PENGGUNAAN METODE INSTRUKSI PERCAKAPAN UNTUK MENINGKATKAN PEMAHAMAN MEMBACA SISWA

THE USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL CONVERSATION METHOD IN IMPROVING STUDENTS’ READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstrak


Kata Kunci: Metode instruksi percakapan, pemahaman membaca, motivasi, skema

Abstract

As the requirement of the wider user of English in the world, the educators investigate unstoppable innovation in learning and teaching process. The study aims to describe the effect of instructional conversation method on the improvement of students’ reading comprehension in learning. The study was designed in a form of experiment involving 8 students of SMP Negeri 23 Makassar. The experiment was performed in three stages: pre-test, 8 sessions of treatment with instructional conversation method, and post-test. The data were collected by means of the test, classroom observation, questionnaire distribution, and interview. The study indicates that the students’ reading comprehension score improves at the post-test as the result of the application of instructional conversation method from 32.56 at the pre-test to 63.58 at the post-test due to the activation of students’ schema. The analysis of the data on classroom observation, questionnaire, and interview reveals that the students were motivated to study because of the instructional conversation method during the 8 sessions.

Keywords: Instructional conversation method, reading comprehension, motivation, schema
INTRODUCTION

The English language today is one of the most widely spoken and written languages in the world. The wider usage of the English language makes the more people learns English both in formal and informal education. In the education field as formal education, English becomes one of the important subjects to be passed. This phenomenon marks the unstoppable innovation from educators. As define by Brown (2007),that educationalists carry on their professional to complete the history. The educators investigate the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic feature of language, outside of grammatical and discourse elements in communication. They explore pedagogical resources for “real-life” communication in the classroom.

In the real life communication, the students are required to be able to master the four language skills of listening, writing, speaking and reading. Reading skills have important roles to determine and identify the natural activities in the world. Reading is the original meaning of “interpretation”. The word of reading is properly engaged with all modes of happenings when people attempt to make sense of circumstances. People read weather, read faces, states of tides, people’s feelings and intentions, stock market trends, animal track, maps, signals, signs, symbols, hands, the law, music, mathematics, minds and body language (Smith, 2004). It tends to interact with meanings and messages. Reading is the processing from eyes to cognitive structure in our mind to determine the meaning of what is seen.

“Reading” is a special use of the term when engaged in interpretation of a piece of writing (Smith, 2004). Furthermore, Snow (2002), also describes that reading comprehension refers to collaboration and contribution to written language as the progression of concurrently extraction and construction of meaning. The special term can be described in educational field where reading tends to be dominant in written text. Reading becomes harder because the text may contain lots of unfamiliar words, cultures, and events. Commonly, to understand the text, reader tries to find out the meaning of difficult words. The reader does not use specific strategies in reading such as predicting the next event in the text, identifying the main point of the text, or connecting with the real world.

Using a reading strategy may help us to comprehend the text. One of the reading strategies is connecting the text with the real world. The real world contains events, experiences, people, or things. The real world is also related to existing knowledge or background knowledge, which are parts of schema theory. Schema theory is a structure of theoretical psychology, which
refers to representing generic concepts stored in memory. It is a tiny background, plan, or script. Schema is made over familiarity with people, objects, and events in the world. Schema can also be understood as the ordered background knowledge, which expects or predicts the aspects of dialogue’s interpretation (Ajideh, 2003). So, everything has been learned and faced in our life is parts of schema. The reader can use his/her schema to understand the text and improve reading skills. Activation of schema may become a good way to help the students to comprehend the text because it tends to create a meaningful learning.

Activation of schema is used in Instructional Conversation method (IC) in teaching reading. According to Thrap and Gallimore (1991), American education tried to make a transformation from individual learning to social learning. The term of social learning is referred to IC. IC enables a classroom interaction between teacher and group of students. Teacher’s role in IC is as discussion leader to guide the students to understand the point of the lesson. In the learning process of IC, the teacher selects a specific topic in discussing the reading text. Then, he/she stimulates the students to think and connect the topic with their background knowledge and experience as the activation of schema. The teacher will then invite the students to contribute and elaborate their arguments related to the topic. In IC, the teacher has responsibility to make a decision of students’ argument. The teacher knows where he/she should bear or stop the discussion (Goldenberg, 1991).

Some studies shown that the implementation of IC can increase students’ reading skills in Senior high school, Junior high school, and Elementary school level in English. Based on this point, the researcher tries to introduce IC in VIII grades students of SMP Negeri 23 Makassar. This school is a standard school where the students are from different family background, environment, and social economic. This school also gives positive response from teachers to apply IC. The teachers have a big willingness to improve their teaching performance and students’ quality in term of transform the students’ behavior in reading as translation to reading as comprehension by using instructional conversation method. The researcher wishes to describe the effect of instructional conversation method on the improvement of students’ reading comprehension.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Location

The population of the data was the 8th grade students of SMP Negeri 23 Makassar in academic year 2013/2014 which consisted of 8th A, 8th B, 8th C, 8th D, 8th E, 8th F, 8th G, 8th H, 8th I, and 8th J. The researcher chose this school because the instructional conversation method was never taught in this school and the teacher also had a positive response to apply this method. Furthermore, in this grade the students were introduced to some kinds of reading passage. The researcher used random sampling technique to choose which class to be the sample of this research. Therefore, the researcher raffled the class to select the sample. The sample of the research was class 8th A consisting of 39 students.

