Improving Students’ Reading Comprehension By Using REAP (Read, Encode, Annotate, Ponder) Strategy

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Abstract
This research was a classroom action research. The objective of this research was to explain the extent to which the using REAP Strategy can improve students’ reading comprehension and factors improved the students’ reading comprehension at the second year students of VIII.2 class of SMPN 14 Kota Bengkulu. The subjects of this research were 37 students, consisted twenty two (22) males and fifteen (15) females. The instruments of this research were reading comprehension tests, students’ and teacher’s observation checklists and field notes, and interview. The research was conducted in two cycles which included plan, action, observe, and reflect. The evaluation test was given at the end of each cycle. The result of this research shows that using REAP strategy successfully improved students’ reading comprehension. There were 83.7% students reached the very good category or got the score $\geq 75$. The improvement was influenced by the used of interesting materials chosen, the REAP strategy, and the teacher attitudes toward the students.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, REAP Strategy
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1. Introduction
English has four language skills that should be mastered by students. There are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. From all those skills, reading has the most emphasis in teaching and learning especially in Indonesia. It is because Education Institution is focused on the goal of the final examination (Ujian Nasional). Every students at the end of grade 9 (Junior High school) and grade 12 (Senior High School) must pass the examination. The examination of English course involves mostly two language skills, they are listening and reading. Generally, the examination test’s questions dominantly consist of reading passages. Therefore, the students are expected to be good in reading to pass the English examination.

The students can be a good reader if they can reach the goal of reading itself. As Nunan (2003) states that the goal of reading is comprehension. Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand information presented in written form. Mendonce (2012) states reading comprehension is the level of understanding of text. This understanding comes from readers’ interaction between the text and how they use their knowledge outside the text. In order to pass the examination, the students are expected to be good in reading. In addition, according to Alyousef (2005), reading itself is viewed as an interactive process between a reader and the text being read. It means in the process of reading, readers get information through deep thinking process of the text being read. Therefore, in teaching a language, teacher should encourage students to comprehend the given materials.

Based on the researcher’s experience in teaching practice time (PPL) in the VIII 2 class of SMPN 14 Bengkulu, it was found that the students were difficult to comprehend a reading text. It was shown when the researcher asked the students to read a text, most of them was difficult to understand about the text. Therefore, the students cannot answer the questions about the text correctly.
In addition, before doing the research, the researcher gave the preliminary test as based line data to the students. The test was a multiple choice test that consisted of 30 questions. The material was narrative text that designed based on the curriculum. The students could pass the test if they reached the very good category (reached score ≥75) as the indicator of success. According to the preliminary test that the researcher did on Monday, March 04th, 2013, there were many students at VIII.2 class could not pass the test. From 37 students, there was only 43.2% or 16 students could reach the very good category. The rest of them got score below the very good category, there were 10.8% or 4 students reached the good category (score 60-75), 37.8% or 14 students reached the fair category (score 40-59) and 8.1% or 3 students reached the poor category (score 0-39).

Moreover, based on the interview with the English teacher at the VIII.2 class compared to the researcher’s teaching experience at the VIII.2 class, there were some problems faced by the students in reading competence as follow: (1) they got difficulties to understand contents of a text, (2) they got difficulties in finding the main idea of the text, and (3) they got difficulties to understand unfamiliar words on the text. Based on those problems, the researcher helped the students how to get information and understand the text.

In order to help the students comprehended a text, there were some learning strategies in teaching that could be used by a teacher. One of them is Read, Encode, Annotate and Ponder (REAP) strategy. Read, Encode, Annotate and Ponder (REAP) was a strategy for helping readers to read and understand a text. According to Allen (2004), the use of this strategy will cause the students to revisit the text during each stage of the REAP process. The students also learn to represent main ideas and the author’s message in their own words. After that, they do the ponder stage. They should connect with the text through analysis and synthesis of their reading. According to Eanet and Manzo (1976), the purposes of REAP strategy is to develop students to a greater understanding of writer’s roles in writing and improve their reading comprehension. REAP strategy will help the students to connect between a text and their words to enable them to communicate their understanding of the text.

