IMPROVING THE READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY THROUGH WEBBING STRATEGY

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Abstract: This study was designed to improve the students' reading comprehension ability through webbing strategy which is designed to find a strategy of teaching reading skills in expository texts. The study employed a collaborative classroom action research design in which the researcher and the collaborator worked together designing the lesson plan, implementing the action, observing the action, and reflecting the action. The subjects of this research were 40 students the eleventh grade students of SMA PGRI Mojosari in the 2010/2011 academic year. The webbing strategy was successful in improving both the students' ability in comprehending expository texts and the students' involvement in reading activities. The strategy increased students' mean scores and the students' individual score percentage from preliminary study to Cycle 2 ranging from 64.83 to 78.17 or the students' individual score percentage extended from 42.50% to 85% equal or greater than 70% of 40 students. The results of the second cycle indicated higher scores in which predetermined criteria of success met in the second cycle. The majority students showed active involvement (92.50%) in the third meeting of Cycle 2.

Keywords: reading comprehension, expository texts, webbing strategy.

Reading enables people as readers to find out information from a variety of texts, written or printed information from newspapers, magazines, advertisements, brochures, and so on. According to Djiwandono (1996: 62) reading is an important activity and becomes more important in this modern world, where the development in every life aspect occurs very quickly. As a part of language skills, reading plays an important role for the success of language learning. In reading activity, we are not only reading the text, but also trying to understand what we are reading. Leipzig (2001) stated that reading requires words recognition, comprehension, and fluency. Djiwandono (1996: 63) points out that to understand all types of information in an array of the texts; it requires not only the reading activity, but also ability to understand the

content. In addition, he states that without the ability to understand the text content, one is not able to absorb or comprehend a lot of information quickly, accurately, and easily.

Reading, as one of the macro skills of English, is taught as a compulsory lesson at SMA PGRI Mojosari - Mojokerto. The competency of English lesson, specially reading skill, is stated in the *Content Standard Curriculum (Kurikulum Standar Isi)* year 2006 (Kemendinas, 2006) is that students are expected to be able to comprehend the meaning short functional and essay texts in the form of report, narrative, and exposition. This competence standard is broken down into some basic competence; 1) Responding the meaning of the short functional texts such as: banner, poster and pamphlet, etc. 2) Responding the meaning and rhetorical texts using various language features in

the form report, narrative, and exposition. Then, the basic competence is broken down into some indicators which implemented in the teaching and learning process.

During the teaching and learning process in the classroom, the teacher found some reading comprehension difficulties and then gave questionnaire and interview with students about English lesson, especially reading. Most of the students responded that English was very difficult lesson compared to other subjects. Students mostly had problems in finding vocabulary meanings of a text contextually. Students, therefore, got difficulty to find and identify explicitly and implicitly stated information in a text, students got difficulty to recognize a main idea of each paragraph in a text and got difficulty to recognize a supporting idea/detail in a text, students had difficulty to recognize a topic of a text.

METHOD

This research is designed to solve the practical problems in the teaching and learning process; especially in the teaching of reading comprehension. The strategy offered is used as one of the alternative strategy to help the students to be able to comprehend the reading passage related to their major. The strategy is applied by using some webbing that lead students to comprehend the reading passages related to their major or their study. Further, this strategy can activate the students' background or prior knowledge by giving some webbing related to the topic.

The design of this research categorized into collaborative classroom action research (CAR) because it solves the problem in the classroom and meets the criteria of classroom action research. Kasbolah (1998:14) states action research is reflective research conducted by giving certain actions to improve and increase the quality of teaching and learning practices in the classroom. In addition, Bassey (1998) cited in Koshy (2005: 8) states that ac-

tion research is carried out to understand, to evaluate, and then to change, in order to improve educational practice.

In the procedures and the implementation process, the stages are done in repeated cycles starting from planning the action up to reflection. Planning is made on the basis of the analysis of findings taken from preliminary study. Implementing the action is done by conducting teaching and learning process applying webbing strategy in teaching reading skill. Observing is done by the collaborator teacher intended to collect the data when the researcher, who is taking role as the reading teacher, and who is conducting teaching and learning activities. Reflecting is done by both the researcher and the collaborator teacher showing the result of the action done in each action, re-planning of the next cycle is done when the action of each cycle is unsuccessful of the result of the teaching and learning process does not meet the predetermined criteria of success yet. The procedures employed are adapted from Kemmis and Taggart's action research model (1988).

FINDINGS

Based on the result of students' reading comprehension tests, it was found out that the students' reading comprehension was gradually getting improved from preliminary study to Cycle 2. It meant that there was a positive impact of webbing strategy toward the increase of students' achievement in the tests of reading comprehension. Thus, the students' mean score and the percentage of individual score gradually improved at the end of each cycle. The following figures recapped the progress of students' mean score and the percentage of students' individual score.

