Improving Reading Comprehension by using Language Experience Approach on Junior High School Students

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Reading is probably the most important skill for second language (L2) in academic context. Based on a preliminary study conducted at MTS Zainul Bahar Wringin, students has difficulty in understanding the meaning of each word, sentences, paragraphs within the text. In addition, students are also less active when the teacher taught reading material.

This research aimed: (1) to know whether *Language Experience Approach* can improve seventh Grade Students' Reading Comprehension in *descriptive* text at the 2018/2019 Academic Year?, (2) to know whether *Language Experience Approach can* improve the Seventh Grade Students' Active Participation at MTS Zainul Bahar Wringin the 2018/2019 Academic Year?

The type of this research was Classroom Action Research (CAR). This research was done in two cycles which consisted of planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting in each cycle. The subject of this research was the seventh grade students at MTS Zainul Bahar Wringin totaling 25 students. The research instruments used were reading test and observation checklist of the students' active participation.

Keywords: Language Experience Approach, Reading Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Being successful in teaching English is a factor that the English teacher should pay attention to, especially in teaching reading. Most of students in junior high school think that reading is difficult skill of English. Even the teacher examines their reading comprehension of the text; many of them do not understand and feel difficult to comprehend the text. It is important to find the solution by every English teacher to make teaching and learning process running well and better. In teaching reading, teacher should have a technique to improve reading comprehension because reading comprehension is important. Reading is probably the most important skill for second language (L2) learners in academic context (Grabe, 1991).
Furthermore, fluent reading and understanding the meaning of the text are the result of reading skill. A good reader is able to code the writing message as conceives its meaning. Acquiring this skill is required. To know visual components of language each level, from letter to sentence, and understanding their meaning and exploring their relationship (Richard and Renandya, 2002).

Klingner (2007:8) states that reading comprehension involves much more than readers' response to the text. Reading comprehension is a multicomponent, highly complex process that involve interaction between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text types). Reading comprehension is a process in understanding the content of a reading text by constructing and gaining meaning from the text.

Reading comprehension depends on three factors. The first factor is that the reader has command of the linguistic structures of the text. The second factor is that the reader is able to exercise met cognitive control over the content being read. This means that the reader is able to monitor and reflect on his or her own level of understanding while reading the material. The third and most important criterion influencing comprehension is that the reader has adequate background in the content and vocabulary being presented (Tankerslay, 2000).

In related to the fact that of those students have problems in learning reading, the writer will try to carry out a research in teaching reading using a method which is called Language Experience Approach; LEA is very interesting method. In learning process using LEA, the principle is to use the students own vocabulary, language pattern, and background of experiences to create reading text, making reading an especially meaningful and enjoyable.

The LEA builds upon the notion that if children are given material to read that they are already familiar with, it will help them to learn to read. This method is based on two related ideas: that learning should move from the familiar to the unknown, and that readers whose world knowledge or schemata are similar to that underlying the texts they are reading will be more able to make a sense of the text (Celce& Murcia, 2001)

Learning Experience Approach (LEA) is one of the suggested approaches in teaching language (Zemelman and Daniels, 1999). The Language Experience Approach (LEA) incorporates a variety of models of using Language to express the Experiences in a variety of genres (Nessel and Dixon, 2008).

Language Experience Approach is one of learning in structural method. It is an approach of learning which arranged to affect interaction between the students and the teacher as the alternative toward the class. The teacher gives the topic and questions for the students, while the he is making a story based on the students' experience using their familiar words. After the story has been constructed, the teacher orders the students to read and makes sure that the students can explain the story.

METHODS

The type of this research was Classroom Action Research (CAR). This research was done in two cycles which consisted of planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting in each cycle.

Participants

The subject of this research was the seventh grade students at MTS Zainul Bahar Wringin totaling 25 students. The research instruments used were reading test and observation checklist of the students' active participation.

Instruments

In this study, this research used reading comprehension test and observation checklist to measure how the implementation of LEA can improve the ability of reading comprehension and active participation in class.

Procedure

In this study, the students were treated by using 4 steps of language experience approach. In three meetings in each cycle. It is tried that this instruction has close relation to the student's experiences and in other words, each meeting provides a background for the next meetings in short description.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before the actions were implemented in cycle one, based on preliminary study, the students' reading score was low. It was proven by students' previous reading score. Then, the results of the reading test after given the actions in cycle one was only 68% or 17 of 25 students who got score 65 or above. The actions in this research were considered successful if 70% of the students got score 65 or above. This result indicated that the action in cycle one has not been successful.

In cycle two was implemented with some revisions to get better results because the previous action had not fulfilled the objective of the research. After the action in cycle two, the results of the reading test showed improvement. It was shown that 22 students got score 65 or above with the percentage 88%. It means that the students' reading score in cycle two had achieved the objective of the research.

Based on the result of the research, it could be said that the use of Language Experience Approach could improve the students' reading comprehension. Seeing from their score of reading test, there were 22 students of 25 students or 88% who were able to get score 65 or higher. One of the activities of LEA is the students are not only receiving explanation from the researcher, but also from their own selves. Therefore, they would understand more easily the material that was descriptive text because the content of the text is from them. By asking and answering the question orally, it helped students to know how far their knowledge and skill about the material.

Table 4.1 Reading Test Result of Cycle 1

Data result	Score
Students who get score ≥ 65	68%
Students who get score <65	32%

Then, according to the data above, it is decided to conduct the next cycle and the teacher intended to give a better explanation to them.

Table 4.2 Reading Test Result of Cycle 2

Data result	Score
Students who get score ≥ 65	88%
Students who get score <65	12%

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the result and discussion, it showed that Language Experience Approach facilited the activity for the students to built their reading comprehension achievement. This is proven by the result of students reading comprehension test in cycle 2. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of Language Experience Approach can improve the Seventh grade students' reading comprehension achievement in the 2018/2019 academic year with the help of dictionary, more explanation and example from the teacher during the discussion. In addition, students' active participation was also improved. It can be seen from their participation in the class, they were willing to ask questions, gave some answers and tried to speak up more by using English.

The result of the research shows that the use of Language Experience Approach can improve the students' reading comprehension achievement. Considering the result some suggestions are given to the English teacher, the students, and the future researchers.

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