By using Read, Encode, Annotate and Ponder (REAP) Strategy, it was expected that the students can improve their reading comprehension. It was assumed that Read, Encode, Annotate and Ponder (REAP) was appropriate to overcome the problem of the students of VIII 2 class of SMPN 14 Bengkulu. It was because every steps in REAP strategy had some advantages in order to help students understanding a text. The Read step was aimed to help the students to revisit the text. The Encode step allows students to understand the text by restating main ideas and important points of the text in their own words. The Annotate steps can improve the students’ attention and make reading a more active process (Strode, 1993). This step can also help the students to understand unfamiliar words on the text by using quotes, phrases, or other words. The Ponder step allows the students to make a personal connection between the texts with their understanding. Therefore, the researcher conducted this research entitled “Improving Students’ Reading Comprehension by Read, Encode, Annotate and Ponder (REAP) Strategy at the Second Year Students Class of VIII 2 of SMPN 14 Bengkulu”.

2. Methodology

The design of this research was a classroom action research. According to Ferrance (2000), classroom action research is a collaborative activity among colleagues looking for solutions, real problems experienced in schools, or to find out ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement in their learning. In line with this, Sagor (2004) states that classroom action research is a tool that is used to help teachers applying strategies to
improve their teaching practices. In short, classroom action research is a way for researchers to find out what works best in their teaching and learning process in the classroom.

In this research, there were two types of data collected by the researcher. They were quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data in this research was a reading comprehension test. This reading comprehension test was used to measure students’ reading comprehension to the material given. In addition, this test also aimed to know the students’ improvement in reading comprehension. The form of the test was a multiple choice. It consisted of 30 questions about narrative text. The researcher gave the reading comprehension test at the end of each cycle. After that, the researcher analyzed the data. Then, the result of the data was used for making a decision for the next cycle.

The qualitative data in this research were observation checklists, field notes and interview. Those data were used to know the factors that improved students’ reading comprehension of narrative text by using REAP strategy. The first, the researcher collected the data using observation checklists and field notes as assessment for the students and the teacher. Second, at the end of this research, the researcher interviewed some students at VIII.2 class. The number of students was 20% of the subject or 7 students. The researcher asked five questions to the students related to the used of REAP strategy in the teaching and learning process.

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data in order to support the researcher’s answer. There were two types of data to be analyzed in this research; they were quantitative and qualitative data.

1. Quantitative Data
To analyze the students’ individual score, there was a formula that used by the researcher.
1. The researcher calculated the students’ individual score by using the formula:

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S = \frac{X}{Y} \times 100
\]

(Sudijono, 2009)

Where:
X: The total of the students’ correct items
Y: The total of items
S: Score
2. Based on the students’ individual score, the researcher took the frequencies of the data and made the total of percentages of data. The frequencies and percentages of the data contained the score interval achieved by the students. The frequencies and percentages can be seen as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Students’ interval ability score</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>85 – 100</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>75 – 84</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>60 – 74</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>40 – 59</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0 – 39</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. The researcher took a result of students’ achievement in the reading comprehension test. The students passed the test if they reached the very good category or got score ≥75 (based on the indicator of success).
4. To see the students’ improvement, the researcher compared the result of students’ achievement to the previous result of the test.

2. Qualitative data

The qualitative data in this research consisted of observation checklist, field notes and interviews. It aimed to know the improvement of students’ learning activity. In analyzing qualitative data, there were some general steps (Taylor et al, 2003). The researcher followed those steps. The steps described as follows:

1. Get to know the data
2. Focus on the analysis
3. Categorize information
4. Identified pattern and connection within and between categories.
5. Interpretation

Therefore, the procedure of this research was:

Clycle 1
Plan
The steps in planning were:
1. Arranging a teaching schedule
2. Preparing observation checklist, field notes and interview.
3. Preparing a lesson plan
   The content of the lesson plan was the steps that were done by the researcher, the title included the kind of lesson, class and semester, time allocation, basic competence, indicator, and teaching and learning activity such as opening, while and closing activity.
5. Preparing tests for the students.
4. Preparing learning materials for the students
5. Preparing exercises for the students
6. Preparing tests for the students.

