



THE EFFECT OF USING *PEER-ASSISTED LEARNING STRATEGY* TOWARD STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AT SMKN 1 TANJUNG RAYA

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Abstract

This is quasi experimental research by using quantitative approach which is aimed to investigate the effect of using PALS toward reading comprehension. The writer used test in form of multiple choice to collect the data. The population of the research was 55 students of the tenth grade students at SMKN 1 Tanjung Raya and the sample was X TITL 1(25 students) as control grup and X TKJ 1(30 students) as experimental class with PALS. To determine the sample, the writer used cluster sampling. In order to analyze the data, the writer used the normality test by using Liliefors test and tested the homogeneity of the data by using f test. The writer used z test formula to test the hypothesis and consulted its result with the z table with $\alpha = 0.05$. The result of this research showed that the hypothesis was accepted. It showed that $T_{obtained} > T_{table}$ or $2.14 > 1.645$. So, the reading comprehension of the students who were taught with PALS better than the students who were taught without PALS.

Key words: PALS, reading comprehension.

A. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the important language skills studied by the students in SMK (vocational school) in Indonesia. This happens because the teaching of English is done through genres or kinds of texts. The students should read various texts like descriptive text, explanation texts, and procedure text. Besides, reading will help the students to face examination and to understand manuals and tools in the workshop. In addition, reading is also important for the students to continue their study to college or university. Besides, Lee in Arianto and Sari (2019:81) also add that reading is the main activity for lifelong learning. Moreover, reading is needed by the students to get a job when they finish their study.

Because of the importance of reading for the students, it is put into the educational curriculum in Indonesia, that is, curriculum 2013. In curriculum 2013 there are some types of text taught at SMK, such as advertisement, announcement, letter, labels, narrative, recount, procedure, descriptive and other texts. Basically,

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the purpose of the reading in curriculum 2013 is the students are expected to be able to comprehend the texts through reading.

Even though reading has been learned by the students at SMK for quite a long time, they still got difficulties in reading comprehension. Based on the interview and reading score that was taken in SMKN 1 Tanjung Raya, Agam District, it was found that around 43 students (75,4 %) have lower score in reading, while 14 students (24, 6%) have average reading score.

There are two factors that make the reading score is low, namely the students' and teacher's factors. As it is said by the English teachers of SMKN 1 Tanjung Raya Agam in an interview, the scores of the reading section of the students were very low. This is because some students did not comprehend the text well that they read and students were lack of vocabulary, and low motivation. Moreover, when it was confirmed to the students of SMKN 1 Tanjung Raya, they said that it was difficult for them in comprehending of text due to students had less vocabulary, and also lack motivation to read. Second, the low ability of the students in reading was caused by the teachers. Based on the questionnaire that was given to English teachers in SMKN 1 Tanjung Raya it was found that the teachers mostly used discussion and direct method in the class. The teachers rarely used different strategies or techniques in the learning process. It makes the students get bored during teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, there are some strategies that can be used, such as *Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy*, *KWL'S*, *TPR*, *jigsaw* etc to help the students to comprehend reading texts.

Based on the problem above, the writer intends to use *Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy* (PALS) as one of alternative strategies to solve students' problem in reading comprehension at SMKN 1Tanjung Raya. The main factors that make writer intend to use *Peer Assisted Learning Strategy* because this strategy has never been used by the teacher in that school in learning process. Thus, the teacher used apply direct method and discussion in teaching English. This statement based on the questioner that was distribute to English teacher.

According to Sheng (2000:1) states that reading is a process of communication between writer and reader which involves the recognition of letters, words, phrases, and clauses. On the other hand, Alderson & Bachman (2000:13) mention that reading has similarities toward listening process, and the process of transformation from print to speech is only the specific aspect of reading that we need to concern ourselves with as tester. The basic concept in reading is the reconstruction of the information based in part on the knowledge drawn from text by the reader.

Reading comprehension is a very complex process that is much influenced by background knowledge, and experience. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002:18) reading comprehension is the ability to understand information in a text and interpret it appropriately through background knowledge and experience. The reader will work to make sense of a text not just from the words and sentences on the page, but also from the ideas, memories, and background knowledge evoked by those words and sentences.

There are some steps that should be prepared by the teacher in order to have success teaching and learning activities through *Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy*

(PALS) explained by Tariq (2005:37) such as; (1) introduce to the students about the concept and benefits of PALS. (2) organize the sessions in PALS well, for instance; emphasizing that the students' willingness to participate in the sessions of PALS are needed because it will influence the success of PALS. (3) Explain the students' roles in the group.