Figure 4.1 shows that the students' mean scores increased from the preliminary study to Cycle 2. The students' mean score in the preliminary study was 64.83 increased to 72 in Cycle 1 and 78.17 in Cycle 2. The complete

progress of students' mean score is presented in Appendix 8.

Meanwhile, Figure 4.2 in the next page shows that the percentage of students' individual score increased from preliminary study to Cycle 2. The data obtained from the students' individual scores of preliminary test were 10 out of 40 students (25%) achieved the score of 0 – 55, 8 out of 40 students (20%) achieved the score of 56 - 60, 5 out of 40 students (12,50%) achieved the score 61 - 70, 17 out of 40 students (42.50%) achieved the score 71 – 80, and no one (0%) achieved the score above 81 – 100.

Figure 4.1 The Progress of Students' Mean Score
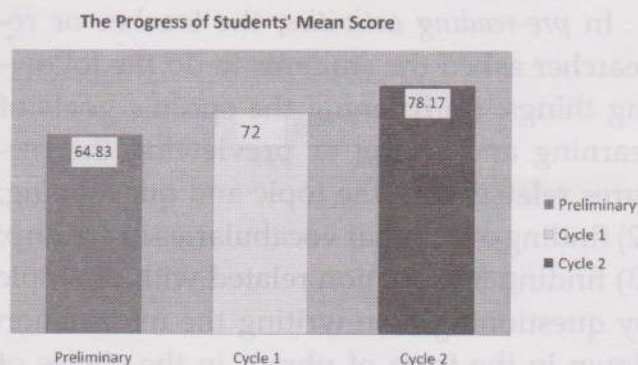
The data obtained from the students' individual scores of Cycle 1 reading comprehension test were no one (0%) achieved the score 0 – 55, 8 out of 40 students (20%) achieved the score 56 – 60, 8 out of 40 students (20%) achieved the score of 61 – 70, 8 out of 40 students (20%) achieved the score 70 – 79, 16 out of 40 students (40%) achieved the score above 80 – 100. Meanwhile, the data obtained from Cycle 2 test were no one (0%) achieved the score 0 – 55, no one students of 40 students (0%) achieved the score 56 - 60, 5 out of 40 students (15%) students achieved the score of 61 – 70, 15 out of 40 students (35%) achieved the score 73, and 6 out of 40 students (15%) achieved the score 80, and 14 out of 40 students (35%) achieved the score 86.
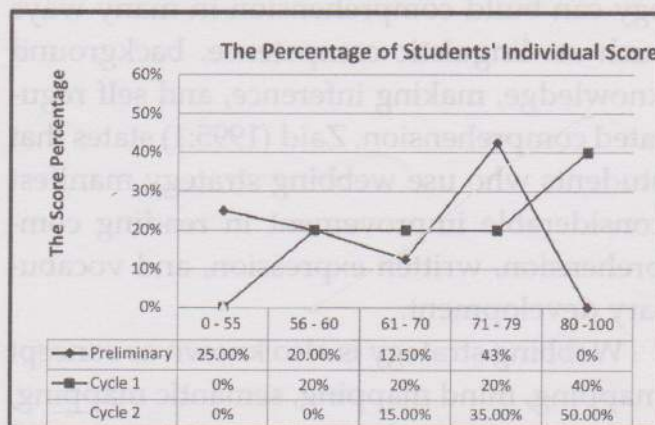
Figure 4.2 The Percentage of Students' Individual Score

Figure 4.3 The Students' Involvement in Reading Comprehension

Figure 4.3 shows that the percentage of the students' involvement in reading activities (pre-, whilst, and post-reading activities) increased from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. In the first meeting of Cycle 1, there were 15 students out of 40 students (37.50%) participated or involved actively. In the second meeting, there were 20 students out of 40 students (50%) participated actively. In the third meeting, there were 26 students (65%) participated actively. Meanwhile, the students' involvement in Cycle 2 was greater than the Cycle 1. In the first meeting, there were 29 students out of 40 students (72.50%) who involved or participated actively. In the second meeting, there were 29 out 40 students (82.50%) who participated actively. In the third meeting, there were 37 out of 40 students (92.50%) who involved or participated actively.

DISCUSSION

Webbing strategy is a teaching reading strategy which has been proven by some reading experts as an effective strategy to help students to comprehend texts. The following presents the reading experts' statements about the strategy. Cooper (2001:128) states that webbing strategy can be used when

the students are earlier learning to construct meaning in comprehending the text. Peterson, et al. (2000: 15) notes that webbing strategy can build comprehension in many ways such as: linguistic competence, background knowledge, making inference, and self regulated comprehension. Zaid (1995:1) states that students who use webbing strategy manifest considerable improvement in reading comprehension, written expression, and vocabulary development.

