the treatment, and the posttest was given at the last meeting. The researcher conducted the treatment by implementing story mapping strategy. The first until three meeting the researcher gave topic about fable like mouse deer and the farmer, a mouse and a lion, and the ugly duckling and new friends. Then, the four until last six meeting the researcher gave topic about fairy tale such as the prince and his best friend, romeo and juliet, and snow white. Time allocation of each meeting consisted of 2 X 40 minutes. The researcher conducted her treatment for six meetings. The result of each test was used to measure whether the implementing of story mapping strategy can improve students reading comprehension of the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 9 Palu. During this research, there were 30 students of experimental group and 30 students of control group who joined the tests.

The pretest result of experimental group indicated that the highest score is 57.14 and the lowest score is 2.86. The total score of the students is 1014.29. Then, the mean score of the students of experimental group on their pretest is 39.90. Then, their mean score on posttest is also calculated and it is 73.71. Those data explain that the improvement of experimental group is33.81. It was proven that the students’ score in posttest was higher after the researcher gave them the treatment by implementing story mapping than the students’ score in pretest before treatment. It was a proof of the implementation of story mapping strategy.

The posttest result of experimental group indicated that the highest score is 57.14 and the lowest score is 2.86. Moreover, the highest deviation in control group is 28.57.34 and the lowest deviation is 2.86. By having the results from the same formula, it can be obviously seen that the classical student comprehension of the control group in the posttest is 42.95 and the pretest is 61.43. Those data explain that the improvement of experimental class is 18.48. It can be concluded that the students of control group

also could increase their mean score but there is no significant improvement. In addition, the experimental group improvement is more significant than the control group. The researcher tested the hypothesis in order to find out whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected. In this case, if the t-counted value was higher than the t-table value, it means that the hypothesis was accepted or the treatment which was given gave significant effect to the dependent variable. However, if the t-counted value was lower than t-table value, it means that the hypothesis was rejected or the treatment did not give any significant effect to the dependent variable which was the improvement of the students in reading comprehension.

Additionally, the hypothesis of this research is rejected if the \( t_{\text{counted}} \) is lower than \( t_{\text{table}} \). In other words, the students' reading comprehension of the eleventh grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Palu cannot increase through story mapping strategy. The researcher used interpolation computation in measuring the \( t_{\text{table}} \) score because the degree of freedom (df) \( = N_x + N_y - 2 = 30 + 30 - 2 = 58 \) with the level of significance 0.05 cannot be found in the \( t_{\text{table}} \) list. Then, the researcher found the value of \( t_{\text{table}} \) is 1.672 and the value of \( t_{\text{counted}} \) is 5.11. It showed that the \( t_{\text{counted}} \) was higher than \( t_{\text{table}} \). It means that the hypothesis of the research was accepted. In other words, the implementation of story mapping strategy can improve reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Palu.

**DISCUSSION**

This research has an objective which is to find out whether or not implementing story mapping strategy has significant effect in improving reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Palu. Story mapping helps students in searching for meaning and variety of ways to organize information. It requires the students to focus on relevant details and use concise terminology to capture the purpose of the statements. It helps students easily to comprehend the test and they will feel more joyful in learning English. The students can comprehend narrative text better because they have a graphic or a schema to put the chronological event of story and the other of elements of the text. Furthermore, the researcher focused on the first level of reading comprehension. The literal reading comprehension became the scope of this research since the students’ main problems were related with literal comprehension. Which was the question and the answer stated in the story.

The first meeting, the researcher gave the pre-test to both experimental and control groups in order to find out the prior knowledge of the students in reading comprehension. On the pretest, the researcher gave two models of tests; multiple choice test and essay test which consist 10 number of multiple choice and 5 number of essay tests. In the pretest the researcher gave topic to both experimental and control group about three fish that related question with literal reading comprehension. While in the posttest, the researcher gave topic about the smart of parrot. The result of both experimental and control group in pretest was no one student could get the standard score. The students read the text and answered the question based on the story. The data of this research based on the students’ score in pre-test and posttest. The data were obtained by giving pretest and post test to the experimental and control groups. The researcher gave pre-test for both experimental and control groups before the treatment.

The researcher conducted the treatment for sixth meeting by using story mapping strategy. In every meeting the researcher provided different topic to be discussed. In the first meeting until the third meeting the topic was about fable and the fourth until the sixth meeting the topic was fairy tale. Those meetings focused on the literal reading comprehension. In conducting the treatment, the researcher taught the students by implementing story mapping strategy. The researcher started to develop and activate prior knowledge of the students by asking some question related to the topic. Then, explained about narrative text such as definition, kinds of narrative text, language features, and generic structure. After that, the researcher explained how the story mapping strategy could help their reading comprehension and the researcher be the model to show how to apply this strategy. For
example, there are five elements in the story mapping. Each element has different colors. The first color is orange. In this part the students should fill the answer about topic of the story. The researcher asked them to look for look the title of story. Second color is purple. In this part the student write their answer about character based on the story. The researcher gives clue, to fill the answer in this part the students only look the all participants in story. Third parts the color is blue. In this part the students fill the answer about setting or place. Usually, the authors introduce the participants in the first paragraph. Fourth part is green color about the problem of the story. The researcher explains to the students, character of story is told in the second paragraph. If the students found problem then, fill the answer in green color. The last part is yellow. In this part the students write the answer about the solution. It means, the students can more understand about the important part of the story because they have different color if each part and students can understand in their long term memory. In the while activity, the students divided into small groups. Each group was divided into four or five students. Then, the researcher distributed the text narrative and story mapping to each group and gave the students ten minutes to discuss and answer the exercise by group. Then, the researcher chose one groups task to write their work in the white board. Next, the researcher and the students discussed the correct answer. To make the students more comprehend of the story, the researcher gave them evaluation and the students did it individually. The last activity, the teacher asked the students concluded what are they have learn. Then, motivated and close the meeting to the students, such do not forget to study at home.