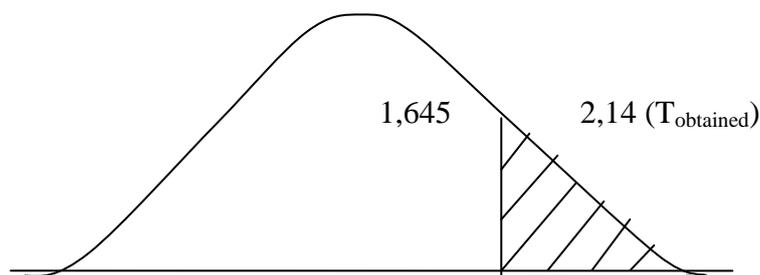
B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was quasi experimental research; it finds the effect of PALS toward the students' reading comprehension. According to Gay (2012:250) experimental research is the one of research that may test hypothesis to establish a cause and effect relation. There are two kinds of group in this research, that is, experimental group and control group. Both of two groups are treated by using different treatment, the experimental group is treated by using PALS, meanwhile the control group is treated not using PALS. The design of this research is non-equivalent control group because the experimental group is treated differently with the control group. In collecting the data using pretest-posttest, the result of pre test is not analyze but only to see the homogeneity and normality of the pre test and the posttest used t test. According to Gay (2012:252) says that pretest posttest control group design needs at least two groups, each of which is formed by random assignment. Both groups will be administered pretest and posttest result to determine the effectiveness of the treatment. After that, the data of the experimental group are calculated and compared to the control group by using t-test formula. The design of the research may be schematized as follow:

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

The hypothesis, is the students' reading comprehension of the students who were taught with PALS better than the students who were taught without PALS. To prove the third hypothesis, the researcher used the formula one tail test-right to find whether H_0 or H_a is accepted or rejected through comparing the post test of experimental and control classes. The value of the $T_{obtained}$ was compared with the value of the T_{table} . If the value of $T_{obtained}$ bigger than the value of T_{table} or $T_{obtained} > T_{table}$, it means that H_a will be accepted and H_0 will be rejected. From the calculation of post-test score of the experimental and control classes, the mean score of the post-test in experimental class (\bar{x}_1) is 73.5. It was greater than the mean score of the post-test in control class (\bar{x}_2) 68.68. Then, the standard deviation of each class was obtained and they were analyzed by using t-formula to find the value of $T_{obtained}$. It was found that $T_{obtained}$ is 2,14, and the T_{table} for degrees of freedom ($df = (n_a + n_b - 2) = (30+25 - 2) = 53$ T with level of significance (α) 0.05 was 1.645. Through comparing the $T_{obtained}$ and the T_{table} , it can be seen that $T_{obtained} > T_{table}$ or $2,14 > 1,645$. **The Curve of the T-test Result in the Post-test of Experimental and Control Classes**



From the data above, it means that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected because the value of $T_{obtained}$ higher than T_{table} or $T_{obtained} > T_{table}$. So, it could be concluded that the students' reading comprehension of students who were taught with PALS better than the students who were taught without PALS. The significant effect also can be seen from the calculation of mean score in the post test of experimental class and mean score in the post test of control class. From the calculation, mean score of post test in the experimental class was 73,5 and mean score of post test in the control class was 68,68. It showed that the mean score of post test in the experimental class was higher than post test in the control class.

2. Discussion

Based on the hypothesis that the reseracher explained, the resercher had been answered the formulation of the problen in chapter I. In this research, the researcher had seen the effect of PALS.. There were two classes involved in this research. one class was assigned as the experimental class and another as control class. The experimental class was treated with PALS. while the control class was treated without PALS. which was used by the researcher in tenth grade of SMKN 1 Tanjung Raya.

Third, the data of the experimental and control classes were also obtained. It was found that the mean score of post-test of experimental class (\bar{x}_1) was higher than the mean score of control class (\bar{x}_2). The curve of t-test result was shown that the $T_{obtained}$ was higher than the T_{table} , $2,14 > 1,645$. The result prove that the reading comprehension of the students who were taught with PALS was better than the students who were taught without PALS. Thus, by using PALS students more enthusiastic and active in learning because PALS have several benefit to apply in learning. The preparation were motivated students to learn. Their spirit was burn on and found that the learning activity was interesting. Students who are not ready with the reading text not actively interested in what they are doing are less likely to benefit from it. When they are really fired up by the topic or the task, they get much more from what is in front of them. Students could get much from the text because they were enthusiastic and enjoy the reading and learning process.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and the discussions in the previous chapter, the researcher concludes this research that focus on students' reading comprehension through PALS activity in teaching reading comprehension was better than without PALS. It was proved by the data of the post-test of both classes where the mean score of experimental class is 73,5 and the mean score of control class is 68,68 meanwhile both of classes had the same level of ability in the pre-test. It also compared with the T-test result, T_{obtained} was greater than the T_{table} ($2,14 > 1,645$)

Based on the findings of the research, the researcher would like to propose some suggestions as following.

1. Based on the result of the research, the English teacher can apply the PALS to increase students' reading comprehension since it can motivate and interest the students to learn.
2. Further researchers are suggested to conduct a study on the effect of PALS in teaching other skills to explore the use of this method in other skills

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