

**IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION SKILL BY USING
THE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR GRADE VIIID AT SMP N 1 BERBAH
IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2014/2015**

E-JOURNAL



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APPROVAL SHEET

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Improving the Students' Reading Comprehension Skill by Using the Graphic Organizer for Grade VIIID at SMP N 1 Berbah in the Academic Year of 2014/2015

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Abstract: This research aimed to improve the students' reading comprehension skill by using the graphic organizer for grade VIIID at SMP N 1 Berbah in the academic year of 2014/2015. This research was an action research. It consisted of two cycles. The data were obtained from the classroom observation during the teaching and learning process, the students' interview, the teacher's interview, the questionnaire, and supported by the score of the students' reading comprehension tests. The data were analyzed qualitatively and the scores were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics. The results of this research suggested that the graphic organizer improved the students' reading comprehension skill for grade VIIID at SMP N 1 Berbah. The qualitative data analysis showed that the students were able to comprehend the texts better by using the graphic organizer. There were also some changes on their behavior. They could focus their attention on the teaching and learning process by the implementation of the graphic organizer. Based on the quantitative data analysis, the total score and the average score in the posttest I increased 10% from those of the pretest. Meanwhile, the total score and the average score in the posttest II increased 9% from those of the posttest I. The quantitative data supported the qualitative data stating that the graphic organizer could be used to improve the students' reading comprehension skill.

Keywords: the graphic organizer, improvement, reading comprehension skill.

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Introduction

There are four skills in English, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are categorized as receptive skills while speaking and writing are productive skills. In the receptive skills, students do not need to produce language. They only receive and comprehend it. These skills are the passive skills. Meanwhile, in the productive skills, students use the language that they have acquired and produce a message through speech or written text that they want others to understand. They are known as active skills.

In the junior high school level, it is important to make students comprehend the receptive skills first before they go to the productive skills. The first skill they have to comprehend is the reading skill. Nowadays, reading skill has become a vital activity for students since written text such as textbooks for students are written in English. They read written texts in order to get information as much as possible. In this case, it is important to gain students' awareness of reading as a skill that requires active engagement. Some reading strategies have to be introduced as an effort to help the students develop both the ability and the confidence to handle communication situations they may encounter beyond the classroom.

From the observation conducted on January 9, 2015, there were some problems faced by VIIID students of SMP N 1 Berbah in the teaching and learning activities of English. The first problem was from the English teacher and teaching materials. The English teacher had

inadequate preparation of the teaching materials. The next problem was from the students. They lack of motivation in learning English, especially learning English texts. They were not interested in the teaching and learning process since they did not have any specific reading strategies that help them in comprehending written texts quickly. The other problem was the lack of school facilities. The school facilities were not enough to conduct good classroom activities since not every class in SMP N 1 Berbah was equipped with the projector.

In conclusion, the main problem was concerned on the lack of reading strategies. To deal with this problem, the use of graphic organizer was proposed to improve the students' reading comprehension skill for Grade VIIID at SMP N 1 Berbah in the academic year of 2014/2015. In this case, the graphic organizer, especially the "what happened" graphic organizer was chosen, since this form was suitable for teaching the narrative text. It would lead the students to get involved in the teaching and learning process and to comprehend the narrative text faster.

Literature Review

Reading is one of the receptive skills, besides the listening skill. Patel & Jain (2008: 113) state that reading skill is the most useful and important skill for people. This skill is more important than the speaking skill and writing skill since reading activity is a source of joys. Good reading activity encourages the students to keep reading regularly and provides them both pleasure and profit. Moreover, reading is the most important activity in any language reading classes. Reading activity is not only a source of information and a pleasurable activity but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language. Reading activity is needed to widen the mind and to gain the understanding of the foreign culture.

In line with Patel and Jain, Celce-Murcia (2001: 154) claims reading activity as an interactive process. It involves a text, a reader, and a social context in which the reading process occurs. In addition, Brown (2004: 189) states that reading activity is a process of negotiation of meaning. In this process, the readers bring their early knowledge to the next parts of reading process to reach their understanding about the meaning of the texts they read.

As suggested by Patel & Jain (2008: 117-119), reading can be classified as intensive reading (related to further progress in language learning under the teacher's guidance), extensive reading (related to the effort to train the student to read directly and fluently in the target language for enjoyment, without the aid of the teacher), reading aloud (related to a way to help students in accessing the material and developing students' skills as active listeners, and silent reading (related to a way to increase reading ability among learners).

