

## IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT BY USING FOLKTALES THROUGH HERRINGBONE TECHNIQUE

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### Abstract

There is a fact that most of pupils at elementary school still face some difficulties with English at the first time. The teacher needs to encourage them to love the lesson, in order to help them memorize the new vocabulary easily. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to see whether the use of Herringbone technique with folktales improved the pupils' reading comprehension achievement. Non-equivalent group pretest-posttest design was used in this study. The population was the fifth grade pupils of SDN 39 Palembang in the academic year of 2010/2011 with a total number of 74 pupils. Out of this population, 50 pupils were taken as sample. There were two groups, each of which consisted of 25 pupils. The data were collected by using multiple-choice reading comprehension test. The data obtained were analyzed by using t-test formula. The finding shows that Herringbone technique improved the pupils' reading comprehension achievement. There was a significant difference in reading comprehension achievement of the pupils after they were taught by using folktale through herringbone technique. The result of the study indicates that the pupils had better improvement in their post-test scores.

**Keywords:** Herringbone technique, reading comprehension achievement

### BACKGROUND

Reading English is not very easy for young children especially for pupils of elementary school. In reading comprehension they have to answer some questions after reading passage. Even they read a kind of short passage of a story, but they still find difficulties to find the answers of the questions. It is because of they do not know or remember the whole meaning of the story.

People from all over the world use English as an international language and as an aid in communication. For that reason, they need to have the ability to speak English fluently. English in Indonesia is adopted as the first foreign language. Hence, it is needed to be taught since at elementary schools level because it will be the basic element for the higher level in further education. It is better to introduce the English language earlier so then it is expected that the learners become accustomed to the language.

In Indonesia, English has been taught from the fourth year of elementary school as a local content. It is clearly stated in GBPP 1994 (Sunarno, 1994:58):

The English teaching is not a compulsory subject conducted at Elementary Schools but it is as a local content. It begins in grade IV. (*Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris tidak wajib diselenggarakan di SD melainkan diselenggarakan sebagai muatan local. Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris dimulai di kelas IV*).

English is introduced to the pupils through learning its vocabulary besides the Grammar. It would be easier for the pupils to absorb new vocabulary even though they are sometimes easy to forget them too. Teachers need to review the lessons all the time in order to help them memorize the new vocabulary easily. Most of pupils at elementary school still face some difficulties with English at

the first time, so we need to encourage them to love the lesson. Therefore, the teacher could begin by discovering what subjects the pupils are interested in and providing a wide variety of material suited to their interest. Favat (1968) in Petty and Jensen (1980:136) states:

Children read what they please, or more accurately, what pleases them. Teachers and parents must come to understand that the question is not whether one kind of reading produces a more satisfying experience than another but whether it produces a more satisfying experience than another – that is, whether children find the stories an ever-continuing of their own need and desire.

Reading covers other skills, such as grammar, vocabulary and listening. Reading as a field of teaching is considered as one of the important areas of teaching. It is one of the most important academic skills. Furthermore, it is also a major pillar upon which teaching and learning process is built. The ability of reading plays a central role in teaching and learning success at all education stages. It is because most of the materials of teaching and learning are in written form. Hence, the pupils need to improve their reading skills in order to understand the material of teaching and learning process.

It is clear that most of the children love reading especially reading some stories or text in English, especially if the story is colorful one. Therefore, to encourage them to learn English, they are introduced to this language by reading lesson. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand what have been read. It is a crucial part of reading skill which pupils should possess. Reading comprehension is very important in developing the children's reading skill. Without reading comprehension, pupils will only read and will not get what they have in it. Thus, they should be able to comprehend reading texts so that they can perform better in recalling the story and answering questions, generating questions, and summarizing text. Furthermore, they will get the idea of what they have read, not only read and forget it.

