IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH SEMANTIC MAPPING TECHNIQUE AT THE THIRD YEAR OF SCIENCE PROGRAM I OF SMA NEGERI 12 PADANG

THESIS

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This Thesis is Submitted to Fulfill the Requirement of Master's Degree in Education

English Education Section
Language Education Program
Graduate Program
State University of Padang
2009

ABSTRAK

Sri Hirawati. 2009. Meningkatkan Pemahaman Membaca Siswa melalui Teknik Semantic Mapping di Kelas 3 IPA$_1$ SMA Negeri 12 Padang.

Penelitian ini dilaksanakan untuk mengatasi permasalahan siswa dalam pemahaman membaca teks bahasa Inggris. Siswa umumnya kurang bisa menggali latar belakang ilmunya mengenai topik yang akan dibahas di dalam teks. Keadaan ini membuat mereka belum mampu mendapatkan informasi dan menambah ilmu dari teks yang dibaca. Suatu penelitian untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa sangat diperlukan agar tercapainya tujuan pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang dinyatakan didalam kurikulum. Melalui penelitian tindakan kelas ini, *peneliti* bisa mengetahui apakah teknik *semantic mapping* dapat memperbaiki pemahaman membaca teks bahasa Inggris siswa di kelas III IPA$_1$ SMAN 12 Padang atau tidak dan faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan peningkatan tersebut. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus, setiap siklus terdiri dari empat kali pertemuan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terjadi peningkatan pada nilai rata-rata siswa mulai dari tes sebelum tindakan ke tes siklus 1, tes siklus 1 ke siklus 2 dan nilai rata-rata siswa pada setiap indikator membaca seperti menentukan topik, ide utama, informasi yang rinci dan rujukan kata (referensi). Tetapi kenaikan pada siklus 1 belum mencapai kriteria kelulusan minimum (KKM), dan juga belum ditunjang dengan perkembangan yang lebih baik selama proses pembelajaran. Untuk itu, peneliti perlu melanjutkan ke siklus dua. Selama pelaksanaan siklus dua tersebut, terjadi perkembangan yang diharapkan dalam proses pembelajaran dan tingkat pemahaman membaca siswa. Nilai rata-rata siswa melebihi KKM 65, yaitu menjadi 70,97. Ini berarti kenaikan nilai rata-rata siswa 10,42 dari siklus satu 60,55. Maka penelitian dapat diakhiri pada siklus dua. Berdasarkan hasil atau temuan penelitian penggunaan teknik semantic mapping pada pengajaran reading dapat meningkatkan pemahaman membaca teks bahasa Inggris siswa. Faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan peningkatan adalah pertama, prosedur dari teknik semantic mapping itu sendiri mampu mempersiapkan siswa dari menggali latar belakang ilmu berkaitan dengan topik yang dibahas sampai mereka bisa memperoleh informasi dari teks yang dibaca. Selain itu siswa telah mengetahui bagaimana cara memberdayakan potensi mereka dalam proses pembelajaran. Terakhir, peranan guru dalam mempengaruhi atau mengundang perhatian dan motivasi siswa juga mendukung perkembangan tersebut.

ABSTRACT

Sri Hirawati. 2009. Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Semantic Mapping Technique at the Third Year of Science Program of SMA Negeri 12 Padang.

This research was conducted to solve students' reading comprehension problem on English text. In general, students could not activate their background knowledge about the topic that would be discussed on the text. Therefore, students could not get information and add their knowledge from the text read. A research to improve students' reading comprehension was needed to reach purpose of teaching English as stated in curriculum. Through this action research, *the researcher* could find out whether *the semantic mapping* technique could better improve the students' reading comprehension at the third year of science program 1 of SMAN 12 Padang or not and factors which caused the improvement. The research was conducted in two cycles; each cycle consisted of four meetings. The result showed there were improvements in mean scores of the students test before doing action to test in cycle 1, test cycle 1 to cycle 2, and mean scores of each reading comprehension indicators such as finding topic, main idea, detail information and reference. Although there were improvements on cycle 1, but the minimum passing grade (KKM) has not been fulfilled, and students' activities on learning process were also not better yet. For the reasons, the researcher had to continue the research to the second cycle. While doing the second cycle, there were expected improvements on the process of learning and the students' reading comprehension achievement. The students average score was up to KKM 65, it become 70,97. The improvement was about 10,42 from cycle one 60,55. So, the research could be ended at the second cycle. Based on the research findings, using semantic mapping technique in teaching reading could better improve the students' reading comprehension. While the factors caused the improvements were firstly, the procedure of semantic mapping gave the chance to the students to prepare their readiness from activating background knowledge about the topic till they could get information from the text read. Moreover, the students knew how they could make use their potential on learning process. The last, the teacher's role on encouraging students' attention and motivation also supported the improvement.

