

# THE USE OF DISCOVERY LEARNING STRATEGY IN TEACHING READING REPORT TEXTS TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Yunisa Rahmi<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Ratmanida, M.Ed<sup>2</sup>  
English Department  
FBS State University of Padang  
Email: rahmi.yunisa@yahoo.com

## Abstract

Penulisan makalah ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kemampuan membaca teks siswa Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA) yang masih rendah. Kondisi ini disebabkan oleh beberapa hal, diantaranya seperti kurangnya pengetahuan dasar siswa tentang topik yang dibahas dan kurangnya penguasaan kosakata mereka. Dari guru, sebagian mereka kurang mengaitkan antara penjelasan topik dengan kehidupan nyata siswa dan mereka juga cenderung menggunakan strategi yang sama pada teks yang berbeda. Untuk mengatasi permasalahan tersebut, penulis memperkenalkan strategi discovery learning, yang akan membantu siswa SMA dalam memahami teks report. Strategi discovery learning adalah strategi yang mengharuskan siswanya untuk menemukan sendiri informasi topik yang dipelajarinya melalui enam tahapan kegiatan, yakni *stimulation*, *problem statement*, *data collection*, *data processing*, *verification*, dan *generalization*. Langkah pengajaran yang dilalui adalah sesuai dengan pendekatan *scientific* yakni *observing*, *questioning*, *information collecting*, *associating*, dan *communicating*. Adapun keuntungan dari strategi ini adalah: 1) memperkaya pengetahuan dasar dan kosakata siswa, 2) memotivasi siswa untuk belajar 3) membuat rasa ingin tahu siswa berkembang, 4) membuat siswa menjadi lebih kreatif, 5) mengajarkan ilmu sekaligus skil kepada siswa, 6) dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa. Pada akhirnya, penulis berharap agar guru bisa menggunakan strategi ini sebagai salah satu alternatif dalam mengajarkan kemampuan membaca teks report kepada siswa Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA).

Key words: *Reading, Report Text, Teaching Reading to Senior High School Students, Discovery Learning Strategy*

## A. Introduction

Reading is a linguistic process in which the readers search for meaning what they have read so that the message that the writer presents on the text can be comprehended by the readers. Reading, as one of the important skills in acquiring a new language functions as a way for the learners to get new information that they may not get from what they hear and show in their daily activities. By reading, learners can also enrich their vocabulary and develop their grammar.

In 2013 Curriculum, it is stated that the goal of teaching reading at Senior High School is to enable students to comprehend social functions, generic structures, and language features of the texts (Noh, 2013:85). For that reason,

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<sup>1</sup> Student of English Language Teaching Program of FBS UNP graduated on September 2014

<sup>2</sup> Advisor, Lecturer in Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Padang

Senior High School students are taught to comprehend two kinds of texts namely functional and monologue texts. However, based on the writer's evaluation on reading monolog text at midterm test at SMAN 8 Padang (on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2014), it was found that only 18 students of grade XI out of 61 passed the minimum completeness criteria (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum).

Based on the writer's brief interview with some of SMAN 8 Padang students, it was found that these problems caused by several factors. One of them was due to the students' lack of background knowledge such as related idea, linguistic elements, and the structure of the text. Consequently, they were not capable enough to connect their mind with the reading topic being taught that caused them difficult to comprehend the text well. The next factor was lack of students' vocabulary. The students, generally, could not comprehend the text because of many difficult words. For example, the students preferred not to continue reading a text since the whole meaning of the text was determined by those unknown words. They would rather stop reading and asking the other friends about the information presented in the text rather than comprehend the text by themselves. These were the factors from the students' sides.