To increase reading comprehension skills, children should be exposed to a variety of reading materials (Adler, 2004). Children can practice reading and comprehending everyday items around them. The most important factor in a child's reading development is their eager to read for information. Hence, the interesting material is a good choice to encourage children in reading. Sasson (2007) gives them best idea that young children like stories read by their parents or teacher to them. Children can be provided by good models to practice and increase their language skills through children's books which contain beautiful language. Because they always keep in their mind what they have heard and read especially if they received it with fun. Therefore, books with beautiful language and full of colors will be more effective for children as they will be more interested in reading books. In addition, according to Allen (1989) cited in Wu (2008:45), previous researchers further stress that good literature for children cannot only help English native speakers but also young ESL learners acquire English effectively. Folktales are also written in colorful book they are popular with young children. They love to read stories about animals, and humor and magical of traditional stories. Therefore, folktales can be a suitable material in attracting the children to the lesson.

In teaching reading skill, teacher should find the best way to teach and find one that is easy and fun for young learners. Sherry (2001) proposed that herringbone technique is one of the best ways to get the main ideas and events of a story. The graphic organizer is used to help pupils organize the details of the text. According to Tierney (1989), herringbone technique is a structured

outlining procedure designed to help pupils organize important information in a text chapter. Through this technique, the learners are trained to develop comprehension of the main idea through the use of visual diagram of a fish skeleton. The diagram enables the pupils to plot who, what, when, where, how and why questions. The visual pattern of the herringbone creates a framework for pupils to sort of the information.

According to *The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement*, reading score of Indonesian students in East Asia is still low. Indonesian students are just capable of mastering 30% reading material, and find difficulty in reading items that are in the form of commentary requiring cognitive process (IAE for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2003). In addition, PISA 2009 database shows that Indonesian students' score is below the OECD average and on the 57 out of 65 countries (OECD, PISA 2009 Database).

The writers are impressed in applying herringbone technique to improve reading comprehension for elementary school pupils at SD Negeri 39 Palembang. They observed that there are some problems of English Learning Technique in SD Negeri 39 Palembang especially in Reading. The pupils do not get the main idea of what they have been learned, after they learned Reading soon they will forget what they have been taught when the teacher asks them what is the main idea of the previous material or what they have been learned before. Another problem is there is no eager from them to find the end of the reading passage and the main idea of it, it could be assumed by their attention to the material and when the teacher asks them only a few of them will remember and answer what is the material that they have been learned on the previous days.

A study done by Carol Vaupel et al used folklore as the materials in reading; These researchers found that using folklore as educational material helps pupils to understand and appreciate their society and themselves, while developing their reading interests. They suggested ways in which folklore can be used in independent teaching units, as supportive material for motivation, and as recreational material in reading/language arts classes. They suggested learning activities include discussing what folklore is and what pupils remember from their childhood experiences; presenting selected readings in folklore under a specific topic, such as how traditional beliefs and superstitions have affected people throughout history; studying folk songs; having pupils write their own folk songs or folklore; and having pupils discuss local history with senior citizens and community service people.

Other study which has been funded by Pennsylvania Department of Education and the University Center for International Studies of the University of Pittsburgh, used the folktales as teaching material for young learners. In this project there are reasons why folktales are interesting to be used as teaching material because folktales are rich materials, they can interest pupils in nonfiction, folktales are filled with cultural wisdom, are timeless tales, can reflect backgrounds of diverse pupils in classrooms, contain popular themes, increase pupils' knowledge of literature, integrate learning from various domains, involve interactive learning, provide lessons that are remembered for a long time and they can stimulate the imagination.

Therefore, the writers decided to do a research by using herringbone technique and used folktale as the material. They ensure that herringbone technique is appropriate to the elementary school pupils and folktale is appropriate to be used as the material because she found out that children like to read colorful and big font's text and these can be found in folktale stories. It is hoped that reading learning process can be more interesting and their reading comprehension will be improved because folktale is an interesting material for elementary school pupils and herringbone technique will make them involve in the class. In addition, folktale story contains a lot of moral

lessons and it could be one of ways to attract pupils eager to read and find the main idea of the story by using herringbone technique. Finally, it is also hoped that this technique will be very useful to make them ready in reading lesson in their further studies.