SURAT PERNYATAAN

Dengan ini saya menyatakan :

1. Karya tulis saya, thesis dengan judul "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Semantic Mapping Technique at the Third Year of Science Program I of SMA Negeri 12 Padang" adalah asli dan belum pernah diajukan untuk mendapatkan gelar akademik baik di Universitas Negeri Padang maupun di perguruan tinggi lainnya.

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Padang, 14 Juni 2009
Saya yang menyatakan,

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the researcher would like to show her praises to Allah, the most merciful and gracious god who has given her lots of grants and knowledge so that she could finish her thesis.

During the research and the writing process of this thesis, the researcher got much helps and supports from many people. In this occasion, the researcher would like to say thanks deeply to:

1. Prof. Dr. H. Mukhaiyar, M.Pd and Dr. Jufrizal, M. Hum as advisors for valuable inputs, guidance, supports and time so that the researcher could finish her thesis. Besides, the researcher also would like to express her sincere gratitude to Prof. Drs. H. Zainil, M.A, Ph.D, Prof. Dr. Gusnil, M.Pd, and Rusdi, M.A, Ph.D as her contributors for their valuable inputs and advice.

2. All language education program lecturers who have shared their wealth of knowledge and experience.

3. The department of Education and Culture of West Sumatera for providing scholarship during the study at graduate program.

4. The headmaster of SMA Negeri 12 Padang, Drs. Prima Yunaldi and all teachers for their supports and understanding.

5. All the administration staffs of graduate program, the librarians, and to all her classmates in class G/2006, English Department who shared knowledge, experience and opinion when they were studying together in this institution.

6. My beloved parents, Harun All Rasyid (Alm) and Yulinar Said for their sincere prayers, supports and life principles.

7. My beloved husband, Firmansyah, SE and daughters, Friska Meidyana Firmansyah and Frisdena Agustin Firmansyah, for their supports, prayer and love that always motivates the researcher.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLE

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

One can gather various information and enlarge his knowledge by reading, especially reading the English materials. It is because most of information and knowledge source are written in English, for example many printed materials like books, newspapers, magazines, brochures and etc. The improvement in electronic media likes internet also use English in its program. Moreover, many experts and scientists from all over the world write various science and technology in English too. Many research findings are also published in English. All the materials above are not difficult to find nowadays. Therefore, one who has reading skill in English is luckier than one who does not. Wherever he goes, he can access the source of information as much as possible.

In learning English, reading is one of the four skills that has to be mastered by the learners. Based on the standard competency of English curriculum 2004 and school based curriculum 2006 for Senior High School, the students are expected to be able to do oral and written communication by using variation in language based on context fluently and accurately through monologue and interaction communication. Dealing with the written English communication, students should have reading skill because they are hoped to be able to comprehend many kinds of text or genre. Beside that, reading skill is a tool for

them to continue their study to university where some of source books are written in English.

Although reading plays an important role for students' success in education and daily life, the students still get difficulties in comprehending English text. Based on the researcher's observation and experience in teaching English at SMAN 12 Padang, the aims of the standard competency in both curriculum stated above were not fulfilled yet.

In the learning process, many students had difficulties in comprehending English texts, especially for the third year students of SMAN 12 Padang. Even though they have learned English for around five years, they could not comprehend English texts well. Students still got difficulties in finding the topic what mainly discussed about, main idea, detail information and reference. It was because students could not activate their background knowledge to the topic discussed to dig the new ones from the text. So they had lack of vocabulary and tended to find out the meaning of word by word from dictionary and translated them into Indonesia while reading the text. This situation made them bored in reading and passive in teaching learning process. Moreover, students also had lack of grammar, as example, most of them could not differentiate whether the meaning of sentence in active form or passive one, whether the event is in the past or at present and etc. The facts of students' failure of reading comprehension could be see from the result of students' reading comprehension test before doing the action. The students' average score was only 53,05 (fifty three point ziro five). It means the score was far from the minimum passing grade (KKM = 65). From

36 (thirty six) of students were only 22% (twenty two percent) of students could pass KKM and others were fail.

