THE EFFECT OF SYNTAX SURGERY STRATEGY IN TEACHING READING A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT TOWARD STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AT SMPN 2 HARAU

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ABSTRAK

Risto Veni. 2014. The Effect of *Syntax Surgery Strategy* in Teaching Reading a Descriptive Text Toward Students' Reading Comprehension at SMPn 2 Harau. Skripsi. Program Sarjana. Universitas Negeri Padang, Sumatera Barat.

Penelitian ini adalah penelitian eksperimen yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah penggunaan *Syntax Surgery Strategy* dalam pengajaran membaca *descriptive text* memberikan dampak yang signifikan terhadap pemahaman membaca pada siswa SMPn 2 Harau dibandingkan dengan tanpa *Syntax Surgery Strategy*. Untuk menjawab pertanyaan itu, dilakukan eksperimen pada dua kelas yang mempunyai kemampuan seimbang.

Desain penelitian ini menggunakan *experimental research* yang berlangsung dalam 6 x pertemuan. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada siswa kelas VIII SMPn 2 Harau, dimana kelas VIII.2 yang berjumlah 29 siswa merupakan kelas kontrol dan kelas VIII.1 yang berjumlah 29 siswa merupakan kelas eksperimen. Selanjutnya siswa diberikan tes akhir berbentuk pilihan ganda. Hasilnya dijadikan sebagai data yang akan digunakan untuk melihat perbandingan hasil kedua kelompok.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata yang dihasilkan kelas eksperimen lebih tinggi dibandingkan kelas kontrol yaitu 79,1 : 72,5. Berdasarkan analisa statistik menggunakan rumus *Gay*, maka diperoleh nilai *t-value* (2,65) lebih besar dari nilai *t-table* (2,003). Hasil tersebut menyatakan bahwa terdapat perbedaan nilai pada kedua kelompok, secara signifikan. Jadi, dapat disimpulkan bahwa hipotesis yang menyatakan bahwa *Syntax Surgery Strategy* memberikan dampak yang signifikan terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa dibandingkan dengan tanpa *Syntax Surgery Strategy* dapat diterima.

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Risto Veni

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

To comprehend the ideas from a text is one of the purposes of reading. It is the reason and the key to get the writer's idea of the text. It is considered as important skill in reading ability. It is a crucial part in reading skill. It also makes the reader obtain the framework about the material of the text. Thus, reading without comprehension is nothing. Therefore, students are expected to have good comprehension to deal with all reading aspects and difficulties in academic context.

Moreover, comprehension in reading is also important for daily life. If the students can comprehend, they will be able to understand the content of newspaper and know how to describe their own, operate electronics' tool by reading brochure. They will also be able to comprehend what the goodness or the badness of a medicine by the direction of using that medicine. Furthermore, comprehension in reading is an important language skill that is now more demanding than in any time in our history. With the exposure of the internet in global era, students need to master comprehension in reading in order to be aware of the vast knowledge that embraces the world with.

In Junior High School, students study many types of texts. Those are procedure texts, narative texts, recount texts, descriptive texts, and report texts. A descriptive text is learned by tenth and eleventh grade students. It describes a specific person, a place, or any other object and gives information about definitions and

characteristics of something, someone, or a place to the readers. The aim of descriptive text is to give vivid details of how something or someone looks. Nevertheless, the purpose of reading descriptive text could not be reached if one's reading ability is poor.

Although reading is important for students, many students still have problems in reading comprehension. Based on the researcher's observation of second grade students of SMPN 2 Harau, 50 Kota Regency, the researcher found that the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text is still low. It can be seen from the result of descriptive daily test. This test consists of 25 questions in multiple choice form. From the scores gotten from the teacher, 50 of 102 students in second grade students of SMPN 2 Harau, scored less than minimum passing standard (KKM) stated by the school. It revealed that only 45 % of students had good comprehension in the test and the other students did the remedial test.