Action
In this step, the researcher applied the lesson plan. The procedures were described as follows:
1. The researcher explained the narrative text.
2. The researcher explained what REAP strategy is and how it works.
3. The researcher explained the steps in REAP to comprehend the narrative text.
4. The researcher gave materials and REAP chart to the students. The chart was consisted of four columns, including “R” column to write the title and the author, “E” column to put main ideas from the text in students’ own words, “A” column to write a statement that summaries the important points, and “P” column to write what the author hoped the readers to learn from the text.
5. Researcher divided the students into several pairs.
6. The students did the REAP steps individually. First, they read the text to get important points of the text. After that, the students wrote the title and the author of the text.
7. The students did encode step of the text. They needed to put some main ideas from the text and wrote them on their own words.
8. The students did annotate steps of the text by putting a statement that summary the important points from the text.
9. The students did ponder step of the text. The students should write about what they learned by the text in “P” column.
10. The students discussed their task in pair’s discussion.
11. The teacher monitored the students to do their task.
12. The teacher asked some groups of students to discuss their task in whole class discussion.
13. The teacher gave an individual task to the student which was a multiple choice test at the end of cycle. The teacher arranged the seat and asked the students not to help each other.

3. Observe
   The collaborator helped the researcher for observing teaching and learning activities, including teacher and students’ attitude in the classroom based on checklists and field notes.

Reflect
   In this step, whole data were analyzed. It included the data from the reading comprehension test, observation checklists and field notes. The researcher and the collaborator discussed together in analyzing the data. It was consisted of the questions and answered about a success barometer, such as the students’ reading comprehension achieved the indicator of success or not and what else the difficulties would be found by the students in the process of comprehending the text. The analysis of this stage used as information in arranging the activities in cycle 2.

Cycle 2
   Cycle 2 was the continuous activity of the cycle 1. Actually, the activities in cycle 1 were similar to the cycle 2, but there were some revisions of planning based on the result of the cycle 1 that was done in this cycle.

4. Results And Discussion
   The findings of this research have similarities to the previous researches of Tasdemir (2010) and Risqianita (2011). The research by Tasdemir (2010) also found that the REAP strategy could create a significant difference in students’ learning success. Therefore, the students’ learning success level in reading narrative text was significantly higher than before using this strategy. The second, the result of the research by Risqianita (2011) was proven similar to this research that the REAP strategy gave a positive effect of the students’ reading achievements.

   Besides, there were some theories that were similarities to the result of this research. The first was the students’ reading comprehension was improved. The students’ achievement in cycle 2 was significantly higher compared to the result of the preliminary test and cycle 1. This finding is in line with the theory of Eanet and Manzo (1976), mentioned that REAP strategy is a strategy to develop students to greater understanding of writer’s roles in writing and improve their reading comprehension. In further, the theory of Hoover (2000) also supports this finding that REAP strategy helps the students as readers to become more effective readers and think critically about the material that they read.

   The successful of improving the students’ reading comprehension by using the REAP strategy also influenced by the materials chosen and the teacher attitudes such as giving help, monitoring them, giving motivation and control the class. Beside the materials chosen, the improvement is also influenced by the teacher’s attitudes such as giving help, monitoring them, giving motivation and controls the class. Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the REAP strategy could better improve students’ reading
comprehension. And, it is influenced by the factors of material chosen and the teacher giving help, monitoring them, and controlling the class.

5. **Conclusion And Suggestions**

Based on the result of the research, there were some conclusions that can be concluded as follows:

1. The REAP strategy was a teaching strategy which was effective to be used in reading class to improve students’ reading comprehension.
2. The strategy became more applicable when interesting materials and positive attitudes of the teacher exists.

Based on the conclusion, the researcher suggested some suggestions as follows:

1. The REAP strategy can be used by English teacher as a reading strategy to improve students’ reading comprehension. This strategy can help the teacher to teach reading by a different strategy.
2. The REAP strategy was recommended for the students in order to help the students to understand a text.
3. The result of this research also enriched the theory of teaching reading comprehension through the REAP strategy.
REFERENCES