The teacher's role in teaching reading also influenced students' reading comprehension. In teaching reading, the teacher tended to use conventional technique by explaining some difficult words related to the text. Then, students were asked to read the text and answered some question. This teaching learning process was only as the teacher's center, it did not involve students' thinking process. The students were not motivated to predict what the information in the text would be. They also did not get opportunity to think what they had known about the topic. Consequently they students were not ready enough come to the text and comprehended it well.

Therefore, the researcher wants to solve the problems found in teaching learning process, especially in teaching reading. Students get difficulties in reading comprehension, because they are lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar and not interest in reading English text. As the result, they can not comprehend and catch the idea of the text since they do not activate prior knowledge and relate them to new knowledge information from the text read. Furthermore, the teacher has not found the appropriate strategy to use in the classroom. It makes students are not active in teaching learning process. Dealing with the problems described above, in this research the researcher overcame the problems by using a semantic mapping technique.

The technique was chosen based on its characteristics that assumed to be able to solve the problems. The characteristics are: semantic mapping invites

students' interest to read because it is begun by introducing the topic, so it makes students really want to know the detail from the topic discussed by reading it. Next, semantic mapping activates students' prior knowledge and vocabularies by the step of brainstorming, so it gives chance for students to be active in finding related ideas to the topic by categorizing them. Moreover, semantic mapping enlarges students' knowledge and understanding about the text by personalizing new map and comparing with the old one. Finally, semantic mapping is complete as the students' centered in teaching learning process by giving post assignment synthesis. Here, teacher leads the discussion about the last shape of the map acquired from the reading text discussed. The students' understanding about the text read can be seen on how deep they can shape the map and answer the questions based on the text. Based on the description above, it is clear enough that semantic mapping technique has an important role on guiding students' comprehension from building background knowledge to the topic discussed till catching ideas from the text read .

Even though semantic mapping is not a new technique in teaching reading; it is new for the students where the researcher did this research. In the past, the researcher had used various techniques in teaching reading to make use students' prior knowledge. One of the techniques is brainstorming, but the result of students' reading comprehension was not satisfied yet. It was because in brainstorming the students only expressed their ideas related to the topic without categorizing them, so they could not see the relationships among their suggestions. At last, the students could not compare the previous ideas to the new

ones come from the text discussed. Beside that, the technique was only as one of the five procedures of the semantic mapping technique. For those reasons, the researcher hoped that students' problems in reading comprehension could be solved by using the semantic mapping technique. So, they could absorb the message and idea given by the writer through printed text.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the researchers' experience in teaching English at Senior High School 12 Padang, there were some problems faced by the students in reading English text. First, the problems came from the students themselves. They found difficulties in reading comprehension, because they had limited vocabulary and grammar, they could not catch the idea and had no interest in reading the text. Therefore, the teaching learning process, they were not active because they could not activate prior knowledge and related them to the new knowledge from the text. They also could not do assignment individually.

Second, the problem came from the teacher's role in teaching learning process, especially in teaching reading. The teacher was monotonous in her teaching technique of reading. She tended to explain some difficult words .from the text, and then asked students to read the text and answered some questions. Students were not provided adequate time to express their idea about the text discussed.

In order to overcome the students' problems in reading comprehension, the researcher used semantic mapping as the technique for teaching reading in her

classroom where the research was conducted. The process of the technique was pure to emphasize the students' center.

C. Limitation of the Problem

As explained before, the researcher wanted to overcome her students' problems on reading comprehension. The students got difficulties in comprehending the English text. Related to the identification of the problem above, this research was focused on improving students' reading comprehension by using semantic mapping technique in order to overcome their the problems.