This fact is caused by several problems. One of the problems is the media used did not motivate students throughout the learning process. Actually, the teacher has already chosen the strategy in teaching descriptive text by using the media that was a picture. A picture is one of the kind visual media in learning process. Theoretically, visualizing is one of the great strategies to attract the students attention to focus on the learning process. As Troyka said (2009: 50) using imagery are one of the effective ways for catching the students attention in learning process. She said that visuals are pictures or images, charts and graphs. Teacher can use the visuals to support the teaching process because it is interesting for students. However, in the

field, the teacher did not inform to carry out and execute the media properly. The images were at a small scale. It clearly could not be seen from the back. It caused a detriment to the students' eyes that sat on the back row; therefore, they lose motivation in the learning process. When the teacher was asking some questions related to the text, the students still remained silent, some of them kept cheating with their friends, some of them were sleepy, while others were doing other activities. They did not show their enthusiasm throughout the learning process.

The researcher also interviewed some students about their problems in comprehending reading texts. They said that reading was boring and not interesting because they did not know how to comprehend the text included descriptive text. They also said it was difficult because they had limited vocabulary. To complete their reading, they always used a dictionary because of their incompetence. They copied the words without thinking.

In addition, they also had an opinion that the English language is not theirs, so they were too lazy to read especially to read descriptive text. They had no curiosity to know and understand more about the descriptive text because they already had this useless prejudice. Even, they did not show their eagerness or curiosity to comprehend the text even a part of it. They just sat in the class and did what the teacher asked without understanding the purpose of the learning process. They did not get the essential material in this learning process. As a result, they were not able to capture the gist or idea that the writers really mean.

Realizing the phenomena above, an appropriate reading strategy in teaching this skill should be implemented in the classroom as a teaching strategy that can give great effect on the students' success in reading text. The strategy that is used by the teacher should be appropriate with the students' comprehension level. The teacher should use attractive techniques to gain the student's motivation on the reading process. Using visuals is one of the effective strategy in attract students' attention and increase their motivation in learning process. It also should be a potentially conscious procedure to the solution of the problem when an individual is faced with reading an English text that it is not in their language.

It can assist students in changing their negative opinion about English and it can be applied when reading difficulty occurs in order to make the students wish to solve problems. To overcome the problems above, we need a type of reading strategy to help students to read easily and the process is enjoyable. The strategy has to motivate students to love reading. The strategy that will be implemented is syntax surgery strategy.

Syntax surgery strategy is a way to show learners what good readers do when interacting with the text through lifting text and providing notation during a thinkaloud. Through using codes and lifting text, students can see and hear the strategies and skills of reading as the thinking is mapped out on the text (Beers, 2003:135). It means this strategy provides something visuals to help those students comprehend more. Having students in giving a notation to the text is one of the syntax surgery strategy on visualizing the text. As theory states, "one of the good strategies to

motivate students is using visuals in learning process. So, syntax surgery strategy is one of the effective strategy to increase students' motivation. Furthemore, Herrel (2003: 132) states syntax surgery strategy is a strategy that allows students to see the relationship of elements within a sentence that may be confusing to understand. She added that this strategy is effective to overcome the students' reading problem because the students can visually see the connection between the clauses in complex sentence.

Furthemore, syntax surgery also provides self-discovery technique for students. They find by themselves the concept of the words in a sentence. It is a way to assess their understanding of a piece of the descriptive text. Based on research, it has shown that acquire better when they can see what they are trying to acquire. Having students do something physical such visualizing the text by making notations is a good way to get them involved in the process and work out their problems. They find the concept of the words by themselves. The lack of vocabulary that posses by the students can be reduce by using this strategy since syntax surgery strategy having students discover the concept of the words in the text by themselves. It makes them can't forget the concept of those words easily.

Moreover, syntax surgery strategy make the students think aloud when they read a word problem, they will better remember what is going on and will be able to keep their thoughts more organized. Thus, the use of this strategy helps them to be more confident in their use of English. The reading goes much more smoothly using this strategy and the students do not lose the meaning in the process.

Furthermore, many of varieties can be used in using syntax surgery process and as the teachers; we can choose which is appropriate with the lesson that will be taught. Considering the brief argument above, the writer believes that Syntax Surgery strategy could be effective for improving the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text.

