

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION OF
DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS THROUGH COGNITIVE STRATEGY
AT GRADE VII-2 OF SMPN 1 INDRA PRAJA TEMBILAHAN**

THESIS



BY

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ABSTRAK

Fauzul Etfiti, 2013. Meningkatkan Pemahaman Siswa dalam Membaca Descriptive Teks dengan Menggunakan strategi kognitif pada siswa kelas VII-2 SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan. Tesis. Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Program Pendidikan Bahasa, Program Pasca Sarjana, Universitas Negeri Padang.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan seberapa jauh strategi kognitif dapat meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa dan faktor-faktor apa saja yang mempengaruhi perubahan kemampuan membaca siswa melalui penerapan strategi kognitif

Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas. Penelitian ini terdiri dari dua siklus dan empat pertemuan pada setiap siklusnya; dimana tiga pertemuan untuk proses belajar mengajar pemahaman membaca teks deskriptif dan satu pertemuan lagi untuk tes. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan mulai tanggal 30 April 2013 hingga 30 Mei 2013. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah tes membaca teks deskriptif, lembar pengamatan, catatan lapangan, dan wawancara yang dibantu oleh seorang teman sejawat.

Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penerapan *cognitive strategy* dapat meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman membaca teks deskriptif siswa kelas VII-2 SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan. Peningkatan ini dibuktikan dengan meningkatnya nilai rata-rata siswa dari siklus 1 dan ke 2. Nilai rata-rata siswa pada siklus pertama adalah 70,72 dan pada siklus ke dua adalah 78,10. Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi perubahan pemahaman membaca siswa selama penerapan strategi kognitif yaitu bahan bacaan yang diberikan kepada siswa, motivasi siswa, dan pendekatan guru terhadap siswa. Sebagai kesimpulan, penelitian tindakan kelas dengan menggunakan strategi kognitif bisa meningkatkan kemampuan membaca teks deskriptif siswa kelas VII-2 SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan.

ABSTRACT

Fauzul Etfita, 2013. Improving Students' Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Texts Through Cognitive Strategy at Grade VII-2 of SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan. Thesis. English Educational Program. Language Education Program. Graduate Program. State University of Padang.





This research aimed to explain the extent to which cognitive strategy can improve the students' reading comprehension and what factors that influence the changes of the students' reading ability by implementing cognitive strategy

This research was a classroom action research. It consisted of two cycles and four meetings of each cycle. Three meetings for teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text by using cognitive strategy and another meeting for reading comprehension of descriptive text test. The research was conducted from April, 30 2013 up to May, 30 2013. The instrument used to collect the data were reading comprehension of descriptive text test, observation sheets, field notes, and interview which were helped by a collaborator.




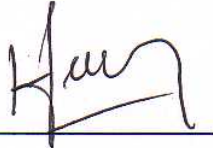

The finding reveals that the implementation of cognitive strategy can better improve students' reading comprehension of descriptive text at grade VII-2 of SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan. The improvement confirms by the increasing average students' score from cycle I to cycle II. The average score of students in cycle I is 70,72 and in cycle II is 78,10. The factors that influence the students' reading comprehension during the application of cognitive strategy are the materials, the students' motivation, and the teacher's role to students. Finally, the classroom action research by using cognitive strategy can improve the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text at grade VII-2 SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

Reading is one of the English language skills that have to be mastered by all of the students. Having good reading English skill is very important for the students. It can help the students to enlarge their knowledge because they can get a lot of information through reading. In reading the texts, the students also have the opportunity to study language components; vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and etc. Then, the students can also improve their language skills through reading because they can practice their speaking, writing and listening besides reading. In this case, the students are supposed to have reading skill because it is a crucial skill that needs to be mastered.

Reading skill is also very important in learning English as a foreign language in order to get information from the English materials. The aim of reading is to be able to read English text effectively and efficiently. The students do not only have to understand the structure of the text explicitly but more important they must comprehend the meaning implicitly. Then, reading does not only improve their reading ability but also by having reading activity they can increase their knowledge, because if we read more we get much.

Consequently, because of reading skill is also very important in learning English as a foreign language, the government through the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) gives obligation to the students to develop their reading skill and also to comprehend types of texts based on their grades. The purpose of teaching reading at the high School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) is making the students able to respond the meaning and

structural text in the functional text and short essay. There are eleven texts should be taught in high school, they are Narrative text, Procedural text, Recount text, Descriptive text, Explanatory text, Report text, Hortatory Exposition, Analytical Exposition, Discussion, Anecdote and News item. However, there are only 5 texts which are taught in junior high school; Narrative text, Procedural text, Recount text, Descriptive text, and Report text.

