

TEACHING READING TO YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH VISUALIZATION STRATEGY

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Abstract

This research is aimed to know whether teaching reading to young learners through visualizing is effective or not at junior high school students. The research belongs to experimental one and it was carried out at SMP N 27 Purworejo in the academic year 2016/2017. The sample of the research is 72 students. Visualization is one of the strategies in teaching reading. It is the ability to make visual representations in student's mind while reading. In this strategy, students learn to create pictures in their minds to help comprehension and recall. The language development stages of young learners between ages of 8 and 12 are shown in concrete operation. It means it is logical but depends upon concrete referent. Creating mental pictures helps students to improve comprehension of ideas in written text. It helps students to transform words into higher-level concept, and improves students' focus, attention to detail and independent reading skills. Teacher can make students work in pairs and allow them to work through the texts together from different subject areas. The result shows that the mean of experimental group is 76.05 and the mean of control group is 65.32. From t-test computation, It shows that the t-value is higher than t-table (5.702.>1.99). It can be inferred that teaching reading to young learners through visualization strategy is effective.

Keywords: teaching, reading, young learners, visualization

Introduction

There is growing awareness of the important role of English as a foreign language to be taught from elementary to university level. Through language as the tool of communication and share ideas, people who do not want to be left behind by the fast development of science and technology begin to think of the importance of mastering English, a language widely used in printed media and oral communication as a means of exchanging variety of information's, including science and technology which grows rapidly nowadays because of the globalization effect on the information era. Reading is one of the skills in language proficiency for the students to master as the requirements for sharing information and enrich their knowledge.

Mc Worther, in Ilvirah (2010, p. 2) says that reading is an active process of identifying important ideas, comparing, evaluating and applying them; therefore in reading paragraph we have to try to

comprehend. It is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text. Reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text. Readers typically make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text.

Stanley and King (1989, p. 330) state that there are five reading components that may help students to read carefully. They are: 1) Finding factual information: it requires students to scan specific detail of the text. it usually appears with guessing question word; 2) finding main ideas: it is the main topic that is being discussed in a paragraph in which help students to guess what paragraph is about. Main idea can be found in the first, middle, or in the last

sentence of the paragraph; 3) Finding the meaning of vocabulary in the context: students can guess the meaning of unfamiliar words with him/her by relating them to the surrounding words or the words that appear around them; 4) Finding reference: the same words or phrases found in several time in the paragraph. they are usually short and very frequently pronouns, such as she, he , it, they, him, her, and many others; 5) Making inference of reading text: students are expected to make accurate prediction. The prediction can be made by correctly interpreting the indicators a writer's gives.

Students at SMP N 27 Purworejo still get difficulties in reading comprehension. They are less motivated in English class, often lay their heads on the table; unable to find main ideas; can't find the meaning of several vocabularies, they often depend on opening dictionary so the reading time is not effective; difficult to find reference; and difficult to make inference.

Cameron (2001, p. 1) defines young learners are those between five to twelve years old. Teaching a foreign language to children has some differences to teaching adults or adolescents. Some differences are immediately obvious: children are often enthusiastic and lively as learners. They want to please the teacher than their peer group. They will have a go at an activity even when they don't quite understand why and how. However, they also lose interest more quickly and are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult. In addition, Fauziati (2010, p. 89) gives some characteristics of young learners. They are: children love playing, children talk about 'here and now', and children understand and retain the meaning better when they have seen some objects associated with it. For this reason, the teacher should expose the students to real life situation; when this is not impossible, the visual aid can serve as a useful substitute, as pictures and their images are more vivid than words. Thus, in teaching

and learning process pictures should be an integral part of every teacher's professional equipment (Ernestova in Fauziati, 2001, p. 93).

Visualization can help students cross the boundary to improved comprehension. According to Harvey & Goudvis (2000), visualizing refers to our ability to create pictures in our heads based on text we read or words we hear. It strengthens reading comprehension skills as students gain a more thorough understanding of the text they are reading by consciously using the words to create mental images. As students gain more deliberate practice with this skill, the act of visualizing text becomes automatic. Students who visualize as they read not only have richer reading experience but can recall what they have read for longer periods of time. Sadoski (1998) stated that the mental imagery that students experience while reading, either spontaneously or induced by instruction, is now known to have powerful effects on comprehension, memory, and appreciation for text. Based on the problems stated and the theories from experts, visualization strategy can be proposed as a simple-but-interesting-technique which can transform students at seventh grade (those who belong to eleven to twelve years old) from passive to active readers.

