



IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION SKILL THROUGH LANGUAGE GAMES AT VII GRADE OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed at improving the students' reading comprehension at grade seven of SMP Negeri 4 Praya in the academic year of 2022/2023. The teaching reading skill of seven grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Praya was through language games. To achieve the objective, collaborative work involving the researcher, the English teacher, the principal, and the students of grade seven was conducted. This study was action research study consisting of two cycles. The steps of the research were: planning, action observation, and reflection. The data were obtained by observing the teaching and learning process during the implementation of the actions, interviewing the English teacher and the students of seven grade students, and holding discussions with the English teacher. The instruments for gathering the data were a recorder, a camera, and interview guidelines. The data analyses were in the forms of field notes, recordings, interview transcripts, and photographs. The result showed that in Cycle I the implementation of language games was successful in improving the students' reading comprehension and their interest in reading during the teaching and learning process. However, the language games which was implemented through group work was not successful because there were some students who were not actively engaged in the group work. Therefore, the researcher improved that action by applying pair work and giving reward. Meanwhile, it was shown in Cycle II that the implementations of language games were successful in improving the students' reading comprehension and interest in reading during the teaching learning process. From the two cycles, the implementations of language games were effective to improve students' reading comprehension.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa kelas tujuh SMP Negeri 4 Praya tahun pelajaran 2022/2023. Pembelajaran keterampilan membaca siswa kelas tujuh SMP Negeri 4 Praya dilakukan melalui permainan bahasa. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut, dilakukan kerja kolaboratif yang melibatkan peneliti, guru bahasa Inggris, kepala sekolah, dan siswa kelas tujuh. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian tindakan kelas, yaitu penelitian yang terdiri dari dua siklus. Langkah-langkah penelitian ini adalah: perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Data diperoleh dengan mengamati proses belajar mengajar selama pelaksanaan tindakan, mewawancarai guru bahasa Inggris dan siswa kelas tujuh, dan mengadakan

diskusi dengan guru bahasa Inggris. Instrumen pengumpulan data berupa alat perekam, kamera, dan pedoman wawancara. Analisis data berupa catatan lapangan, rekaman, transkrip wawancara, dan foto. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pada Siklus I penerapan permainan bahasa berhasil meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa dan minat membaca siswa selama proses belajar mengajar. Namun, permainan bahasa yang dilaksanakan melalui kerja kelompok tidak berhasil karena ada beberapa siswa yang tidak terlibat aktif dalam kerja kelompok. Oleh karena itu, peneliti menyempurnakan tindakan tersebut dengan menerapkan kerja berpasangan dan pemberian reward. Sementara itu, pada Siklus II, penerapan permainan bahasa berhasil meningkatkan pemahaman membaca dan minat membaca siswa selama proses belajar mengajar. Dari kedua siklus tersebut, penerapan permainan bahasa efektif untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa.

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INTRODUCTION

The success of student learning in participating in the process of teaching and learning activities at school is largely determined by the mastery of reading skills. Students who are not able to read well will have difficulty in participating in learning activities for all subjects. Students will have difficulty capturing and understanding the information presented in various textbooks, supporting reading books and other written learning resources. The student will be very slow in absorbing the lesson. As a result, their learning progress is also slow when compared to students who do not have difficulty in reading.

The objective of learning English is to able to communicate in English. English teaching and learning process should be focused on developing students' four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is to achieve the objective of teaching and learning process. Among the four-language skill, it is reading which has the most important role in the students' mastery. In junior high school, reading is one of skill which is needed to learn. Teaching reading in a foreign language, especially English, based on the level of learner ability.

The aims of teaching reading in English are to develop learners' skill to read and to attract students to read in English. According to Troyer et al. (2019) reading is a process of understanding a written language or text. From the reading activity, students can get information and support their writing, speaking, and listening skills because it can acquire vocabulary, grammar, and discourse markers (Rohmah, 2018; Ambarini et al., 2018). By the reading, the knowledge of the students is gradually increased and it may cause other language skills are developed such as listening, speaking, and writing. In addition, the knowledge and experience obtained from reading can make wide intellectual abilities (Aziz et al., 2019). In fact, learning to read in English is a hard work although for the junior high school students. They find some difficulties to learn reading in English. Some of the students also assumed that reading was too boring to learn. Students do not have interest in reading and has not been favoured by the students. It makes the students do not have a reading habit. It is impact on their reading comprehension.