D. Formulation of the Problem

The third year students of the science program 1 of SMAN 12 Padang have been taught reading through various methods, technique and media for about five years. In fact, they still got difficulties in comprehending the English text; it was because they had limited vocabulary, structure and they also could not construct their prior knowledge and related them to the new ones from the text discussed. In order to solve the students' problems in reading comprehension, the researcher used semantic mapping as the technique in teaching reading. By doing this research, the researcher knew the effectiveness of using semantic mapping technique in improving students' reading comprehension. So, the problems of this research formulated as follows: 1) "To what extent can semantic mapping technique improve students' reading comprehension at the third year of science

program of SMAN 12 Padang?, 2) What factors cause the improvement of students' reading comprehension through semantic mapping technique?

E. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to explain whether or not teaching reading by using a semantic mapping technique can improve students' reading comprehension at the third years of the science program of SMAN 12 Padang and to find out the factors that cause the improvement of students' reading comprehension through a semantic mapping technique.

F. Significance of the Research

The result of this research is useful for English teachers and students in general and specially English teachers and students of SMAN 12 Padang in assessing students' reading comprehension. Next, it is hoped that this research help students to improve their ability in reading comprehension and make them to be active by using semantic mapping technique in reading class activity.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the key terms used in this in this research were defined as follows:

1. Reading Comprehension is the ability of students to comprehend written text gaining the components of reading.

2. Semantic Mapping Technique is one of the techniques on teaching reading to make use students' background knowledge in comprehending the text discussed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusions

After conducting classroom action research on improving students' reading comprehension of English texts through semantic mapping technique at the third year of science program 1 of SMAN 12 Padang, it can be concluded that by using semantic mapping technique in teaching reading improves students' reading comprehension. The conclusion of this research is based on the analyzing of the data collected. The findings answer the formulation of the problems as stated in the first chapter.

Furthermore, the improvement of students' reading comprehension can be seen from the result of students' reading comprehension test held before the action and at the end of each cycle. The mean score of students' reading comprehension test increases on each indicator of reading comprehension, namely topic, main idea, detail information and reference. The students' motivation on reading English texts also improved after the application of semantic mapping technique.

The factors that can cause the improvement of students' reading comprehension of the English text through semantic mapping technique are:

1. Students' good understanding on teacher's explanation about the role of semantic mapping technique in the reading teaching learning process. Help them to follow it well.

2. The effective uses of semantic mapping technique in teaching reading help students from building background knowledge till understanding the text read.

3. The texts are familiar with students, so the students can activate their background knowledge better on brainstorming steps of the semantic mapping procedures that are as base on comprehending the text that will be read.

4. Teacher's treatment towards students. Teacher spreads her attention to all students and treats them friendly. This situation makes students not to be afraid of sharing ideas and it is very useful to help the low ability students.

B. Implications

The use of semantic mapping as one of alternative technique in teaching reading to improve students' reading comprehension on English texts has implications as follow :

1. Students are helped on focusing their ideas on the topics discussed, so they know what they have to activate their background knowledge as a base to get the new ones from the text will be read furthermore, it leads students to have a bundle of vocabularies.

2. Students have a brief description about the text from semantic mapping which can help them to understand the text and find the reading indicators easily.

3. Students become more active and more creative on sharing ideas and giving responses while teaching learning process.

4. Students are provided opportunities to interact with teacher directly, because the teacher guides them on exploring their learning capacities through each procedure of semantic mapping technique in teaching reading.

C. Suggestions

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher suggests to other English teachers who want to improve their teaching quality and in order to solve students' reading comprehension problem to use semantic mapping technique in teaching reading. It is because semantic mapping technique has not only one purpose but it provides series guidance from pre-reading to post- reading activity on assisting students' reading comprehension to the texts read.

The English teachers should follow the procedure of semantic mapping technique in teaching reading to support good process of learning and improve students' comprehension on reading English texts. The procedure of the technique is begun from preparing students' readiness to read the texts until they are able to search new information and understand them.

Furthermore, the English teachers should pay serious attention to students' majoring in selecting reading materials. It helps students on activating their background knowledge. In addition, it also motivates students to read the texts and do the tasks as well as possible. In other words, the suitable reading materials are important to make the teaching learning process of reading runs well.

At last, the English teachers should be familiar with students. Sometimes, sense of humor in teaching learning process is needed to support better classroom

atmosphere. Therefore, the teachers should treat students as if their friends to make the students easy to communicate and to share their ideas. The teachers have to do humanistic efforts on the way to encourage students to be more active, because the semantic mapping technique belongs to the students-centered process.

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