There are some teaching techniques which teacher can practice in reading class using visualization strategy. The first is called *starting small*. Teacher can choose to start with a short passage taken from a text or from teacher' own creation to begin a series of lesson that will focus on improving visualization skills. For example, the following sentences could be used to spark discussions:

Beny could barely believe his eyes. All these gifts were for him! He had never seen so many packages, not even on all his birthdays combined!

After the students listen to or read the sentences once or twice, they can discuss the mental images created by the

sentences. Students will likely differ in their descriptions of the scene. For instance, some may picture a small child surrounded by stacks of gifts. Other may imagine an older boy in front of a table piled with presents. There is no single correct answer, and those three simple sentences, though not particularly rich in detail, do offer enough information for the reader or listener to begin to form a mental picture.

The second is *group activities*. Teacher can make students to work on their visualizing skills as a whole class or in small groups. One way to challenge them is to read a picture book aloud, sharing only portions of the illustrations. Then ask students to create their own illustrations based on the text they heard.

The third is *independent reading*. Students can also practice their visualization skills as a follow up to independent reading. The teacher can ask young students who keep track of their reading in reading logs or journals to respond to prompts regarding the images created by the text they read: “Does the picture remind you of your special day?” “Have you ever been receiving such plenty of gifts or presents on your birthdays?” The students can also draw images in their journals, recording their mental pictures in response to their reading. The teacher then discuss these drawings during one-on-one reading conferences. The teachers can modify the technique based on the student’s level and needs. For instance, older students who are reading novels can think about questions such as, “If you were going to make a movie based on your book, who would you want to play the main characters?” “What would the scenery look like?” and “Where would you want to do the filming?” These questions get at the imagery created in the mind of the readers and encourage those readers to share their mental pictures in their response.

Visualization activities help students to follow-up lesson. For example, from the sentences in the “Starting small” activity, these can lead students for deeper

discussion about making inferences. Students can discuss not only what they visualize when they hear or read given text but also the questions that the text suggest, such as, “Why do you think Beny received all of these gifts?” or “What do you think Beny will do next?” Teacher can take this particular discussion further by allowing students to personalize the experience by answering questions such as, “what would you do if you were Beny?” or “How would you feel if you were in Beny’s place?”

According to Miller (2004), teachers should follow the step by step plan to teach visualization.

Teachers should directly model the thought processes involved in visualizing. They should read familiar text and describe the images they see in their mind.

Teachers read a passage for students to visualize. Teachers choose something that is descriptive so the students can easily create vivid images in their mind. Then, teachers explain to students that when they visualize, it is important to use their background knowledge and words in the text to help them imagine a picture in their mind. It is important to make students understand that there is not one correct answer. For young students start with an object and describe it by color, size, shape, and smell. Ask students to close their eyes and create an image.

Students should share their images with a partner. After forming an image, they should pair up with a partner, and share what they have visualized. Allow students to choose their own subjects to describe to each other.

Teachers should use a different selection from the same text and ask students to illustrate while they listen to the teacher read a passage. Students should share and discuss their images.

Students should practice the strategy frequently. They should use visualization during read-aloud and silent reading. Teachers should incorporate both drawings and mental imagery to meet the needs of all students.

In line with the background of the study, this research is aimed to know the effectiveness of visualization strategy in teaching reading for young learners. The researcher limits the study by focusing on the application of visualization strategy in teaching reading descriptive text at seventh graders of SMP Negeri 27 Purworejo in the academic year 2016/2017.

Methodology

This research is experimental with pre-test post-test design. The population of the research is the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 27 Purworejo. The sample of the research is seven 1 and seven 2. The research instrument is test. In collecting the data, the researcher gives reading test in multiple choice form and fill-in-the blank form. The technique of analyzing the data are descriptive and inferential analysis (mean, median, mode, and standard deviation) and t-test is used to test the hypothesis.