### **Problems of the Study**

The problems of this study are formulated in the following questions: (1) How was the pupils' reading comprehension achievement after used herringbone technique with folktales?, (2) Was there a significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the pupils who were taught using herringbone technique with folktales and that of those who were not?

### **The Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problems above, the objectives of the study are: (1) To find out the pupils' reading comprehension achievement after used herringbone technique with folktales, (2) to find out whether or not there was a significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the pupils who were taught using herringbone technique with folktales and that of those who were not.

### **The Significance of the Study**

This study is expected to bring out some significant results. The possible significances that can be expected are as follows (1) it is expected that the use of herringbone technique might be one of usable ways to support the development of English teaching especially in teaching reading. (2) it is expected that the use of folktale as teaching media will be useful to be applied as one of the alternatives media for the EFL pupils in improving their reading comprehension achievement, (3) it is expected that this study would be beneficial for teachers of English to be more creative in finding the variety of materials for teaching English to young learners.

### **Hypotheses**

In relation to the study, the writers formulate the following hypotheses:

- Ho1: There was no improvement on pupils' reading comprehension achievement after used herringbone technique with folktales.
- Ha1: There was improvement on pupils' reading comprehension achievement after used herringbone technique with folktales.
- Ho2: There was no significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the pupils who were taught using Herringbone technique with folktales and those who were not.
- Ha2: There was significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the pupils who were taught using Herringbone technique and those who were not.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

In this study, a quasi-experimental design was used; it is a control-group pretest-posttest design. This design involves experimental and control groups which both of groups were all given a pretest and posttest. McMillan (1990:178) said that this design of research is called *nonequivalent-groups pretest-posttest design* because two groups of experimental and control were involved in the study.

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<u>Group</u>	<u>Pre-test</u>		<u>Treatment</u>		<u>Post-test</u>
A	O1	→	X	→	O2
B	O3	→	--	→	O4

**Where:**

- A** : The experimental group
- B** : The control group
- O1** : Pre-test for the experimental group
- O2** : Post-test for the experimental group
- O3** : Pre-test for the control group
- O4** : Post-test for the control group
- X** : The treatment for the experimental group by using folktale through herringbone technique while there were no treatment to the control group but they received pre-test and post-test only.

The experiment has been done in two months where each of the meetings took two hours of thirty-five minutes so there were 16 meetings in total. The materials given to the pupils were taken from Bright Stars World Fairy Tales Collection Published by Hello Kids (Kelompok Karisma Publishing), Indonesia and umass.edu. The title of the text used were Sleeping Beauty, Goldilock and the Three Bears, The Ugly Duckling, Gingerbread Man, The Three Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, and Cinderella.

### **Variable of the Study**

The independent variable is using folktales through herringbone technique and the dependent variable is the achievement of pupils' reading comprehension in the form of posttest-scores.

### **Operational Definitions**

#### ***Using Folktales through Herringbone Technique***

It refers to the teaching technique to develop reading comprehension that has been applied in teaching reading to the experimental group as the sample of this study. A diagram of herringbone has been drawn on the hard paper which was taped on the board and it was written in colorful to attract pupils' attention and they were asked the question of Who, What, Where, How, and Why. The objective of herringbone technique is after reading the book; pupils completed the diagram template and they led to gathered the information from the answers and conclude the main idea of the story. The story was copied to them and they filled out the diagram while the story was being read. Then they were asked to write a sentence about the main idea along the bottom of diagram after and the whole passages has been read and share their answer to the questions and their thoughts about the main idea with the class.

#### ***Pupils' reading Comprehension Achievement***

Pupils' reading achievement means the result that was gained by the pupils of experimental group, after they received the treatment. Then it can be measured the effect of the experiment by



comparing the score of pretest-posttest between the pupils who are on the control group and on the experimental group.