Webbing strategy is also known as concept mapping, mind mapping, semantic mapping, and text mapping that mean to a process used for exploring topics that are explicitly or implicitly stated in the text. To make one, draw a circle, and add spokes radiating from it. Put your central idea or subject in the middle, and add subtopics or related ideas around it in any order. Tailor (1986: 206-207) states that webbing is another approach to summarizing which has been found to be effective. A map is different for a hierarchical summary in that it is composed of important key words instead of main idea and important detail sentences. Therefore, a map will take less time for students to make and use.

In addition, Denton, et al. (2007: 115) suggest the teacher to implement the procedures of webbing strategy in helping students to do comprehending on reading stages. These reading stages are: (1) In pre-reading activity includes showing the webbing strategy to students and discuss students' prior knowledge, using the webbing strategy as a tool to preview the chapter or text, and asking students to make predictions about the text based on the graphic organizer; (2) In whilst-reading activity includes having students fill in important information on the webbing as they read the text, confirming and/or modifying students' predictions about the text; and (3) In post-reading activity includes having students write a summary of the chapter or text using the webbing strategy as a guide, having students use the webbing strategy to present the content orally to a peer, tutor, or mentor, having students write study guide or test questions based on the webbing strategy.

From the result of findings, showed that webbing strategy was in line with the four previous studies above. The eleventh grade students of SMA PGRI Mojosari got improvement on reading comprehension achievement. The present data findings showed that the students' mean score increased from 61.30 to 75.00 in Cycle 2. Besides, the percentage of students' individual score also increased, 85% or 32 out of 40 students got greater than or equal to 70 after the implementation of webbing strategy. The following presented the reading stages of this study.

In *pre-reading activities*, the teacher or researcher asked the students to do the following things: (1) listening the specific goals of learning and seeing or previewing the pictures related with the topic and questioning; (2) finding unfamiliar vocabularies in a group; (3) finding information related with the topic by questioning then writing the information down in the form of phrase in the circles of webbing ; (4) webbing the information. In *whilst-reading activities*, the teacher asked students to do the following things: (5) reading a text silently; (6) finding and discussing unfamiliar vocabulary meanings contextually in a group; (7) putting important detailed information of a text into the circles of webbing by questioning; (8) finding and discussing the center of idea or topic in a paragraph by classifying and categorizing with lines then write it into a sentence as a main idea of paragraph; (9) finding and discussing other vocabulary meanings contextually, important detailed information, and main idea in the next paragraphs; (10) finding a topic of a text by identifying the information in the form of phrases or words which frequently appear in the webbing as a topic of the text; (11) sharing and completing webbing with other group by comparing with own group webbing ; (12)

answering the questions individually then discuss or compare in a group. In *post-reading activities*, the teacher asked students to do the following things: (13) presenting the answers of reading comprehension questions individually; (14) making a summary of a text they have learnt; and (15) listening and responding to the teacher's feedbacks

To sum up, the webbing strategy of this present study does not only improve the students' reading comprehension achievement but also makes students actively involved in the teaching and learning process.

CONCLUSION

The implements of the webbing strategy concluded that it is an effective strategy in teaching reading comprehension mainly in expository texts. The students' mean score had improved greatly in preliminary study from 64.83 to 78.17 in Cycle 2. Besides, The students' individual score percentage had achieved a great extent from 42.50% in Preliminary study, 60% in Cycle 1 to 85% in Cycle 2 equal or greater than 70% of the criteria of success predetermined. While, dealing with the students' involvement, most of students (92.50%) were involved actively in the reading activities in the third meeting of Cycle 2.

The webbing strategy consists of the following teacher's steps: (1) explaining the students to the specific goals of learning and leading students to the topic by showing some webbings; (2) writing a key word or phrase from an expository text on the chalkboard; (3) asking students to group these words into logical categories and label each category with a descriptive title; (4) asking the students to make a group and to discuss unfamiliar vocabularies; (5) asking the students to find several themes or topics in a texts by brainstorming, class discussion, questioning to activate the students' background knowledge or prior knowledge; (6) asking the students to make webbing of the information from a text or write the information down in the form of phrases in the circles of webbing; (7) having the students read a text fast (speed reading); (8) asking the students to find important detailed information of a text by questioning and put the information in the form of phrases into the circles of webbings; (9) asking the students to find and discuss the center of idea or topic in a paragraph by classifying and categorizing with lines then write it into a sentence as a main idea of paragraph; (10) asking the students to share and complete mapping with other group by comparing with own group mapping; (11) asking to students to answer the reading comprehension questions individually then discuss or compare in a group; (12) asking to students to present the results of webbings and answer of reading comprehension individually; (13) asking the students to make a summary of a text they have learnt; and (14) giving feedbacks to the students by checking the right answers of the previous reading comprehension questions.

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