Findings and Discussion

The steps of conducting research is began with giving pre test and give treatments for each group. After that, the researcher held post test. The post test is conducted to know the improvement of the students' achievement in reading after they get treatments. In experimental group, the average of pre test score is 65.03 and the post test one is 76.05. Meanwhile, in control group the pre test score is 64.03 and the post test one is 65.32. After conducting pre test, the researcher gives treatments to the experimental group.. She conducts treatments twice using visualization strategy. In the teaching and learning process, the researcher follows the teaching steps which are described in the previous theory. The focus of the treatments is on the teaching reading descriptive text. The improvement of students' reading achievement can be seen from the mean score of experimental group and control group. The mean score of experimental group is higher than the mean of control

group. The mean of experimental group is 76.05. Meanwhile, the mean of control group is 65.32.

After calculating the mean, the researcher then calculates the post test result of experiment group. From the score table, the researchers conclude; the highest score of students in reading comprehension test result (H) is 92, the lowest score (L) is 59, the range (R) is 32, the median (Me) is 75, the mode (Mo) is 72, and the total score of students' reading comprehension test result (T) is 2737.

From the data above, the researchers find the mean of the data by applying the mean formula and then the researcher find the variance and the deviation standard of experimental group. The mean (M) is 76.05, and the deviation standard (SD) was 7.992.

In this discussion, the researcher calculates the post-test result of the control group. From the score table, the researcher concludes that the highest score of students in reading comprehension test result (H) is 79, the lowest score (L) is 49, the range (R) is 31, the median (Me) is 65, the mode (Mo) is 69, and the total score of students' reading comprehension test result (T) is 2351.

From the data above, the researcher tries to find the mean of the data by applying the mean formula and then the researcher tries to find the variance and the deviation standard of control group. The mean (Me) is 65.32, and the deviation standard (SD) is 7.960.

Knowing that objective of this study is to find out whether there is a significant effect of teaching descriptive text using visualization strategy to improve reading comprehension in the seventh grade students of SMP N 27 Purworejo, the researcher employs the statistical analysis, in this case is t-test to analyze data. However, before employing the statistical analysis, the researcher mainly applied prerequisite test analysis to test the homogeneity of variance.

a. Test of Homogeneity of Variance

To know whether the variance of the two samples is homogenous or not, the researcher used F test. From the computation, the value of F is 1.000 then it is compared with the value of F table with df of numerator (36-1 = 35) and df of denominator (36-1 = 35). Based on F table, it is known that the F value in the significance level of 0.05 is 1.76. So, F value is lower than F table. Because F value is lower than F table (1.008 < 1.76), so the variance of two groups is homogeneous.

b. Test of Normality

To calculate the Parametric Statistic, the requirement of the data must in the form the normal curve. To see whether the two sets of data have normal distribution or not, the researcher uses Chi Square (X^2) to check normality. It is done by comparing the normal curve (Arikunto, 2002, p. 92). From the normality table of experimental group above, chi-square value is 9.741. Then, it compared with the value of chi-square with df (degree of freedom) 6-1=5. Based on the value on the chi-square table, it is shown that the chi-square value on the significant level 0.05 is 11.070, so chi-square obtained is lower than the value of chi-square table (9.741 < 11.070). It means that the distribution of experimental group post-test is normal.

In addition, the result of t-value is 5.702. Then, the researcher consulted the critical value on the t-table using the 5% (0.05) alpha level significance and the degree of freedom is 1.99. It shows that the t-value is higher than the t-table (5.702 > 1.99). It means that the teaching reading using visualization strategy is effective. Therefore, the researcher's hypothesis with 0.95 or 95% of significant level is accepted and null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings above, it can be concluded that teaching reading by using visualization strategy is effective to improve students' reading comprehension in descriptive text of the seventh grade students of SMP N 27 Purworejo. It can be seen from the mean score of experimental group and control group. The mean score of experimental group is higher than the mean of control group. The mean of experimental group is 76.05. Meanwhile, the mean of control group is 65.32. Moreover, the result of t-value is 5.702. Then, it is consulted to the critical value on the t-table using the 5% (0.05) alpha level significance and the degree of freedom is 1.99. It is clear that the t-value is higher than the t-table (5.702 > 1.99). Therefore, it can be inferred that the researcher's hypothesis with 0.95 or 95% of significant level is accepted and null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

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