Based on the issue above, the researcher would like to observe "The Effect of Syntax Surgery Strategy in Teaching Reading a Descriptive Text Toward Students' Reading Comprehension at SMPN 2 Harau"

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the problem above, it is shown that there are some problems in students reading due to the teacher didn't inform to carry out and execute the media properly. The teacher used a media, but that was not effective to attract students' attention. This activity process caused several problems. First, they were not motivated in the learning process, because they were not interested in it. Second, they also had limited awareness about vocabulary and did not understand the meaning of the single words. Third, they had an opinion that the English language is not theirs, so they become lazy to read, especially to read descriptive text. In syntax surgery strategy, students are helped to comprehend, by allowing them to see the relationship of elements within a sentence that may be confusing, and provides self-discovery technique for students. This strategy could be appropriate for teaching reading comprehensively to the students because this strategy is enjoyable and having students get involved in the learning process. In this study, the writer would like to

find out the effect of syntax surgery strategy in teaching reading a descriptive text towards a students' reading comprehension.

C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, there are some problems found in reading descriptive text. The writer would like to limit on the effect of syntax surgery strategy in teaching reading a descriptive text on students' reading comprehension.

D. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem above, the writer formulates the problem as follow; "Does syntax surgery strategy in teaching reading a descriptive text give a significant effect on students' reading comprehension?"

E. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to find out whether syntax surgery strategy in teaching reading a descriptive text gives a significant effect on students' reading comprehension than without using syntax surgery strategy.

F. Significance of the Problem

It is expected that this research, theoretically, will provide useful information to the reader about the use of syntax surgery strategy especially for foreign language students in improving reading ability. In addition, the result of research can be used as the reference for who want to conduct a research in teaching English. Besides, practically, this study can be used by the teachers to provide the better technique for teaching reading in junior high school.

G. Definition of Key Terms

- a. Reading: a process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning.
- b. Reading Comprehension : the process of inferring the ideas and the information that depends on the information contained and the background information available with the reader
- c. Descriptive Text: one of the genres stated in curriculum, which describes a specific person, a place, or any other object and gives information about definitions and characteristics of something, someone, or a place to the readers.
- d. Syntax Surgery Strategy: a strategy that allows students to see the relationship of elements within a sentence that may be confusing to understand.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. The Nature of Reading Comprehension

1. Reading

As a language skill, reading can be considered as crucial aspect of one's language ability because it deals with information and communication. Generally, reading is a complex process that combines receptive, active and interactive process between text and the reader. According to Quitman and Wayne (2009:5) stated that reading is not just looking a words. Reading is a complex, diverse process. Moreover, Grabe (2009:15) stated that reading is an interactive process in two ways. It means that there are interaction between the reader and the text in reading process. The reader will aware and have purposes when they read. Readers also use knowledge, skill, or strategy to conclude what the meaning is. Thus, it makes connection between ideas and then integrates these understandings with prior knowledge.

Additionally, reading is also a cognitive process. According to Richards and Bamford (2008:11) reading as a cognitive process, takes many forms. Reading is the construction of meaning from a printed or written message. In line with Richards, Graves stated that (2011:3) in the cognitive view, reading is a very much an active process in which the meaning the reader gleans from text is heavily influenced by the cognitive work that she puts into the reading process. This theory indicates that

reading involves thinking process in order to get the meaning what the writer's conveyed.

Moreover, according to Alderson and Bachman (2005:13) reading involves perceiving the written form of language, either visually or kinesthetically (using Braille). It means that the reader need to know how to get the meaning that is the essential things in the text. They can guess, perceive and get what the idea from the text. They connect what they have gotten with their schemata and then the comprehension about the text will be achieved. Instead of that, the students should have the good strategy in reading process in order to perceive the written form successful.

Lastly, we can conclude that both teachers and students need to recognize the knowledge of reading definition. It facilitates teacher to determine appropriate for teaching reading. For students, it helps students' awareness of reading process and reading strategies.

2. Reading comprehension

According to Grabe (2009: 13) reading is centrally a comprehending process. We read to understand what the writer intended to convey in reading, though we also do more. We begin to comprehend a text from the first words that are processed, although building up a general understanding of a longer text requires more processing information than immediate word recognition, sentence parsing, and propositional encoding. In line with Grabe, Anderson stated that (2008: 3) the goal of reading is comprehension. Fluent reading is defined as the ability to read at an

appropriate rate with adequate comprehension. Thus, reading nothing without comprehension in the reading process.