Specifically, the aim of teaching reading at seventh grade of junior high school is making the students able to respond the meaning and structural text in the functional text and simple short essay in the form of descriptive and procedural text to interact with surrounding. However, the aim of teaching reading itself is not always achieved well since there are some problems are appeared in teaching learning process in SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan. Where, for many students, reading English as a foreign language is not an easy task. It happened during teaching reading at SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan for the VII-2 grade. Most of the students have difficulty in constructing meaning from descriptive texts. Based on the result of reading comprehension test, it was found that 6 students could not answer the reading comprehension well, they got mark 45. There were only 3 students got marks 60, and 1 student got 65. Then, only 5 students who could answer more than half, they got mark 75. Finally, only 7 students reached the minimum standard of achievement, 4 of them got mark 80, 1 student got 85 and 2 students got 95. While the minimum standard achievement at grade VII is 75. From the explanation above, it could be seen that students are various in the abilities. Some of them learn successfully, and then others are unsuccessful learners.

In fact, there are some problems that made students difficult in comprehending reading text. The problems were identified by the teacher when she interviewed the students. The first problem that influenced the students' ability in comprehending reading texts is because they feel reading was boring and uninteresting activity since they did not know how to comprehend the text. Sometimes, the words in the text were difficult to comprehend. Their limited vocabulary was one of the reasons that made them difficult to comprehend the text. They were accustomed to look up their dictionary while reading process. When the students read the text, they used to much of their processing capacity or read individual word rather than interfered their comprehension.

The second problem was the teaching and learning process that the students had in the class did not help them to comprehend reading text well. It happened because the students have low motivation to read, some of the students have little background knowledge so that they cannot connect the idea of the text well, and the students usually stop their reading if they found difficulties. Limited media use also influenced their motivation, because they get bored if the teacher did not use any kind of media.

The third problem is when the teacher asked them about what they have read. They cannot recall the information from the text. They become passive learners. Even the teacher asks them to do in group, only few students can stay focused on the text while others only chat with their friends. It was happened because many of students tended to read the text by looking up the meaning of word per word without connecting one idea to another idea written in the text. As the result, they did not get the point and conclusion of the text. From this problem, the teacher concluded that the students still need their teacher's participation in teaching learning process. The teacher has to pay attention to each of their activities while teaching learning process.

Besides that, the teacher also found that the students lazy when they were asked to read. The students kept on their mind that reading English was difficult and boring activity. This happened because they did not know how to read and the teacher did not use ineffective teaching strategy. Teacher's strategy in teaching reading made students bored and difficult to get the point of the text. A common way of teaching reading used by the teacher like asking students to read aloud, finding difficult words, and answering question related to the text, did not really help students comprehend the text. When I asked some of my students about their reading activity at home, whether they read at home or not, many of them said they were lazy to read English text at home because reading was not interesting and they difficult to understand the text, especially reading descriptive text. They needed a new way of teaching which helped them more enjoy and understand the text. As a good teacher should not only ask students to read but also teach how to read and comprehend the text. It means the teacher should introduce an effective reading strategy that can be used by the students inside and outside classroom or independently and help them comprehend what they read.

After analyzing the phenomena, the techniques and method that English teacher used at SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan in teaching reading were not effective. A new strategy should be implemented in teaching reading descriptive text. In this research, the researcher interested in using Cognitive Strategy in teaching descriptive text to help the students comprehend descriptive text because this strategy is one of tools to help students to get deeper understanding about the text. Such strategies are varied lot, ranging from repeating to summarizing. With all their variety, cognitive strategy is unified by a common function. According to Oxford (1990:36), Cognitive Strategy such as summarizing or reasoning deductively, enables learners to understand and

produce new language by many different mean. Dealing with the effort of improving students' reading interest and participation, the teacher should be able to find new strategies or activities in teaching learning reading. One of alternatives, which could be used to overcome the problem above, the researcher interested in applying Cognitive Strategy.

Oxford also added four sets of cognitive strategies exist: practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure and input. The first letters of each of these strategy sets combine to form PRAC, because Cognitive strategy is Practical for language learning. So, through this strategy the students taught how to organize the information in the text. They were taught how to find the mind idea and supporting information and then they wrote it in the chart. Besides that, they also were asked to highlighting the important part of the text. It helped them memorize the ideas.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the problem, it can be identified that there are many problems that students faced during teaching and learning process in reading comprehension which make the students unable to comprehend the text.

The first problem that influenced the students' ability in comprehending reading texts is they feel reading was boring and uninteresting since they did not know how to comprehend the text. Sometimes, the words in the text were difficult to comprehend. Their limited vocabulary was one of the reasons that made them difficult to comprehend the text.

The second problem was the teaching and learning process that the students had in the class did not help them to comprehend reading text well. It happened because the students have low motivation to read and limited media use also influenced their motivation, because they get bored if the teacher did not use any kind of media.

The third problem is when the teacher asked them about what they have read. They cannot recall the information from the text. They become passive learners. It happened because many of students tended to read the text by looking up the meaning of word per word without connecting one idea to another idea written in the text.

