



IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH THINK ALOUD STRATEGY

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Abstract

This research aims to improve the reading skills of the first year students of SMP Negeri 2 LawangWetan through think aloud strategy. The research method used was action research methods with the working procedures multi-cycle that in each cycle consists of four aspects: planning, action, observation and reflection. The results showed there is significant increasing in the average value of the initial test is 48,29, while the average of the first cycle was 68,51, while the average value of the end of the second cycle was 72,79 and the average value of the third cycle was 75,43. Therefore it can be said that the reading ability of students to think aloud strategy to increase. On the other hand, the success of the new measures is reached in the third cycle that is 86% of 85% is applied.

Keyword: Action research, think aloud strategy, reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

English as an international language is spoken in most international events and is used as the medium of information flow on science, technology and culture. As we know that learning a foreign language is more difficult than learning a national language or learning a mother tongue. It is because the foreign language has completely different aspects and systems, which should be understood by the students or the learners, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and the cultural background of the language.

Language is rapidly becoming an additional form of diversity, and many teachers have little information or education that focuses on assisting multilingual learners with their reading (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2005:17). Reading is the skill, which may often be used and is retained the longest. It concerns not only assigning the English sounds to written words but also the understanding of what is written.

Reading score of Indonesian students in East Asia, as reported by The international Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement, stubbornly remains flat with the score 51,7. To overcome the above problems, the writer believes, it is necessary to improve the quality of teaching and learning reading comprehension by trying an appropriate method of teaching and learning. Teachers must understand how to teach strategies and deliver content to English language learners in strategic ways that make the concepts comprehensible. There are many reading strategies that can help students improve their reading comprehension achievement, such as think aloud. Think aloud is a metacognitive technique or strategy in which a teacher verbalizes thoughts aloud while reading a selection orally, thus modeling the process of comprehension (Harris & Sipay, 1995: 256).

The conclusion from definition above, that think aloud strategy is more stress to students' constructive creative in reading. So think aloud strategy can use to improving students' reading comprehension of SMPN 2 LawangWetan. Thus the study entitle "Improving Reading Comprehension through Think Aloud Strategy" (Action Reasearch to students SMP Negeri 2 LawangWetan), with



formulation of the problem “Is think aloud strategy can improve students’ reading comprehension in SMP Negeri 2 LawangWetan?”

The action research is systematic approach to effective methods of finding solutions to the problems of everyday faced by professionals in particular the educators. Action research differs from other scientific research, because the purpose of action research is to study a problem in the context described in the action research (Ernest T. Stringer, 2007: 1-2). The most influential models in the field of action research was developed by Stephen Kemmis and Robert Mc Taggart. According to Hopkins, Kemmis and Taggart proposed phases of planning, action, observation, reflection and these phases can be repeated within each cycle, its phases are not done exactly the same, because each phase produces different conclusions, so the planning phase will experience adjustments (Kemmis and Taggart in David Hopkins, 1993:48).

Reading Comprehension

The concept of reading comprehension could be bottom-up and top-down approaches. Nunan (1989:33) mentions that with the bottom-up approach, the reading is viewed as a process of decoding written symbols, working from smaller units (individual letter) to longer ones (words, clauses and sentences). According to Olson and Diller (1982:42), what is meant by reading comprehension is term used to identify those skills needed to understand and apply information contained in a written material.

This statement is supported by Harris and Sipay (1980:179), who say that reading comprehension ability is taught to be a set of generalized knowledge acquisition skills that permits people to acquire and exhibit information gained as a consequence of reading printed language.

So reading comprehension can say that reading comprehension ability is the ability to understand the concept and meaning of the text contents are read by connecting reasoning and knowledge in reconstructing the message from the main idea, important details and the whole notion so as to form and test hypotheses. This case shows how complex reading by involving all the higher mental processes, such as memory, thinking, imagination, setting, implementation and troubleshooting.

Think Aloud Strategy

Think aloud is a technique by which the individual voices her or his thoughts during the performance of a task. Jahagirdar(<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/education-plus.html>, cited on 31 Oktober 2009)said that think aloud same as spit-balling in his writer, the title is The Hindu, today’s paper he explain that Spit-balling is similar to thinking aloud, and refers to making a tentative suggestion, or to proposing an idea without having fully considered it yet.

In connection, Tinzmann et al (<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/skill-builder/html>, cited on 31 Oktober 2009) said that the students develop to think into reflective, metacognitive, independent learners, an invaluable step in helping students understand that learning requires effort and often is difficult. So it can be said that the think aloud strategy oriented thinking skills constructivism.

The implementation of the think aloud strategy is to be done; (1) begin thinking as you read. Do this at points in the text that may be confusing for students (new vocabulary, unusual sentence construction), (2) introduce the assigned text and discuss the purpose of the think aloud strategy. Develop the set of questions to support thinking aloud: what do I know about this topic? What do I think I will learn about this topic? Do I understand what I just read? Do I have a clear picture in my head about this information? What more can I do to understand this? What were the most important points in this reading? What new information did I learn? How does it fit in with what I already know?

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(3) give students opportunities to practice the technique, and offer structured feedback to students, (4) read the selected passage aloud as the students read the same text silently. At certain points stop and think aloud the answers to some of the preselected questions, (5) demonstrate how good readers monitor their understanding by rereading a sentence, reading ahead to clarify, and/or looking for context clues. Students then learn to offer answers to the questions as the teacher leads the think aloud.