Seven grade students should be able to understand what the meanings of the texts are. Reading skills are important tools for the students become successfully reader. Without being able to comprehend the text, the purpose of teaching reading becomes failed. By comprehend the text, students construct meaning by interacting with text using their experience, previous

knowledge and information from the text. Improving students' reading comprehensions skill is needed because more background information students find from the text, it is easier for them to understand the text. Teacher should find the effective ways to teaching reading comprehension skill for the students.

The used of conventional activity to teach reading make students get bored, the students are not active and feel monotonous. Students read the textbook or texts then listen what the teacher say. The material presented by the teacher without using media, such as picture, flashcards, etc. The exercise gave by the teacher after they finish their reading. In the class, there is no more interaction between teacher and students. This condition builds boring situation in learning process. Some of the students create their own activity with their friends; they talking with their friends, hanging around in the class, and playing with their friends. Their voices are disturbing other students who listen what teacher said.

This is the teachers' job to makes reading learning process enjoyable and to make students have a reading habit. This is not an easy way to make students love reading. The teachers should effort to make students love reading and interest in learning reading. One way to make teaching reading effective and enjoyable is making students active and doing many readings activity so they can enjoy reading class and improve their reading comprehension. As the most influential person in the classroom, teacher should have a new way to make the students interest to learn reading and improving their reading comprehension. Teacher needs to find and create some types of activities, which are interesting for the students and relevant to their background, abilities, and experiences. Students love playing and they are learning things when they are playing. The use of games in classroom activity for junior high school students is a significant. Games are fun and students like playing games as their activities. By using games, students can experiment and discover new things with the environment they use. On the process of playing games, the students can improve their language skills. Games help the teacher to attract students' interest in the teaching and learning process. Using games make students more have variation in the teaching learning process.

Analyzing from the problem above, the researcher conclude that the problem was related. The problems come from the students, the teacher and the media. Then the researcher decides to do action research. The researcher invited the teacher of seven grade to work together to identify the existing problems. Games will be used as a media to improve students' reading comprehension skill because games provide many funs activity. Meanwhile, games can help the students to encourage of learning and it improves students' skill and interaction. Therefore, the researcher promotes games as the technique to improve students' reading comprehensions skill.

METHODS

This study was Classroom action research that was aimed at improving students' reading comprehension skill through language games in the seven grade of SMP Negri 4 Praya. According to Burns (2010), CAR is a part of a broad movement that has been going on in education. It is related to the ideas of 'reflective practice' and 'the teacher as researcher. In this method, there are four components in one cycle for conducting classroom action research; planning, action, observation, and reflection which were conducted integrated like spiral. Each phase is concluded based on the previous one and the next. The instruments used to collect the data are observation checklist, field notes, recorder, a camera, and interview guidelines which are administered to measure the students' reading skill after each cycle.

The method used is qualitative method and numerical data as supporting data. The data in the form of qualitative method is obtained from the observation done by the

collaborator during the teaching learning process about the whole activities and the students' participation. It is done by checking the list of activities during the teaching learning process. Furthermore, it is also supported by taking field note, recording and the interviews are done after the teaching learning process. While numerical data are obtained from the tests in form of reading performance. The result of the test within each process is analysed to see the improvement of the student's reading skill. It shows the improvement of the student's reading score as one of the pieces of evidence of the effectiveness of *Language Games* for the student's reading skill.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cycle 1

After doing the reflections, the researcher concluded some points as follows:

1. The use of various tasks was good to vary the activities and make the students involved in the classroom activity. The students looked active and enthusiastic to do the tasks in the handout and joined every activity in the classroom. However, there were some students' members who only did the task while the others were cheating. Consequently, they did not really understand what they should do when the teacher asked them. In addition to this, the class situation was fairly crowded and noisy.
2. The use of language games combined with reading tasks was good to make the students interested in the story. The students were enthusiastic to read the text. In addition, the text was simple and did not take long time for them to read the text.
3. The use of pictures was suitable to attract the students' attention. The teacher used some pictures to make the texts understandable. The students seemed enthusiastic to understand the vocabulary from the pictures. However, there were some pictures stuck on the whiteboard which were not really clear for some students. Therefore, they came to the front of the class to see the pictures more closely.
4. The use of proper steps of teaching reading was successful in making the students understand every activity conducted during the teaching learning process. They were helped to understand the text well so that they became enthusiastic in joining the class activities.