Graves (2011:5) stated that we can break the comprehension process into at least three parts-construction, integration, and metacognition. To construct ideas the reader first applies his knowledge of vocabulary and syntax or grammar to understand each sentence, a very similar process to that used in oral language comprehension. Then, the reader integrates text information and prior knowledge, creating his own mental model. Then, the reader has to keep an idea on the whole meaning construction process and ensure that it makes sense. Hence, think of your mind's eye, a part of your brain that observes your own cognitive functions, giving frequent thumbs-up when things are progressing well and stopping the whole process when it does not make sense.

Based on Graves (2011:9) comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. It is defined as the in which reader constructs meaning as closely and approximately as possible to the author's meaning by using cues and prior knowledge to infer the meaning. Furthermore, Richard (2011:11) says, "Building comprehension of the text is the process through which readers construct their own understanding of the meaning of the text. Students can become conscious of their use of such strategies and can learn to use those strategies more effectively".

B. Descriptive Texts

One of the genres, which are learnt in Junior High School, is a descriptive text. Descriptive texts consist of social function or purpose, generic structure and language features. First, a social function of a descriptive text must be identified. According to Depdiknas (2004: 22) the purpose of descriptive text is to give information. The contextual factor of this kind of text is to describe the specific thing, animal or human. Similarly, Rohim (2005:25) says that the social function of descriptive text is to describe a particular person, place, or thing.

Second, descriptive text consists of generic features. According to Gerot and Wignell (1994: 55) there are two basic parts of generic structure of descriptive text. They are identification and description. Identification is a part which function is to identify phenomenon to be described, while description describes parts, qualities, and characteristics.

Third, descriptive text consists of language features. It is usually focuses on specific participant, using linking verbs since it describes or explain an object; and using simple present tense because everything describe must be true

In conclusion, a descriptive text is a kind of text that describes characteristics of detailed things, detailed place and other detailed object. Generic structure of descriptive text are identification and description, while its language features usually focuses on specific participant, using linking verbs since it describes an object; and using simple present tense because everything described must be true. Relating to this research, syntax surgery technique is the appropriate technique that

can be used in teaching reading of descriptive text, because descriptive text is close to the visual aspect.

C. The Views of Teaching Reading

Strategy is the most effective when it is explicitly taught and successfully integrated into the materials. Anderson (2008:29) said that explicitly teach reading strategies that is called strategy instruction is extremely important for readers, especially those at the beginning level of language proficiency. Furthermore, Graves (2011:342) stated that good strategy instruction is neither rigid nor teacher centered. Rather it is flexible, interactive, and constructivist. He also said that instruction is the procedure and practices teacher use to help students acquired new knowledge, skills, and attitude. To do so, teachers explain concepts and skills show student how to use them, provide assistance as students try out new tasks, and provide many opportunities to practice.

In addition, Noonan (2003:15) states that teaching reading usually has at least two aspects: first, it can refer to teaching students who are learning to read for the first time. Then, aspect of teaching reading refers to teaching students who already have reading skills in their first language. In addition, Harmer (2007:37) explains that there are several principles of teaching reading: (a) allow students to read, (b) Encourage the students to respond the content of reading text, (c) predict is a major factor in reading, (d) match the task to the topic.

According to Anderson (2008: 10) the purpose of teaching reading strategies is to improve comprehension while reading. Strategies are the conscious action that readers take to improve their reading skills. Troyka and Thweat (2009:50) argue that using the visuals that accompany a reading selection is another method to support you in determining the author's message and to further your understanding of the material. Therefore, images are visual representations provided by the authors to enhance the message they want their material to deliver.

According to Anderson (2008:25) there are several principles for teaching reading to beginning learners. They are: (1) Select appropriate reading materials, (2) Balance bottom-up, top down, and interactive reading instruction, (3) Explicitly teach reading strategies, (4) Focus attention on vocabulary development skills, (5) Provide both intensive and extensive reading instruction. In short, we have to concern of these principles because it guides us in the teaching of reading.

D. Teaching Reading by Using Syntax Surgery Strategy

1. Syntax Surgery Strategy

The terminology of syntax surgery comes from syntax and surgery words. "Syntax is the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages. Syntactic investigation of a given language has as its goal the construction of a grammar that can be viewed as a device of some sort for producing the sentences of the language under analysis." (Chomsky, 2002:11).