There were also problems came from English teachers. Teachers generally did not have a good enough strategy in teaching reading. For example, he/she did not have a strategic way to relate the topic being taught with the students' real world. In fact, to connect the real world of the students with the topic being taught is needed. This is because the students will be easier to comprehend the concepts of the text as it is closely related to their life. In doing so, English teachers generally tend to give explanation about the monolog text that is less related to the students' real world. They also often give the high level of parables. Consequently, their students find difficult in comprehending the content of the text. In addition, there was also a tendency that the English teachers just asked several students just to read aloud and the others listened to them without introducing any other effective and efficient reading strategies. As a result, when being checked, many of them still did not understand the information presented in the text and just asked the other students to answer the questions given.

These the problems that make report text difficult to comprehend by the students. Because of that, it is important for the teachers to help the students to solve those reading monolog texts' problems. One of them is by using discovery learning strategy in order to help student in comprehending a report text. So, through this paper, the writer will describe about the use of discovery learning strategy in teaching reading report texts to senior high school students.

Actually, discovery learning itself is firstly introduced by Jerome Bruner in 1960 (Thorsett, 2002:2). Holesinska (2006:1) stated that discovery learning strategy is the most practical and encouraging example of active learning strategy in which the students have to work out rules and find the text concept by themselves. Similarly, Thorsett (2002:1), defined discovery learning as a learning situation in which the principal content of what is to be learned is not given, but must be independently discovered by the learner, making the student becomes an active participant in his learning. In the same way, Joolingen (1999:386) stated that:

Discovery learning is a type of learning where learners construct their own knowledge by experimenting with a domain, and inferring rules from the results of these experiments. The basic idea of this kind of learning is that because learners can design their own experiments in the domain and infer the rules of the domain themselves they are actually *constructing* their knowledge.

The solid definition comes from Balim (2009:2) who said that discovery learning is a strategy that encourages students to arrive at a conclusion based upon their own activities and observation. So, it can be concluded that discovery learning strategy is an active the strategy in which the facts or the contents of the topic are not given by the teacher in the beginning of the lesson directly, but it must be discovered by the learners through observing and experimenting activities as the rules of discovery learning.

In discovery learning, students construct knowledge based on new information and data collected by them in an explorative learning environment (Njoo in Balim, 2009:8), it is very suitable with the process of understanding report text in which the students are expected to comprehend factual information about people, animals, things or phenomena in environment (NSW, 2011:1). The prior knowledge that the students get from the explorative process will help them in comprehending the monolog text. They will find easier to connect their mind with the reading topic because they get the concepts of the text in the beginning of the lesson through observing by themselves.

Furthermore, Holesinska (2006:1) said that in applying discovery learning strategy, the students will be involved with words and it is likely to help them to learn and remember them. In other words, students discover the ways in which the language works and they learn through this process the function of language. Therefore, this strategy is valuable in processing a text, especially a text that contains science information just like a report text. Holesinska (2006:1) also added that this strategy has a good pedagogical and methodological effect on students because they are more involved in the learning process and are aware of language and how it is used.

In Indonesia, the stages of discovery learning strategy itself are divided into two steps namely *preparation* and *implementation* (Stephanus, 2013). In *preparation* step, there are seven things that the teachers should do. Those seven things are: 1) establishing the goals, 2) identifying students' attitude (such as prior knowledge, interest, and the level of the students, or the way of learning), 3) selecting learning material that should be learnt, 4) choosing topics, 5) elaborating the material 6) rearranging the topics from the simple to the complex one and from abstract to concrete, and 7) preparing assessment. While for the *implementation* step, there are six phases: *stimulation*, *problem statement*, *data collection*, *data processing*, *verification*, and *generalization*.

There are some advantages offered by discovery learning strategy proposed by experts. Thorsett (2002:3) stated that discovery learning strategy could build on the students' background knowledge and understanding. In addition, he also stated that discovery learning can support active engagement of the students and

provide high motivation because the students have opportunity to experience. Similarly, Kagan in Liang (1980:99) agreed that discovery learning creates encouragement and consequently maximizes attention during learning. Then, since this strategy provides any interesting media to be observed and also does not allow the English teacher to give any information about the topic in the beginning of the teaching learning process, it can foster students' curiosity (Thorsett, 2002:3). This strategy can also bring out students' creativity, since there are two explorative activities taken by them namely observation and experimenting (Nutting, 2013:8).