### **Subject of the Study**

#### **Population**

Population in this research was the 5<sup>th</sup> grade pupils of SD Negeri 39 Palembang in academic year of 2010/2011, because in elementary level this grade has been exposed to reading text a lot than the graders before so they need to be more interested in reading and capable in reading comprehension better for their next level of study. There are three classes of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade pupils with the total number of 74.

#### **Sample**

In this research, two of the three classes were taken as the sample where one class was taken for the experimental group and one class was taken for the control group. The third class was not taken as the sample because the writer only needs two classes to be observed and the two classes have the same total number of pupils; they are class VA and VB. To find which one will be the experimental group and which one will be the control group, randomly choice by using lottery technique was taken. The treatment was done to the experimental group by using folktale through herringbone technique and the control group received no treatment at all. It was done in the regular time as the real schedule of the study so there was no need to make a new schedule for them if the treatment was done after the school.

#### **The Materials**

The materials given were taken from Bright Stars World Fairy Tales Collection Published by Hello Kids (Kelompok Karisma Publishing), Indonesia and umass.edu. the titles are: *The Gingerbread Man*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *Cinderella*.

#### **Technique for Collecting the Data**

To obtain the data, reading comprehension test was used. There were two tests given, pretest and posttest. The test were in the form of multiple choice reading comprehension test and taken from several sources; Serial Story Book Published by Agape Bandung and folktale stories from umass.edu. Then the test was tried out at SDN 2 Padang Selasa Palembang which had similar characteristic with the sample. The results of the try out then were analyzed to find out its validity and reliability. After that, the final test has been compiled so that the test could be used to the experiment.

Both experimental group and control group were given pretest before the treatment. It was aimed to measure the pupils' reading comprehension mastery of them and especially to find the significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between these different two groups. This test focused on gathering the information of their reading comprehension achievement. It consisted of thirty reading comprehension questions in the form of multiple choices. After collecting the data of the experimental group in 16 meetings, the control group has received no treatment at all, the posttest then was conducted with the aim to measure the pupils' reading comprehension achievement after the treatment they have received. The test was the same as the pretest so the experimental group and the control group did the test again to see their significance difference after the treatment. Some data also

gained by the result of half interview which was asked to the teacher regarding to the teaching material and technique of teaching reading.

### Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability are important to determine appropriateness and usefulness of a measurement instruments. Before the treatment, the readability of reading text had been measured first by using Flesch Kincaid formula. The objective is to find out whether reading text was appropriate to the level of reading comprehension of the sample or not. Flesch Kincaid readability tests are designed to indicate comprehension difficulty when reading a passage of contemporary academic English. There are two tests, the Flesch Reading Ease and the Flesch Kincaid Grade Level. Although they use the same core measures (word length and sentence length), they have different weighting factors, so the results of the two tests correlate approximately inversely; a text with comparatively high score on the Reading Ease test should have a lower score on the Grade Level Test.

### Validity

After the test was measured by using Flesch Kincaid formula, the items of the test were validated which was known as content validity. It helps to determine how well test score represent certain learning objectives as Downie and Heath (1974:249) said that as a result of the item analysis of content validity, the kinds of information can be obtained concerning with the items: (1) the difficulty of the item, (2) the appropriateness of the item, and (3) the discrimination index of the item. Moreover, Heaton (1990:160) also said that content validity depends on a careful analysis of the language being tested and of the particular course objectives. Therefore, to find out the content validity in order to measure the index of the difficulty, Carvantes' formula (1989:12) was applied:

$$IDIF = \frac{TRR}{N}$$

**TRR** = Total Responses

**N** = Number of Examinee

The numerical values then translated into this following descriptive value:

IDIF
.86 – 1.00 → very easy
.71 - .85 → easy
.40 - .70 → desirable
.15 - .39 → difficult
.01 - .14 → very difficult

The items of the test were tried out to the same characteristic of pupils like the sample which was SD N egeri 2 Padang Selasa Palembang, the result then validated by using Carvantes' and it showed that from the 50 items desirable, 22 items were difficult, and 2 items were very difficult. Only 30 items were taken; 20 desirable items, 5 easy items and 5 difficult items. Therefore, the test of reading comprehension for the pretest and posttest consist of 30 questions of the multiple choice test.

