Improving Reading Comprehension Ability of XI Grade Students of SMA Negeri 1 Tawangsari through the Implementation of Collaborative Strategic Reading in the Academic Year of 2015/2016

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Abstract: This research is aimed to improve the reading skill of Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 1 Tawangsari in the academic year of 2015/2016. This study was an action research. The actions were implemented in two cycles based on the class schedule. The study involved 29 students of SMA Negeri 1 Tawangsari in the academic year of 2015/2016 with the English teacher as the collaborator. The data were qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data were obtained through the observations during the teaching and learning process of reading, interviews with XI Bahasa Class students and English teacher, discussions with the collaborator and pictures and videos taken during the implementation. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were collected through a pre-test and two post-tests. The validity used in this research were democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, catalytic validity and dialogic validity. The results showed that the implementation of Collaborative Strategic Reading improved the students' reading ability. The improvements were indicated by many factors, some of which are their ability to find detailed and explicit/implicit information, their ability to find the main ideas and the writer's message, their vocabulary and their ability to call up their background experience to solve the problem and to determine the context of the text. The students' mean score of the pre-test was 71. The mean score improved in Post-test 1 to 74.4 and in Post-test 2 to 79.8. It indicated that there was an improvement in their reading comprehension skill. In conclusion, Collaborative Strategic Reading successfully maximized the students' reading comprehension ability.

Keywords: *reading comprehension, strategy, collaborative strategic reading*

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Introduction

Reading is defined as a process in which a reader attempts to grasp the messages conveyed by a writer in a certain text. It has been claimed as one of the main skills that can determine students' success in learning English. Reading is one of the main keys in the English teaching and learning process. Therefore, learning reading is crucial since reading skill is needed by students to enable them to understand the textbook or other references written in English. To get information from English sources, the learners have to be able to read the sources effectively and efficiently.

Israel and Duffy (1997: 3) state that the most important skill indicating that someone is a success or failure in school and in society depends upon the ability to read. It means that they only understand the structure of the texts, but also comprehend the message of the texts. In

accordance with *KTSP*, one of the reading competencies which students should learn is to comprehend the meaning of short functional texts and essays in the form of narrative, recount, descriptive, report, expository and procedure texts in the context of daily life activities. Hence, students need to learn how to read and comprehend what they read fairly well because in fact there are many students that have difficulties in learning how to read and comprehend what they have read. Teachers need to put emphasis on teaching the reading comprehension skills to the students.

There are many strategies that can be used in teaching reading comprehension. One of them is using Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in English class. The writer is interested in applying CSR to solve the readers' problems with reading, that is, their difficulties in learning how to read and comprehend what they have read. It is an excellent technique for teaching students reading comprehension, building vocabulary and also working together co-operatively (Klingner and Vaughn, 1998: 3-22). It means that CSR improves students' reading comprehension skills, increases their vocabularies, enhances cooperative skills, and enriches content area learning. Moreover, it helps students organize information based on categories, makes them become more active readers and helps them remember new vocabulary and other information.

When the writer undertook observations at SMA N 1 Tawangsari Sukoharjo, it was found that many students had difficulties in comprehending texts. Most of the students still had problems in finding factual information within a text (such as main ideas, supporting ideas, and conclusion). Further, a lack of vocabulary was also a big problem for the students. Sometimes the students tended to focus their full attention on very unfamiliar words they found and try to find their meaning in a dictionary. As a result, the students did not have a good understanding of what the text was about when the time was over. Consequently, the students could not catch the ideas and the message of the text because of those problems.

As a result of these findings, the researcher decided to find out ways of improving English reading comprehension using Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR).

Research Method

This research was action research that followed a design proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) in Burns (1999). In this research, the researcher used four phases in each cycle. Those phases were planning, action and observation and reflection. It involved 29 students of Class XI Bahasa at SMA N 1 Tawangsari Sukoharjo and was conducted from February to April 2015.