Then, about report text, it is actually a text that presents, classifies, and describes factual information about people, animals, things, and phenomena. Report text more focuses on general points; for example report about tiger, lion, cat, parrot and others.

According to Wahidi (2008:5), report texts are organized with two structure parts, they are: 1) general classification (stating classification of general aspect of thing, such as animal, public place, plant, etc, which will be discussed in general); and 2) description (describing the thing which will be discussed in detail, part per part, customs or deed for living creature and usage for materials, habit/behavior or 'uses' if no natural).

Common language features of a report text according to Wahidi (2008:6) include: (1) introducing group or general aspect (generic participant); (2) using conditional logical connection, e.g. when, so, etc; (3) using simple present tense such as eat, fly, walk, swim, etc; (4) no temporal sequence such as mention years, use the word *first*, *second*, *next*, etc; (5) nouns and noun phrases are used rather than personal pronouns; the use of personal pronouns is limited; (6) some reports use technical or scientific terms; (7) linking verbs are used, e.g. *is*, *are*, *has*, *have*, *belong to*, to give coherence; (8) uses some action verbs, e.g. climb, eat, etc; (9) uses technical vocabulary such as feel, enjoy,

Permendikbud No.81a Year 2013 about curriculum implementation has regulated three phases for English teaching activities (including in teaching reading), they are: 1) Introduction activity, 2) Core activity (observing, questioning, information collecting, associating, and communicating), 3) Close activity

The teaching activities are started from introduction. In this phase, the teacher will prepare the students to face learning process physically and mentally. This involves activities like greeting, checking students' attendance, and asking questions about the previous lesson and asking questions about the topic that is going to discuss. These questions should lead the students to the problems and tasks to be solved. If the students seem not ready to study, the teacher has to motivate them first. As they have been motivated, the teacher will introduce the topic and tell the objectives of the teaching learning process. The last one, teacher will give to the students a text going to discuss.

The second, teacher applies core activities. This phase is the main learning process. The purpose of this phase is to achieve learning basic competence stated. The characteristics of the activity are interactive, inspiring, enjoying, challenging and motivating; while, its objectives are to encourage students to find much

information, and give them freedom to be creative and autonomous based on their talent and their interesting, both physically and psychologically (Noh, 2013)

To achieve the goals of core activities, teaching English at senior high school nowadays uses Scientific Approach. This approach has five phases, namely Observing, Questioning, Information collecting/Experimenting, Associating/Reasoning, and communicating/Networking (Noh, 2013). All of the phases belong to core activity.

In observation, the teacher will ask the students to observe the media or event about the topic given. The teacher will try to make the students wonder about the topic; it can be done by looking at the pictures, watching videos, or observing/experimenting things about the topic. The goal of this activity is to train the sincerity, carefulness, and to collect the information (Noh, 2013). The second activity is questioning activities. In this activity, the students will be required to make some questions about the topic that appear during media's observation activity. The questions should be the combination of factual questions and hypothetic questions. Here, the teacher will help the students who have difficulties in making the questions. The goal of this activity is to develop curiosity, creativity, the ability to formulate questions in order to create a critics' mind that is educated and want to learn more (Noh, 2013).

The next activity is information collecting. In this activity the students in group will be asked to collect as much as information about the topic. The information can be obtained from experimenting things, searching information on the internet, reading the other sources, observing the object or event, or interviewing. The information should be relevant and easy to be comprehended. The main goal of this activity is to apply the ability to collect information (Noh, 2013). After collection information, it's continued by associating activity. In this activity, the students will be asked to process all of information that they got from the three previous activities. The main goal of this activity is to develop students' ability to apply procedures and to think both deductively and inductively in concluding something. The last activity is communicating. Here, students will present the result of observation and conclusion and have the others give feedback. The main goal of this activity is to develop the ability to show the opinion briefly and clearly, and to develop the ability to speak fluently and correctly.