Research Design and Variables

This research was conducted by using experimental design, one group pre-test post-test design. In collecting the data, the researcher used mixed-method. The data of quantitative and qualitative were collected concurrently throughout the same study. The research carried out to know the effect of the implementation of IC and students’ motivation when IC was implemented. The procedures involved that a single group tested before the implementation of IC as pre-test, exposed the treatment in the implementation of IC and post-tested after the implementation of IC. The success of the implementation of IC was determined by comparing the result of pre-test and post-test. There were two variables in this research; they were independent variable, and dependent variables. Independent variable was the teaching reading using instructional conversation method, the dependents variable was the outcomes of the study, students’ reading comprehension scores.

Procedures of Data Collection

The instrument used in this research was reading comprehension test, observation sheets and questionnaire. Pre-test was delivered in the first meeting before the students were given the instructional conversation method. The purpose of pre-test was to know the students’ score before they were taught through instructional conversation method. Instructional Conversation method was implemented for eight meetings for the A class of 8th grade students of SMP Negeri 23 Makassar. Before the implementation of IC in the classroom, the researcher introduced and
explained to the teacher about how to apply this method. From the first to the eight meeting, the teacher gave students a reading text and encouraged them to understand the text by using Instructional Conversation method. Researcher did classroom observation to see and find out classroom activities and classroom participations during the application of the instructional conversation method. The items in the classroom observation were adapted from Crookes &Chaudron’s language teaching techniques (Crookes &Chaudron, 1991 in Brown, 2007). The researcher modified the items, which were appropriate with this study. The items included the nine points of classroom activities. It was also involved the students’ responses in answering teacher’s question. The post-test was administered in the last meeting after the implementation of instructional conversation method. The purpose of the post-test was to know the students’ progress after they were taught using instructional conversation method. The type and content of post-test were the same with pre-test.

Procedure of Data Analysis

The result of the data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The pre-test and post-test were analyzed quantitatively by using the statistical package. The reading comprehension scores were measured first by scoring the students’ answers on pre-test and post-test and classifying them. The result of the test triangulated from classroom observation data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The table 1 shows that in pre-test, seven students categorized to have “fair” as their score between 41 to 60 in range, the percentage is 18%. The classification of “poor” reader as the score between 21 to 40 in ranges refers to 32 students, the percentage is 82%. None of student categorized as very good, good, and very poor readers. The result of the pre-test indicates that the students have not got the treatment of IC yet. It means that the students still use translation method into L1 to understand the text.

Table 2 shows classification of students’ post-test score prove that instructional conversation method positively influenced the students’ score on the post-test. It gives the indication that the number of students who get “poor” score decreased into 2,6%, and in contrast to the pre-test, as displayed on the table of the students’ post-test result that 5 students indicated as very good readers in score range between 81-100 as the percentage of 12,8%. 16 students categorized as “Good” in range of score 61-80 as the percentage of 41%. 17 students classified
as “fair” in score range between 41-60, the percentage is 43.6%. One student categorized as “poor” reader in interval score between 21-40 as the percentage of 2.6%. None of the student indicated as very poor in the result of the test.

The results of class observation showed that most of the students actively responded teacher question during the discussion of the implementation of IC. In the activity of understanding the text the teacher also guided the students to show and explore more about students’ ideas in activation of students’ schemata which was related to the familiarity of lesson topic, so the students generalized the new knowledge from the text to the previous knowledge in understanding the text.

**DISCUSSION**

Based on research finding that previously described in students’ score in reading comprehension, before the implementation of IC, the researcher conducted pre-test. The result of the pre-test showed that more than 50% students who categorized as poor score in reading comprehension, 18% students’ score categorized as “fair”. It indicated that the students had low score in reading comprehension. The factors might influence that the students’ still use their prior reading strategy as translation in understanding the text.

After the students took pre-test, the students were given IC method in the class during eight meeting. The fundamental activity in the IC method was discussion as conversation. There were three-way communications in understanding the text. The first was the students with the text. The students interacted with reading text in term of understanding the content of the text. The second was students with students in their own group. It pointed out that after reading the text the students discussed the point of the text with their group to find out the understanding of the text related to lesson topic given. The third was teacher with group of students in question-answer display as discussion. Here the teacher made conversation with the students as discussion.

The conversation covered the question-answer display. It included the activation of students’ schemata, inviting students’ idea, expanding students’ idea and giving probing question. The students responded teacher’s question based on their understanding related to the text. Reading comprehension consists of multicomponent, high complex process that contains many assimilation among readers and what they bring to the text such as previous knowledge and strategy they used as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in the text, understanding
of text types). Therefore, the reading comprehension involves much more than readers’ responses to the text (Klingner, 2007). In activation of schemata, the students were required to share their previous experience which came from their real life related to the lesson topic. Every student brought different schemata in the classroom because they faced different culture, environment, and people who influence their life as supported by Nuttal (2005), who says that providing the schema theory is the worthwhile mode to think an intellectual factor. It is theoretical because it does not relate to any certain experience although it comes from all specific experiences that the reader has had. It is a structure because it is organized which includes the relationship between its component parts. Some people have different schemata because they have different experiences in their life.