There are five research instruments used in this research: observation sheets, a camera, a recorder, interview guides and reading comprehension tests (a pre-test and post-tests). The data of the research were in the form of field notes, interview transcripts and students' reading comprehension scores. The instruments used for observations included and interview guide for the purpose of collecting data and observation checklists. They were then recorded on the observation sheets. It was conducted to get information related to the students' attitudes toward English texts during the implementation of the research.. The reading comprehension tests were also conducted to get the students' reading scores before and after the implementation of CSR. It was aimed to measure how the subjects improved their reading comprehension compared to the initial ability of the participant. Both of the tests consisted of thirty multiple choice questions

with four possible answers. To grade the participants, the number of right answers was converted to a percentile.

The data collected from this research were qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data consisted of interview transcripts and field notes. The quantitative data required to answer the research problem were collected through administering a pre-test and post-tests. The qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were analyzed using the mean score of the pre-test results compared to the post-test mean score in each cycle. The researcher used five criteria of validity and reliability of data proposed by Anderson in Burns (1999: 161), namely democratic, outcome, process, catalytic and dialogic validity. In order to get trustworthiness, time triangulation and investigator triangulation were applied.

Findings and Discussion

The research was aimed at improving the reading comprehension ability of Class Bahasa XI at SMAN 1 Tawangsari through CSR. Therefore, the actions conducted answered the questions formulated in the first cycle.

In the first cycle, the implementation of CSR was successful in making the students get involved in the teaching and learning process. It also improved their reading comprehension ability. However, some problems occurred in the implementation of the actions. The class became noisy and some students had poor time management. Some students could not use the clunk strategy, which meant that they could not figure out the meaning of difficult words, and some of them could not find the main ideas of the texts given. It was concluded that the treatment given in Cycle I had not met the success criteria used in the study yet. Therefore, the action research should be continued to Cycle 2 and some aspects of the teaching strategy used (CSR strategy) had to be revised and improved in Cycle 2.

In Cycle 2, the students could comprehend the text given better than they could in Cycle 1. They answered the questions correctly. They could find the main ideas of the texts and also figure out the unfamiliar words using the CSR strategies. After the researcher applied CSR in this cycle, the obstacles that were faced in the first cycle had been solved well. The students could use clunk cards with the click and clunk strategy and they could find the meaning of unfamiliar words, main ideas, and they could comprehend texts well. In addition to the obstacles being solved successfully, the students were interested in the implementation of CSR. They were more motivated in participating in the teaching and learning process of reading.

After comparing the results of the pre-test and post-tests from Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, it could be concluded that there was improvement in students' reading comprehension. The results from the pre-test and post-tests are summarized in the following table.

Table The Result of the Pre-test and Post-test Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Test	Number of Students	Mean

Pre-test	29	71
Post-test 1	29	74.4
Post-test 2	29	79.8

From the result above, it could be seen that the students' score had increased. The mean score of the post-test of Cycle 1 was 74.4, higher than the score of the pre-test, which was only 71. The gain score of students' reading comprehension post-test of Cycle 2 was 79.8. It was higher than the score of the post-test of Cycle 1. It can be concluded that there was an improvement in their reading comprehension ability.

Conclusion

In Cycle 1, the main activity was the implementation of Collaborative Strategic Reading strategy. Besides the main activity, there were supporting activities including dividing the groups, giving handouts, distributing identity cards and clunk cards, explaining materials, discussing materials and tasks, and presenting the students' results of discussion. In the first cycle, the implementation of CSR was successful in making the students get involved in the teaching and learning process. It also improved their reading comprehension ability. However, some problems occurred in the implementation of the actions. The class became noisy and some students had poor time management. Some students could not use the clunk strategy, which meant that they could not figure out the meaning of difficult words, and some of them could not find the main ideas of the texts given. The results of the post-test in the Cycle 1 also were not as good as expected. However, the students claimed that they enjoyed learning with CSR. The researcher decided to keep using CSR as the strategy to improve the students' reading comprehension ability.

In Cycle 2, the activities were generally similar to Cycle 1. The researcher solved the problems occured in Cycle 1 so that in Cycle 2 the students' reading comprehension improved successfully. All actions conducted in the implementation brought some positive improvements to the students's reading comprehension ability. It can be concluded that CSR can be used as a guide framework for students in reading. CSR strategy increased the students' reading comprehension ability, students' vocabulary and encouraged them to actively participate in the teaching and learning process of reading.

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