### **Reliability**

After the validity of the test was found, the test was continued to be tested to find out the reliability of the test. The data which are reliable could be assumed as valid but not all of the data which are valid could be assumed as reliable. Therefore, the data which were not valid has not been used and the remains were measured to find out the reliability. Wallen and Fraenkel (1991:95) states that reliability refers to the consistency of scores or answers—how consistent they are for each individual from one administration of an instrument to another, and from one set of items to another. The results of the data from the try out then were analyzed by using Alpha Cronbach; it is a coefficient of reliability. It is commonly used as a measure of the internal consistency or reliability of a psychometric test score for a sample of examinees.

As the result, the Cronbach's Alpha was 0.639. If the result  $> 0,70$  it means that the data is reliable. Therefore, it could be assumed that the data was reliable.

### **Procedure and Techniques in Teaching Reading Comprehension**

#### **Technique in teaching reading comprehension using Herringbone Technique**

The pupils were given a short time to skim a passage and then have them to fill the Herringbone Pattern with the main ideas of the passage, including: What is the main idea? Who is speaking? Who is reading talking about? When did it occur? How was it done this way? Pupils were asked to write phrases answering these questions. After they recorded the information, the writers asked them to discuss together about what they have done. Finally, they were asked to answer the comprehension questions from the passage given.

#### **Technique for Analyzing the Data**

The quantitative data analysis is used in this study where the writers found out the means score and the significant differences within the groups and between the groups in terms of reading comprehension achievement. The contribution of Herringbone Technique in improving pupils' reading comprehension achievement was measured as well. Here, the reading comprehension rubric was also used to guide the writers in teaching reading process.

The normality of the pretest and posttest, and the homogeneity of the test were analyzed through the IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS/P) 19 Program while the writers found out the mean of the tests. Then, the mean of pretest and posttest from control group and experimental group were compared so then the significant difference in terms of reading comprehension between the pupils who are trained by using Herringbone technique with folktale as the material and those who are not were showed. To compare the means of the test, the t-test was used in order to find out the significant difference between the means and decide whether those differences were likely to happen by chance or by treatment effect. This procedure was also done through SPSS 19 program for windows.

### **FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION**

The lowest of the pretest score obtained by the fifth grade pupils was 2.33 while the highest score was 9.00. And then, in posttest scores, the lowest score was 5.00 and the highest score was 9.67. It was found that the average of pretest was 5.0668 and the average scores of posttest was 7.56. The posttest score was higher than the pretest score and there is difference of the score before the treatment and after the treatment. The average score of the pretest was 5.066 and posttest was 7.56 with standard deviation of 1.326 for pretest and 1.339 for posttest. It means that the score was insufficient in the



pretest and average in posttest, we could assumed that teaching reading comprehension by using folktale through herringbone technique could increase the pupils' reading comprehension score.

After doing the posttest, the result showed a statistically significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the pupils who were taught using folktale through herringbone technique and those who were not. The mean score of the posttest of experimental group was higher than the mean score of the posttest of control group. It was understood that folktale through herringbone technique gave significant contribution in improving pupils' reading comprehension achievement. The mean posttest of experimental group was compared to the mean of control group. The result showed that sig. (2-tailed) or p-value (0.001) was less than  $\alpha$ -value (0.05). It means that there was significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between both of groups.

There were some reasons why folktale through herringbone technique gave significant contribution to improve pupils' reading comprehension achievement in the experimental group. First, based on the observation during the learning process, the writers saw the pupils in the class were active. They could fill the Herringbone Chart after the researcher explained how to use it. They were given and asked to read some pictorial books and they answered the questions related to the story by using herringbone technique and chart. In conclusion, they could understand the point of the story in the pictorial books and answer the questions by filling out the herringbone chart. Those books were also attractive to the pupils because they have many colorful pictures inside so that the pupils enjoyed their learning. The frequent exposure of Herringbone technique through folktales helped the pupils in learning reading comprehension. They were attentive and active within the learning process especially when they were asked to read the books, they also eager to find out the answer of the question by filling out the chart which was colorful as well.