The last teaching activity is close activities. In this phase, the teacher together with the students concludes the lesson. There are also activities in which the teacher evaluates the students learning progression and prepares plan to improve the students' weakness on the lesson taught whether the students need more remedial, assignment, or counseling. To make students be refresh after studying, teacher can also give some entertains such as videos, songs, or interesting stories.

## **B. The Implementation**

In this section, the writer will explain about two important things in implementing discovery learning strategy in teaching reading report text to senior high school students. It begins with the teacher's preparation such as preparing a

lesson plan, classroom setting and media. Then, it will be continued by teaching process, in which the students face three major implementing activities namely introduction activity, core activity, and close activity.

### **1. Teacher Preparation**

There are three things that the teachers need to consider before coming to the class and applying discovery learning strategy. They are a lesson plan, classroom settings, and media. In constructing a lesson plan, a teacher needs to consider seven things related with the preparation just like have been mentioned in the previous explanation.

To set the classroom in applying discovery learning strategy, the classes in which the discovery learning is applied should offer experiences to make students want to learn or be motivated to learning (Conklin, 2010:215). These experiences must have an amount of uncertainty, which in turn will increase students' interest and curiosity to solve the problem. The teacher also must carefully plan the questions which should be asked in order to help students to attain the topic being taught (Cetin 2004:15). Then, the teacher needs to consider that discovery learning is a natural process (Nutting, 2013:8). It means that when acquiring the knowledge, there are no any bonding rules that can regulate students tightly. Nutting (2013:8) also stated that learning is process-oriented, not just fact or goal-oriented. So, the major thing that teacher needs to do is to make sure that in the end of the lesson, students not only get the fact of the information, but they are also expected to master the skills implied in the activities.

Media that the teachers need to prepare is should be relevant with the topic being taught and can make students feel motivated to study such as videos, pictures, concrete things, and other printed texts related to the topic. Internet is also a suitable media for this strategy if the school can provide *wi-fi* network.

### **2. Teaching Procedures**

In this teaching process section, the writer will explain three major activities namely introduction activity, core activity, and close activity.

#### **a. Introduction activity**

It begins with greeting, checking students' attendance, and motivating students to study. After the students feel motivated, the teacher will introduce the topic and its objectives to the students. Then, teacher gives the students text that is going to be read, for this section is text about bee.

#### **b. Core activity**

##### **1) Observing**

It begins by the teacher explains the stages of discovery learning strategy that the students face during reading activities After explaining the stages, the teacher will ask the students to observe the videos, pictures, scenarios or any other media related to Bee without giving any information about bees, but she/he can give some questions that lead the students to the concept of bee. It aims to make students motivated to explore the topic by themselves. This activity is called *Stimulation Stage*, the first stage of Discovery learning strategy.

##### **2) Questioning**

At this stage, the students are required to prepare some questions about information showed by media that has been presented by the teacher. The

questions should be the combination of factual questions (questions that ask about fact) and hypothetic questions (questions that need proving). Here, the teacher will help students who have difficulties in making questions. After helping students prepare some question, the teacher will divide the students into several groups, and then give them the opportunity to write all of information that they have got from the observation activities. Then, the teacher will ask the students to discuss the information and choose some of them that they think is completely correct. This information will be used as the tentative answers of questions (hypothesis). This is what is called by *problem statement*, the second stage of discovery learning.

### **3) Information collecting**

Here, students will collect as many as information about bees (called by *data collection* stage). The information can be obtained from watching videos, experimenting activities, reading the other sources, observing the object or event, interviewing, and browsing in the internet. The information later will be used to prove whether the tentative answer in hypothesis right or wrong.