Cycle II

After doing the reflections, the researcher concluded some points as follows:

1. Giving various reading tasks was really good to create communicative reading activities in the classroom. The students became active and involved in the activities conducted in the class. Their boredom was minimized because the activities were attracting and varied. The students seemed to be enthusiastic with the various reading activities.
2. Board game, card game, and memory game is more interesting and challenging. The students were really engaged and interested in the activity. The students were more curious to read the text and understand the difficult word.
3. The use of pictures of the difficult words was attracted the students' attention and to maintain their understanding of the difficult words easily. The use of big and colourful pictures was successful to make the students enthusiastic and pay attention to the teacher's explanation about the materials.
4. The using of the steps of teaching reading was really successful to create a meaningful step of reading teaching and learning process in the classroom. The students were engaged and involved in every activity conducted in every step. The students were easier to comprehend the text.

General Finding of the Research

This discussion describes important matters concerning the general summary of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of the action research. It has been stated before that this research is aimed to generate the students' enthusiasm in the reading practices by using language game. Based on the findings in cycle 1 and cycle 2, the general findings would be stated as follows:

1. The use of reading tasks was believed to be made the students active and motivated in the reading activity. Giving various reading tasks facilitate the students to comprehend the texts in different ways. The various reading tasks made the students get involved in the classroom activities.
2. Language games were suitable for generating the students' enthusiasm to join in classroom activity. The use of language games needed to be varied to maintain and to keep the students motivation and enthusiasm to read and to overcome the problem in understanding the text.
3. Group work could be selected to make students cooperate with each other and created joyful reading activities in the class. The students were more enthusiastic to do the tasks together with their friends. The teacher could easily control the students' work and automatically it built the students' awareness in completing the tasks.
4. The use of steps of teaching reading was believed to clear up each activity conducted in the class. It was easy for the teacher to deliver the material. The students also understood what lessons they got from their teacher. Consequently, they would be more interested and enthusiastic to join the classroom activities. Then, there was the improvement of the researcher in teaching English especially in reading skill. It could be proven from the result of observation that the researcher could activate the students in learning. It made the students' score improved and achieved the target (KKM). It indicated that the implementation of Language Games can help the students in reading skill.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this research, this research was aimed to improving students' reading comprehensions skill trough language games of seven grade students of SMP 4 Praya academic year of 2022/2023. The actions which were carried out in two cycles were effective in improving the students' awareness on their own reading comprehension, motivation, self-confidence, and vocabulary. There were four games applied in this study. Two games applied in cycle 1 and two others acted in cycle 2. Games applied in cycle 1 were board game and memory card games. The games applied in cycle 2 were matching card game and drawing games. There are some changes occurring as a result of the actions: (1) the English teaching and learning processes, (2) the students, and (3) the English teachers. These changes are presented as follows:

1) The changes to reading class

Before the implementation of the actions the class activities were also monotonous. Having the actions, language games could build positive classroom atmosphere and effective teaching learning process. The students were motivated to read the text because they want to find the clue of the game.

2) The Changes Happening to the Students

Before implementation of the actions, the students used to be silent and passive. As the class activities were monotonous, the students got bored easily so that they used to be noisy and did something irrelevant to the lesson. Using games as the class activities, the students felt a new atmosphere in the study. Using language games could help students

memorize the vocabulary and also attract students' interest in joining class activity. The students made some improvement in reading comprehension. They were more confident to read and to be more active in doing reading task.

3) The Changes Happening to the Teacher

In this study, the teacher acted as an observer. Before the action, the teacher rarely used the teaching media to maintain the students' attention to follow the learning activities actively. Even, she always used the monotonous teaching technique, such as always used LKS (students' worksheet exercise). After the action, in relation to the English teaching, some efforts had improved her knowledge and experience on how to teach English for children, the teacher showed her great appreciation on the efforts to improve the students' reading comprehension. She was also eager to know more about how to apply games in the classroom.

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