According to Vallin and LaPolla (1997:1) 'the term 'syntax' is from the Ancient Greek *syntaxis*, a verbal noun which literally means "arrangement" or "setting out together". Traditionally, it refers to the branch of grammar dealing with the ways in which words, with or without appropriate inflections, are arranged to show connections of meaning within the sentence".

"Syntax is the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages. Syntactic investigation of a given language has as its goal the construction of a grammar that can be viewed as a device of some sort for producing the sentences of the language under analysis." (Chomsky, 2002:11)

Based on The Cambridge Dictionary, surgery is the treatment of injuries or diseases in people or animals by cutting open the body and removing or repairing the damaged part. Based on Beers, Syntax surgery (2003:18) is a literacy support tool that helps students understand sections of confusing text. Based on Beers idea, syntax surgery helps students to comprehend the text that involve the incorrect words arrangement, phrase, clause, and sentence.

According to Herrel (1998:279) syntax surgery is a strategy that allows students to see the relationship of elements within a sentence that may be confusing to understand. Because English syntax often differs from the word order found in students own language, English learner sometimes found difficulty in comprehending sentences they read or confuse word order in reading.

Using syntax surgery makes lesson more interesting, less boring for students.

Baltra, 1998 in Pearson says, "Creating a visual to illustrate parts of a sentence allows

English learners to see the connections". Participating in the creation of the visual gives students' opportunities to clarify meaning as well. This means syntax surgery is a strategy that can be used to help students understand what intended in the text by visualizing

According to Beers (2003:1) The main goal of using "Syntax Surgery" is to allow students the opportunity to examine a text closely and critically. This strategy provides the opportunity for the students to see the connection of elements in a sentence that may be confusing to understand. Syntax surgery involves reading a sentence on a sentence strip and then cutting the sentence apart to rearrange it into more understandable pieces. This strategy makes English syntax more visible to the students.

2. Teaching Procedures of Syntax Surgery

There are five steps in implementing syntax surgery strategy based on Herrel (2012; 132). They are as follows:

- (1) Identify a problematic sentence. First, the researcher has to recognize a sentence that makes confused. It may be a complex sentence found in reading that confusing. It may be a sentence that has unfamiliar words that students' need to look for its meaning in the dictionary.
- (2) Write the sentence and initiate "the surgery". Second, the researcher has to write the sentence on the sentence strip and reread the sentence aloud with the student or students involved in the reading activity. For example, if the sentence that was written by the students says, "she was wearing a sweater green," take a pair of

scissors and cut the sentence apart in the place or places of difficulty. "She was wearing a sweater green" would be cut before the words *sweater* and *green*.

- (3) Rearrange the words. Rearrange the words in the pocket chart or on the chalk rail in the correct English sequence. Place "She was wearing a sweater green" on the chart and say, "This is the way we say in English," reading the sentence with the correct English word order. Reaffirm the students' knowledge of the home language by rebuilding the sentence in the original order and say, "This would be the right order of the words in Bahasa Indonesia but we say in this way in English," and put the words back into the correct order for English.
- (4) Practice more sentences with the same pattern. Write a few sentences with the same word pattern on sentence strips, and have the students read them along with you for additional practice.
- (5) Time the lesson. Be careful not to use this lesson in a way that interrupts communication with the student. If the message the student was conveying was clear, respond to it modeling the correct English sentence. Write the student's sentence down and return a later time to use the syntax surgery strategy to support the refinement of the student's English. Be observant of other student who might benefit from the explanation and use the opportunity to give instruction to several students at a time.

In addition, this is the implementation detail of syntax surgery on teaching descriptive text by using notation; (1) Before the reading lesson, teachers examined the text to be taught closely to identify the skills or elements of the text that need to

be emphasised and decided on what reading skills and strategies students could develop through the text, (2)During the reading lesson, teachers guided students to interact with the text through lifting text and think-aloud, (3) The teachers go over rules for syntax surgery; squiggles under subjects, underline all verbs, and box the adjective words, (4) The teachers put copy of 1st paragraph of the text in front of class, (5) The teachers go through paragraph with class, one instruction at a time (guided modeling), (6) The teachers isolate each aspects and focus just on verbs/subjects, (7) The teachers have students take out their copy of descriptive text and do syntax surgery to another paragraph, (8) The teachers ask for volunteers to share the words they circled/boxed to show, (9) The teachers provide opportunities for students to do syntax surgery with a gradual reduction of support from the teacher

E. Review of Previous Studies

There were some relevant studies concerning syntax surgery strategy and descriptive text. One of them was a study by Ria Adrian (2012). *Using the Syntax Surgery Strategy in Teaching Reading a Narrative Text to Junior High School Students*. The main aim of this study is to describe about the application of syntax surgery strategy in order to solve reading problems that face on junior high school students.