### **4) Associating**

In the association activity, the students who are still in group are asked to identify and process the information that has been obtained from *data collection* stage (called by *data processing* stage). Then, they will compare that information with the tentative answers in hypothesis and identify whether the information right or wrong. After that, students together with teacher will start to process the text that has been given in the beginning of the teaching learning process and they will also try to identify the goals, social functions, generic structures, and language features of the text (called by *verification* stage).

To help the students understand the text quickly, the teacher should provide some guiding questions and address the necessary vocabulary. There are four techniques that can be used to teach vocabulary in applying discovery learning strategy; they are using dictionaries, doing contextual guessing, analyzing word units, and doing social strategies such as asking teacher, classmates, or other groups (Al-Fuhaid, 2004). If there is other information that students need to know, the teacher has to present it at this time. After understand the text, students compare the information presented in the text with the information from data collection and the tentative hypothesis, to prove whether they are right or wrong.

### **5) Communicating**

In communication activity, students will make the conclusion of the text and the information that they got from all of previous activities. This is what is called by *generalization* stage. After making the conclusion, each of the group will present it in front of the class and have the other groups give comments and feedbacks.

### **c. Close activity**

In this last phase, the teacher together with students makes the summary of the lesson and provides feedback on the process and the outcomes of learning. After that, the teacher will show some entertainments to the students to make

them refresh and do not feel stress of the task such as giving an interesting video or song.

### **3. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Discovery Learning Strategy**

The advantages of discovery learning based on the implementation above are: a) discovery learning strategy enriches students' background knowledge, b) discovery learning strategy enriches students' vocabulary, c) discovery learning strategy encourages students' motivation to study, d) discovery learning strategy creates students' curiosity, e) discovery learning strategy brings out creativity, f) discovery learning strategy makes the students learn both, facts or information about the text and skills, g) discovery learning strategy increases students' confidence.

However, besides having many advantages, the writer also finds the disadvantages of implementing discovery learning strategy, they are:

- a) Discovery learning strategy will require too much time for preparation and learning.
- b) The number of the students. The number of the students is almost always too high to use discovery learning especially in describing lesson because it is importance to interact one-on-one. On the other hand, group interaction is also important to achieve the collective experiences of the group; therefore, if the number of students is too small, the collective experiences are limited.
- c) The limited number of the lesson to be taught. In applying discovery learning strategy, students are required to learn the topic deeply. Besides that, there are also many stages faced by students during reading activity. This situation makes teacher cannot continue the learning process to the next lesson quickly. So, it can be guessed that not all of the lessons can be taught with the number of time given.

To solve the problem, the write suggests the following things:

- a) The allocation time for preparation in implementing discovery learning strategy can be decreased through asking the students to do what they need to do before coming to the meeting used discovery learning as the strategy. So, whenever the teacher comes to class, the students have been ready to continue the process to the next stages.
- b) If the number of the students is too high, the teacher is expected to focus more on the students that find much difficult to comprehend the text. She also can choose some clever students to help their friends to get understanding. In the opposite, if the number of the students is too small, the teacher can ask students to prepare more questions so that the time does not remain and the collective experiences of the group still can be achieved.
- c) To solve it the limited number of lessons to be taught, teacher can condense the lesson by grouping the topics that into the most important topic and the less important one.



## CONCLUSION

Discovery learning strategy is a strategy in which the students are not given the content of the lesson in the beginning of the study, but they have to find it by themselves through the six stages namely *stimulation, problem statement, data collection, data processing, verification, and generalization*.

For the suggestions, the writer explains several things to be considered by the teacher, they are: 1) the teacher must carefully plan the guidance questions which should be asked in order to help students to attain the topic being taught, 2) the teacher should consider that in applying discovery learning strategy, learning happens naturally, 3) the teacher in the school that does not have un-complete library book and do not have *wi-fi* network, should prepare various media such as interesting videos, related pictures, and simple report texts to help students to find much information that will be used as the basic background knowledge to comprehend the text, 4) the teacher has to guide the students intensively, so whenever is needed, students can ask directly, especially to get the meaning of the difficult words.

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