In the teaching of the reading skill, the teacher should follow principles from experts in order to create interactive techniques. Harmer (2007: 101-102) states six principles for the teaching of reading skill. Those principles encourage the students to read as often and as much as possible, to be engaged with what they are reading, to respond to the content of a text (and explore their feelings about it), not just concentrate on its construction, prediction is a major factor in reading, match the task to the topic when using intensive reading texts and the last principle is good teachers exploit reading texts to the full.

In teaching the reading skill in Indonesian junior high schools, teachers should follow the principles or regulations made by the ministry of education and culture. According to BSNP, the principle for the teaching of English in the junior high school level is using KTSP and

2013 curriculum. The aims of the teaching of English in the junior high school level are to develop the students' communication ability in oral and written form to reach the level of functional literacy, students' awareness about the essence and importance of English in order to develop the nation's competitiveness in the global community, and to develop students' understanding of the relationship between language and culture.

The goal of reading activity is comprehension. Klingner & Geisler (2008: 65) define that reading comprehension is a process of constructing meaning from a text which involves the complex coordination of several processes, including decoding, word reading, and fluency along with the integration of background knowledge and previous experiences. In the same way, Oakhill, Cain & Elbro (2015: 1) state that reading comprehension is an important thing not only for understanding a text, but also for broader learning, success in education, and employment. The reading comprehension skill is even important for our social lives.

According to Adler (2004: 1), there are seven strategies to improve the reading comprehension skill. They are monitoring comprehension, metacognition as monitoring, making connections with graphic and semantic organizers, generating questions, answering questions, recognizing story structure, instruction in the story structure, and summarizing.

Assessing reading comprehension is different from those in others kind of reading. Good reading comprehension is the main goal of reading instruction at all grade levels. Accurate assessment of reading comprehension is necessary to know if this goal is being met, to identify students who need remediation, and to help plan future instruction. Brown (2004: 201-211) explains that types of assessment in reading comprehension are cloze task, impromptu reading plus comprehension questions, short-answer tasks, editing, scanning, ordering task and information transfer: reading charts, maps, graphs, diagram.

According to McKnight (2013: 1), the graphic organizer is visual representations of information and concepts. Similarly, Bromley, DeVitis & Modlo (1999: 6) agree that the graphic organizer is a visual representation of knowledge that structures the information by arranging important aspects of a concept or topic into a pattern using labels. Although there are many variations and possible combinations of graphic organizers used in the classrooms, Bromley, DeVitis & Modlo (1999: 8) state that the graphic organizer is falling into four basic categories, namely cyclical organizers, conceptual organizers, sequential organizers and hierarchical organizers.

To solve the problem found in the classroom observation, the "what happened" graphic organizer was used. This graphic organizer is categorized into the sequential organizer since it arranges events in the chronological order. Bromley, DeVitis & Modlo (1999: 108) state that it helps the students to understand the chronological organization. It provides a plan for comprehending a text. Chronological organization is a central to most narratives, historical writing, recipes, procedures and directions.

Research Method

The research design employed in this research was the Classroom Action Research (CAR). The process involves four steps. They are identifying a classroom problem, developing and implementing an action research plan, collecting and analyzing data, and using and sharing results. Applying the principle of an action research design, this study involved the spirals of planning, action, observing, and reflecting. The researcher took the model proposed by

Kemmis and Taggart (1988: 5) in which each cycle consists of four steps, namely planning, implementing, observing and reflection. Those four main steps were preceded by a reconnaissance (preliminary study).

This study was conducted at Grade VIII D of SMP N 1 Berbah, Kalasan. In collecting the data, the researcher employed two kinds of data: quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data were gained from two kind of tests, pre-test and post-test. They were conducted in order to know whether there was the improvement after employing the graphic organizer. The qualitative data were obtained from observations, interviews, and questionnaire.

In analyzing quantitative data, the researcher used descriptive statistics analysis. It was used to find means and total scores. The results of pre-test and post-test were analyzed to know whether there was improvement or not in the students' reading comprehension skill. Meanwhile, the qualitative data were collected from observations, interviews and questionnaire. They were in the forms of field notes, interview transcripts, and questionnaire analysis. Then, all the data were interpreted and analyzed. Finally, the outcomes of the data were reported from the beginning to the end.

There were five validity criteria that ensure data validity of this action research. The five validity criteria were democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, catalytic validity and dialogic validity (Burns in Madya 2006: 37-45). Furthermore, to enhance the trustworthiness of the data and the subjectivity in analyzing them, the researcher used the triangulation. The first triangulation was the time triangulation, the second was the space triangulation, and the last was the investigator triangulation.