As social interaction in the classroom, the students and teacher were ever changing as speaker and listener. As the speaker, the students usually took self-directed turn and spoke together in answering teacher’s question. Besides that, in responding teacher’s instruction, the students from different group conducted different way to answer it. There was group who discussed the answer with their own group, then they wrote it on a piece paper to make the answer clear. Then, they spoke aloud together to show their answer. This way in answering teacher’s question indicated that the students did not confident if they answered the question alone, and if they made wrong answer not just one students who be blame but all of the member of the group. It was contrary to other group who did as the same as the previous group such as discussing and writing the answer on the piece of paper but this group asked a representative to perform the answer.

In the other hand, in the classroom interaction also found that there was individual student who always dominated turn in their group without discussing the answer with her group first. This point described that the student stood out herself in her group. As the listener, the students always listened carefully teacher’s instruction. They wait until teacher’s instruction finish, they thought and tried to answer right teacher’s question.

After the students described their experience as background knowledge, the students connected their understanding from their schemata to the text in inviting ideas section. In inviting students’ idea, the students generalized from what they know in previous knowledge to the new knowledge that the got from the text. Further, the conversation continued in the expanding
contribution to share the information in the text. Moreover, in probing part, the students explored hiding information in the text, for instance, identifying title or genre of the text.

The researcher carried out post-test after the implementation of IC. The post-test shown that more than 50% students are categorized as very good and good score in reading comprehension. 43% students categorized as fair score of reading comprehension and 2.6% students categorized as poor score in reading comprehension. From pre-test to post-test, students’ reading comprehension increased.

The result of this research was a line with the previous study which focused in the same study. For example investigation conducted by Aidinlou (2012) and Yusuf (2011) to examine the effect of IC in reading which showed that the students reading comprehension increased by using IC method in the class. IC defined as productive interactive verbal strategy by the teacher to engage the students to actively thinking, negotiation of meaning and consequence learning. The consistency and similarity the result of these results might be an evidence that IC is good to apply in improving students reading comprehension.

From the increase of the students’ score in pre-test to post-test, the researcher might define some factors that influence the students’ reading comprehension. In the implementation of IC there was discussion between teacher and groups of students as advocates by Thrap (1988) in Aidinlon(2012), that instructional conversation refered to the conversation between teacher and students as discussion. The teacher attended students’ talk carefully, resolve, and module the dialogue to find out the development of students’ understanding.

Further, in the beginning of discussion the teacher activated students’ schemata by questioning the students. The students were asked the familiarity of the text and what the students knew about the point discussed in the text. When students schemata activated, the students could reflect with their own and previous knowledge with the new knowledge of the text. Schemata were made over familiarity with people, objects, and events in the world. Schemata also could be understood the ordered background knowledge that expect or predict aspects of dialogue’s interpretation (Ajideh, 2003). In inviting students’ contribution in discussion, the findings showed that all the students in group answer and respond teacher’s question. The students might answer and responded teacher’s question because the question from the teacher was a line with students’ understanding and point of view. As cited in Aidinlou (2012), that the construction of
students’ knowledge and understanding relates to make connection of the knowledge, build mental schemata and develop new concept of previous understanding.

During eight meetings of the implementation of IC, most of groups gave responses and contributions of ideas when the teacher questioned them. It could be specified that the students’ participation was high in learning process. It was supported by the statement of Goldenberg (1991), that the participation is high without any domination of the turns by individual and teacher in particular. The students and the teacher involved in the extended of discussion and conversation. Thus, the students had their own opportunity in responding teacher’s question because IC is free from formal teaching so the students can contribute their ideas freely.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings on reading comprehension score proved that instructional conversation method positively influenced the students’ reading comprehension. The proof of students’ score from pre-test as 32.56 of mean score to 63.58 in post-test is caused by the interaction between teacher and group students as discussion which involve in circle of question-answer display as discussion. In the question-answer part, activation schemata influence students’ view to predict the content of the text. A classroom implication can be concluded from this study that this research conducted in large number of students which about 39 number of students. In further investigation, IC is expected to be applied in smaller number of students that less than 30 students in order the class can be controlled and managed easily. During the implementation of IC, the teaching material of this research was report text. The researcher may suggest for next investigation that the teaching material should be more authentic and familiar to the students for effective discussion. The focus of this study is in teaching reading by using IC method. It may be a good way to create an innovation to integrate IC into other language skills, namely writing, listening, and speaking.
REFERENCE


Snow C. (2002). Reading for Understanding : Toward a Research and Development Program in Reading Comprehension. Science and Technology Institute, RAND Education


Table 1. The rate frequency and percentage of students’ score on pre-test

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<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Table 2. The rate frequency and percentage of students’ score on post-test

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Good</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
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