Hypothesis Actions

Action hypothesis in this study is formulated as follows. Think aloud strategy if implemented properly then the reading comprehension ability of students in SMP Negeri 2 Lawang Wetan will increase.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research method is used action research method. Action research conducted by the theory proposed Kemmis and Mc Taggart (2009) and Suyanto (2002). Kemmis and Mc Taggart (cited Diaz-Maggioli, 2003:7) states that when carrying out action research, the teacher asks questions about the issues they experienced, and the filter questions linked to learning strategies that fosterage, developing an action plan to address these questions, execute lesson plans and reflect on the results. The corresponding landing Kemmis and Mc Taggart, issues experienced by teachers in SMP Negeri 2 Lawang Wetan is students do not like and less good at reading. The facts related to learning strategy that has been done by the teacher is not conducive. Subsequent remedial efforts to develop a plan of action.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The first cycle (plan of action)

- a. Researchers conducted an assessment to fellow teachers who care for English subjects and students (interviews of teachers and students)
- b. Put together a program of learning to read (Lesson Plan)
- c. Preparing a test device (early and late), observation sheets, and a list of interview questions.

Implementation of the Action

Preparation prior to implementation of measures and action steps to implement think aloud strategy. Initial test conducted on March, 1 2010. Asked to read the beginning of topic Mount Bromo. Initial test results showed that of the 35 students there is no single person (0%) who obtained a score of 70. Average initial test is 48,29. Low initial tests showed that the students' ability in reading is very low.

Results and Discussion of the First Cycle of Action

Cycle I carried as many as 2 meetings. Each meeting lasted for 80 minutes (2X40 minutes). The first meeting held March 4, 2010 at 07.40-09.00 WIB. The second meeting held March 5, 2010 at 09.15-10.35 WIB. Final test first cycle on March, 7 2010 at 09.15-10.35 WIB. Results 60% of students could express their ideas from reading text. The average value of the first cycle is the final test 68,51%. From 35 students who scored 70 only 11 person. It means, the percentage of successful actions reached 31,43% of the 85% targeted.

Results and Discussion of the Second Cycle



The second cycle is done 2 meetings. The first 80 minutes (2X40 minutes) implemented March 22, 2010. The average value of the second cycle is the final test 72,79 there are 24 students who scored 75. It means the success of the new measures reaching 68,57% of 85% targets.

Results and Discussion of the Third Cycle

Action third cycle lasts for 80 minutes (2X40 minutes) at 09.15-10.35 WIB, done March 26, 2010. End of the test the third cycle April 1, 2010. The average value of the final test the third cycle are 75,43. Meanwhile, the percentage of success of the action has reached 86%. In other words, from the 35 students there are 30 students who scored 70.

Table Value Acquisition Cycle I,II,III

No	Code	Test Results			
		Early	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
1	1	50	45	57,5	80
2	2	40	65	65	70
3	3	50	64,5	75	80
4	4	50	59,5	60	75
5	5	40	65	80	75
6	6	40	75	75	75
7	7	60	75	62,5	75
8	8	50	70	75	80
9	9	55	72,5	75	75
10	10	40	75	75	80
11	11	55	64,5	75	75
12	12	65	72,5	75	75
13	13	50	75	80	75
14	14	45	75	75	80
15	15	50	59,5	70	75
16	16	40	55	67,5	75
17	17	40	65	75	70
18	18	60	75	75	75
19	19	45	60	75	60
20	20	50	75	80	80
21	21	50	70	70	75
22	22	50	75	75	75
23	23	40	62,5	80	80
24	24	45	70	80	75
25	25	50	72,5	65	75
26	26	50	75	75	75
27	27	45	65	75	70
28	28	50	75	75	75
29	29	40	67,5	70	70
30	30	45	70	75	80
31	31	60	75	80	80
32	32	55	67,5	75	75
33	33	50	70	75	75
34	34	45	70	65	80
35	35	40	70	65	75
Average		48,29	68,51	72,79	75,43
Percentage of success		0%	31,43%	68,57%	86%



CONCLUSION

The results showed there were an increased reading comprehension at class A the first year students of SMPNegeri 2 LawangWetan. The average value of the initial test is only 48,29, the average value of the final test first cycle increased to 68,51. The second cycle 72,79, the third cycle 75,43. Therefore, it can be stated that the reading ability of students increased by applying think aloud strategy.

On the other hand, initial tests showed that no one who scored 70. Therefore, the success of the action at the beginning of the test were 0%. Thus, the action research ended in the third cycle because it has exceeded the success criteria defined action i.e. 85%.

As for the suggested procedures in applying think aloud strategy on learning to read is (1) the teacher introduced the topic, (2) the teacher asked the students to think of ideas that might be related to the topic. This brainstorming phase allowed students to make use of their prior knowledge or experiences. (3) the teacher asked the students to survey: survey each chapter, survey the topic, survey the illustrations. (4) the students made questions before, during, and after reading the material. (5) the students read for the main ideas and organization. (6) the teacher asked the students to recite. The recite is summarize aloud what your read. (7) the teacher recorded the students with underline and made marginal notes, coordinate class notes and textbook notes. (8) the students reviewed constantly.

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