Findings and Discussion

As a warming up activity, the students were provided with the picture series. They should comprehend the text and answer some questions related to the text. Most of the students could not comprehend the text quickly and had difficulties when they answered the questions related to the text. Then, they were introduced to the "what happened" graphic organizer. They were firstly asked. Then, they were asked to make it in a group. At first, they got confused on how to make it and how to use it to help them comprehending the text.

They were asked to make a graphic organizer in a paper and decorate it with some coloring pens. In making their graphic organizer, they firstly looked for the definition of some new words. Then, they looked for the main idea of each paragraph and wrote it on the graphic organizer template. When they were asked to answer some questions related to the text, they could answer it with the help of the graphic organizer although it took a long time to relate their graphic organizer with the questions. Although they could make a graphic organizer in the first cycle, they still did not know how to use it as a helpful reading strategy.

When they made the graphic organizer, they firstly copied the main idea of each paragraph to the graphic organizer without looking for the main idea of the whole text. As a result, they still got confused when they were asked to answer some questions related to the text. They also did not know when they were asked to write the generic structure of the text. Furthermore, when they were asked to retell the story, they had no idea about the text. They only read their graphic organizer without knowing the main idea of the text. When they made their graphic organizer, they firstly only copied one or two sentences of each paragraph. Then they directly looked for the meaning of each word without relating and joining the main

idea of the first paragraph with the next paragraph. They got difficulties when they were asked to mention the main idea of each paragraph.

In the second cycle, the students were asked to make the graphic organizer and they could decorate their graphic organizer with many things: colored paper, coloring pens, highlighter, coloring markers, and other things.

When they made the graphic organizer in this cycle, they tried to look for the main idea of each paragraph and tried to link the main idea of each paragraph. They finally could know the main idea of the whole text. As a result, when they were asked to answer some questions related to the text, they could easily answer it. They knew how to use the graphic organizer to help them comprehend the text.

In this cycle, the students firstly tried to look for the definition of some new words. Then, they looked for the orientation (what, who, when, where), complication (problems) and resolution (solutions for problems). When they were asked to mention the generic structure of a text, they could do it and tell the others about the generic structure and the main idea of the whole text.

They could find the relationship of among paragraphs. They firstly looked for the meaning of some new words, the main idea of each paragraph, and the relationship among those main ideas. When the students were asked to retell the story, they could do it well. They could mention the main idea of each paragraph and the main point of the story. They also could answer some questions related to the text. They knew how to use the graphic organizer.

To support the qualitative data, the quantitative data were also employed. The data were gained from reading comprehension tests. The tests were administered three times, before the implementation, after the implementation of Cycle I and the after the implementation of Cycle II. The researcher then compared the score by focusing on the total score and the average. The table below presents the total score and the average score of the reading comprehension test.

Test	Frequency	Total Score	Average
Pretest	31	1955	63.06
Posttest I	31	2270	73.22
Posttest II	31	2557	82.48

Based on this table, the total score in the pretest was 1955, and the total score in the posttest I was 2270, and the total score in the posttest II was 2557. It could be concluded that the total score and the average score in the posttest I increased 10% from those of the pretest. The total score and the average score in the posttest II increased 9% from those of the posttest I. The quantitative data supported the qualitative data, that the graphic organizer could be used to improve the students' reading comprehension skill.

Conclusion and Suggestion

In line with the previous discussion, it can be concluded that the graphic organizer improved the students' reading comprehension skill. With the implementation of the graphic organizer and its accompanying actions, the improvement was not only on the students' reading

comprehension skill, but also on the students' creativity and the students' involvement. Although at the first time they got confused, they could make it successfully. They also could relate their graphic organizer with the text. When they were asked to answer some questions, they looked at their graphic organizer and related their graphic organizer with the text and the questions. The only problem was time. Since they faced a new reading strategy, which was the graphic organizer, it took a long time to deal with it at the first time. After they made it twice, at the first meeting and the second meeting, they could make it by themselves.

Suggestions

After conducting this research, there are some suggestions for the Junior high school students, the junior high school teachers, the other researchers on the reading skill, the junior high school textbook writer and the junior high school material developers.

It is suggested to the junior high school teachers to implement various techniques in teaching English, especially reading comprehension through graphic organizer. They should also implement the current language teaching approaches. Furthermore, this study focused on improving the students reading comprehension through the graphic organizer. Other researchers could conduct their research in the use of the graphic organizer on the other skills, such as the writing and speaking skills.

The results of this study suggest the introduction of the graphic organizer on the textbook in order to improve the students' reading comprehension skill. Furthermore, the material developers of the junior high school level are suggested to consider putting the graphic organizer as a technique to improve the students' reading comprehension skill on their materials.

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