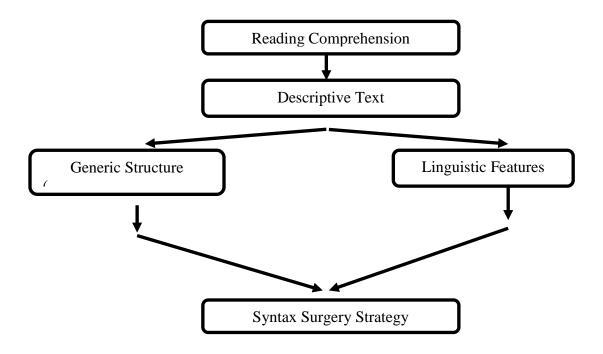
The study about syntax surgery strategy was also conducted by Salazar (2010) at Middle school at one class period. The activities are designed to guide students in

comprehending past verb in simple past tense. She did the research to the students of Albemarie County Public School. The result of the research revealed that students' reading comprehension increased by getting them involved.

Related to those studies, the researcher is interested to do the experimental research. However, it is different from previous researcher, this study has a purpose to see the effect of syntax surgery strategy in teaching a descriptive text toward students' reading comprehension.

F. Conceptual Framework

This research will look at the effect of using syntax surgery strategy in teaching descriptive text toward students' reading comprehension, the concept of this research is shown on the conceptual framework as follow:



Reading comprehension is an important skill to be able to comprehend all genres of texts, including a descriptive text. Like other types of texts, the descriptive text also has its own generic structure and linguistic features. Both of them can be taught thoroughly by using syntax surgery strategy. It was believed that this strategy can improve students' reading comprehension.

G. Hypothesis

This research can be hypothesized, as follows: the students who are taught by syntax surgery strategy have better reading comprehension of descriptive text comprehension than without syntax surgery strategy at the second year junior high school student.

- H₀: There is no significant effect of using syntax surgery strategy in teaching reading a descriptive text to the second grade of SMPN 2 Harau, 50 Kota Regency students.
- $H_{1:}$ There is a significant effect of using syntax surgery strategy in teaching reading a descriptive text to the second grade of SMPN 2 Harau, 50 Kota Regency students.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Based on the research findings that have been discussed in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that:

- 1. The mean of reading score of the students who were given syntax surgery strategy treatment was higher than those who were not giving the treatment of syntax surgery strategy by the researcher. By using statistical analysis, it was found that there was a significant difference in reading achievement between those two groups. Thus, it can be said that that the students who are taught by syntax surgery strategy have better reading comprehension of descriptive text comprehension than those who are applying conventional strategy.
- 2. The students who were given syntax surgery treatment in whilst-teaching got motivated and interested more than those who were not get those treatment. Thus, it attracted their interest, motivation, and enthusiasm to get involved in learning process. Furthermore, it avoided the students' boredom to study.

B. Suggestion

Based on the research findings, discussions, and limitation of the research, the researcher gives numbers of suggestions:

For the next researchers, it is expected to have more meetings to apply syntax surgery strategy in order to get the data and to see the improvement of students' achievement maximally. Furthermore, try to apply syntax surgery strategy not only for teaching descriptive text, but also for teaching other kinds of text. To get maximal research finding, try to do research at the beginning of school learning process. Thus, the research will be optimal and the students' not lack of interest and motivation because of reviewing the lesson. Besides, try to run the learning process based on syllabus so that the result of research will optimally be achieved.

For the teacher or the researcher, it is suggested to communicate the new strategy clearly to the students in order to create effective teaching and learning process. Besides, motivate them to participate in learning process actively to get effective result, and manage the class by having well preparation before teaching.

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