The second meeting, as the researcher observed the students activities from the second until the third meeting, some problems related to some aspect of reading were found. The first problem, students confused to determine the elements in the story such as characters, setting, problem and solution because they do not understand about of story. So, the researcher implemented story mapping strategy to make students easily determine about the elements of story. The researcher explained to the students about generic structure of narrative text. There are three generic structure of narrative text. Namely, orientation tells about the characters, place, and time of the story. A complication tells the problem or conflict of the story and the last, a resolution is used to solve the problem of the story. It made students more easily to determine the elements of narrative test. First paragraph refers with participants, setting, and time. Then, the second paragraph refers with complication or what happened to the story. The last paragraph refers to the solution, either in happy ending or sad ending. The second problem, the lazy or shy students will be passive. They will just see and lazy to explore the map and it takes a long time to teach a long word and it will difficult for the students if they are not understand the meaning of sentence in the text. Therefore, the teacher should manage the class to minimize those problems. First, the teacher can use group work to encourage the students to be active and to motivate the students who are lazy and shy. Second, to solve the difficulties of understanding the meaning of the text, the teacher needs to provide short story that suitable with the eighth grade students so they do not need long time to understand about the story.

The students have some problems when they answer the test. First, students have correct answer and grammar, but incorrect spelling. For example, “this pond is full of fish.” Then, students answer “this phon is full of fish.” Most of students made mistakes in spelling when they answered question. Even though, the answers were stated in story because the researcher focused on literal reading comprehension. It means students not careful in answering question and got four score. Moreover, students have correct answer and spelling but incorrect grammar. For example “the youngest fish still lived in the pond.” Then, the students answer “the youngest fish still live in the pond.” It made students got score three, because their grammar is wrong. Last, students have correct answer but grammar and spelling incorrect. For example “the youngest fish still lived in the pond.” The students answer “the yongest fish still lived in the phon.” It means students only got two score. So the teacher should the
Student remained more carefully when they answer questions of story. The fourth until the sixth meeting, the teacher explain topic of fairy tale and the students start easily to write the answer in the story with their group work. Each group consists of five students. Because there are five elements like topic, character, setting, problem and solution. So the teacher asked the student, each member of student should have different task to make easy complete the test and all of member in group can understand about the importance story. For example, one student has one task. It makes another students motivate to answer the map.

The last meeting, the post-test was given to both the experimental and control group. Level difficulties of the test were similar with the pretest but the topics were different. The test also consisted of two types of test; multiple choice and essay test which consist 10 numbers of multiple choice and 5 numbers of essay tests. The aimed of post-test was to measure the students comprehension in narrative text, especially in literal reading comprehension. The results of post-test shows that both experimental and control groups have improvement but the progress was different. The score of the experimental group in post-test was higher than the control group. The improvement students’ reading comprehension in experimental group could be seen from the result of the posttest. The standard score of English subject of SMP Negeri 9 Palu was 75. Therefore, fifteen of thirty students passed in experimental group while in control group only one from thirty students got through passing grade. These findings clearly showed that story mapping strategy can improve reading comprehension of the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 9 Palu. The application of story mapping strategy successfully facilitates the improvement of the students’ in reading comprehension. Through the task helps the students understand the text. In short, story mapping make the students contributes to their comprehension especially in literal reading comprehension of the text read.

CONCLUSIONS

After conducting the treatment for six meetings and after analyzing the data, the researcher concludes that the results of data analysis indicate that the hypothesis of this research is accepted. In short, implementing story mapping strategy influence to the students in reading comprehension. It is proved by the value of t-counted and t-table in which t-counted value (5.11) is higher than t-table value (1.672). Therefore, the result of this research indicates that the story mapping strategy can improve reading comprehension of the eighth grade students.

Moreover, by conducting story mapping in teaching reading comprehension, it can help students to know about the elements of the story. Story mapping strategy encourages the students to be more active and interactive in the class. It requires teacher guide before the students make their own text and teacher’s role as a motivator in on teaching and learning process. Then, by using story mapping strategy, students will be helped to organize their thoughts to read, because story mapping provide some directions to guide the students to determine the main point of the text. They began to show changes in the fourth meetings until the last meeting, they no longer to understand the meaning of the text and the students seemed to enjoy the teaching and learning process. Almost of the students were able to understand the questions correctly. They felt easier to determine and answer the questions in the map such as title, character, place, problem, and solution of the story. Consequently, their ability to answer the comprehension questions to determine the text importance got improvement.

Additionally, story mapping strategy brings important effects for students’ improvements in reading. Moreover, the teacher should apply the appropriate strategy, method or technique when they are teaching in reading comprehension. Story mapping strategy can be a good choice because this strategy focuses on understanding the elements of the story, such as setting, character, problem and solution. So the students will more understand the whole of story. The story mapping makes students easier to understand the lesson and enjoy the learning process in the classroom because there are some clues of the element in the story. Thus, the use of story mapping strategy can improve reading comprehension of the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 9 Palu.
REFFERENCES