Fourth problem is the boring teaching activities were the other factors that influence their comprehension of the text. The teacher used common way in teaching reading which only asked students to read the text then answer the questions so that they felt bored and were not interested in reading

C. Focus of the Research

As it is described in the background of the problem and the identification of the problem above, the writer considered that the main problem that students faced in reading is the strategy. It could not help the students to have good reading comprehension. So the writer helped the students to improve their reading comprehension through Cognitive Strategy. The writer focused on the application of Cognitive strategy at the first year students of SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan in comprehending descriptive text.

D. Research Questions

The question of this research can be formulated as :

1. To what extent can Cognitive Strategy improve students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts at grade VII-2 students of SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan?
2. What are the factors that influence the improvements of students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts through Cognitive Strategy at grade VII-2 students of SMPN 1 Indra Praja 1 Tembilahan?

E. Purpose of the Research

The purposes of this research are as follows:

1. To find out whether Cognitive Strategy can improve students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts at grade VII-2 students of SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan.
2. To find out the factors that influence the changes of students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts when the researcher applied Cognitive Strategy at grade VII-2 students of SMPN 1 Indra Praja Tembilahan.

F. Significance of the Research

In conducting this classroom action research, the researcher expected that this research aims was to give valuable contribution both theoretical and practical value. Theoretically, this research is to further develop theory in teaching reading comprehension. As Practical value, this research finding can give great contribution to the teaching and learning process. First, conducting this research is a process for the researcher to solve the problems in her class and examine the way she teaches so this is

a process of learning for the researcher. Second, the finding of the research may have implication for the students in reading. The students can improve reading comprehension using Cognitive developed from this research. Third, this research finding can serve as a database for further research about reading comprehension especially using Cognitive as a strategy that can improve students' comprehension.

G. Definition of the Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the topic of this study, the writer explains some terminologies used. They are as the following:

1. Reading Comprehension is the process to understand, comprehend and construct the meaning of the written text through the language and the situation which the text is read.
2. Cognitive Strategy is a mental process or procedure which emphasized the development of thinking skills and processes as a means to enhance learning.
3. Descriptive text is a text type which describes a particular person, place or thing that must be mastered by the students of SMPN level.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION

A. CONCLUSSION

This research was done to find out to what extent cognitive strategy can improve students' reading comprehension and what factors influence the changes of students' reading comprehension at grade VII-2 of SMP Negeri 1 Tembilahan. Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that:

1. The use of Cognitive strategy improves the students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts at grade VII-2 SMPN 1 Indra Praja. There were significant improvement to the students' score of reading comprehension test from pre-test, cycle I and II. The average score of students' score in the pre-test was only 63.15, in cycle I the average of the students' score increased become 70.72, and in cycle II increased become 78.10. It means that the students' average score in cycle II could reach the minimum criteria of achievement of English subject at SMP Negeri Indra Praja Tembilahan that is 75.
2. The factors that influenced the changes of the students' reading comprehension through cognitive strategy are:
 - a. The unknown teaching materials.

Researcher found that the unknown descriptive texts influenced the students' reading comprehension. An interesting material can increase the students' curiosity, they were motivated to comprehend the texts.

- b. Students' motivation

Based on the data from the research, the students had high motivation and enjoy the reading activities by using the cognitive strategy. It was very

helpful for the students in comprehending descriptive texts. In addition, the result of interviews showed that the students were interested in using Cognitive strategy because it was a new strategy for them.

c. Teacher's role

In Cognitive strategy, the teacher gave guidance and explanation to the students. The existence of the teacher really needed because he had a great influence during the teaching and learning process. The guiding activities that the students had to do during teaching and learning process by using Cognitive strategy was the one of the factors that influenced the improvement of students.

B. IMPLICATION

In connection with the findings of this classroom action research, there are several implications for the next teaching and learning process:

1. Cognitive strategy was one of the strategies that can be used by the teacher to help the students in improving their reading comprehension of descriptive texts because it encourage the students to be more active. Since the research finding proved that the use of cognitive strategy could improve the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text, the teacher needs to apply this strategy to solve the students' problem in learning reading comprehension especially in descriptive texts.
2. In applying Cognitive strategy, the teacher should consider some factors that influence the improvement of students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts. The factors are teaching materials, motivation and teacher's role to do cognitive strategy in the classroom. They should be considered in implementing cognitive strategy.

C. SUGGESTION

Finally, for the sake of facilitating English teacher in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive texts, particularly by using cognitive strategy, the researcher suggests as in the following:

1. As in indicates that using cognitive strategy can improve students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts, so it was suggested for others teacher who have the same problems with the researcher to apply this strategy in reading class.
2. Since cognitive strategy was a useful teaching and learning strategy, it was suggested that other teachers could try this strategy in teaching other language skills not only reading.
3. It was suggested for other teachers who are interested in using cognitive strategy to use other types of cognitive strategy.

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