Second, Herringbone technique using folktale could be effective to improve elementary school pupils' reading comprehension achievement. Most of the fifth grade pupils in the experimental group had better development and improvement in their posttest scores compared to their scores in pretest. In addition, one of the factors that made the result of the posttest score higher compared to the result of the pretest score was because of the same questions related to Herringbone technique were repeated in the posttest so that the pupils were familiar with the instructions.

Third, Herringbone technique contributed in improving the pupils' comprehension level. It gave the pupils an opportunity to identify the main idea and the related supporting ideas of a lesson, text or concept.

Fourth, this technique is designed to help pupils organize important information in a text chapter. The pupils were actively instructed that they would be seeking the answers to the questions and would be recording their answers on the Herringbone pattern as they read the material.

Moreover, it is also found their motivation to learn English especially in reading increased significantly, it could be seen from the result of their reading-comprehension posttest and the result of the observation shows that the pupils became more active to answer the questions given on the herringbone chart. It is because folktale is an interesting nonfiction material and it is suited to the level of the pupils' ability and it is time less-tell material so the pupils could get what the story wants to tell easily. The herringbone technique using folktale has an interactive learning because it is found that the pupils were active and the folktale could stimulate their imagination. Finally, folktale also has reflects background of diverse pupils and the content of popular theme for the children.

Last but not least, using folktale through Herringbone technique could be one of ways in teaching to develop reading comprehension achievement. The pupils enjoyed using folktale using colorful books as they could stimulate them to identify the main idea of the text. However, it takes

time to make them get use to this technique because this technique was new to them. Based on the study, the difficulties in reading comprehension were pupils used to find the meaning of the words from the text one by one and they did not know how to find out the answers of the questions which could found in the text. When they used Herringbone technique, they did not have to find the meaning of all the words, in which it could waste some more times to do. They were taught how to find the clues of the answers in the questions by seeing the pictures of the text and from the words of the question itself. They answered the wh-questions on Herringbone Chart by seeing the picture and the clues from the question, for example if the question is Who was the curly girl cried in the room? They could find the answer by seeing one who was crying and find the word crying in text if there was no picture of a crying girl. In addition, reading is a fundamental compete in everyday society. Reading is the fundamental tool for learning. Unless a child learns to read, he or she will face severe obstacles in life. Reading, especially for children, must be fun, as well as educational. That is why folktale is one of choices of teaching reading material for the elementary school pupils ([www.selu.edu](http://www.selu.edu)).

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and interpretation, some conclusions are drawn. First, there was a significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the pupils who were taught by using folktale through Herringbone Technique and those who were not. The pupils in the experimental group could improve their reading comprehension achievement significantly. Their better achievement toward reading comprehension can be seen based on the scores of the posttest which were higher than the scores of the pretest.

Second, the Herringbone technique using folktale was effective to improve elementary school pupils' reading comprehension achievement. It can be seen from the analysis of the data gathered during the experiment and after the experiment. Most of the fifth grade pupils in the experimental group had better development and improvement and they were enthusiastic and active in using folktale through Herringbone Technique.

Third, from the data of the survey during the experiment and the data gathered from the teacher of English of SDN 39 Palembang, the Herringbone Technique could be effective to be used in reading subject to improve elementary school pupils' reading comprehension achievement. The result of the study shows that there is improvement on pupils' reading comprehension achievement after used herringbone technique with folktale and there is significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the pupils who were taught using herringbone technique with folktales and those who were not which can be seen from the scores of pretest and posttest. This technique attracted the pupils' attention and made them involved in the class. Moreover, the folktale as the material of reading made them enjoy reading and they could understand the main idea of the story.

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