



USING MAKING CONNECTIONS STRATEGY IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Fatma Wahyuni¹, Jufri²

English Department
Faculty of Languages and Arts
State University of Padang
email: fatmawahyuni@gmail.com

Abstract

Lack of the students' reading comprehension ability toward English text that they read is commonly influenced by two main factors, they are come from students' side and teacher's side. *First*, the factors that come from the students' itself such as lack of students' reading motivation, it affects less of effort that they do in getting deeper comprehension. Besides, lack of exercise that students do also make them do not use to comprehend the text, most of students often cheat the others when they make reading exercise. As a result, they are unable to explain what exactly they read and write as answers from the question that are constructed based on the text. Next factor is teacher's factor, the method that teacher use still do not motivate students to interact actively with the text that they read. As the effect, students assume that reading is boring activity because it does not make sense for them. To solve those problems, the writer recommends a reading comprehension strategy called as *making connections*. This strategy guide students to connect the information that they find in the text with themselves, the other texts, and the world, so they can interact and involve actively with the text. The teacher can starts the lesson by activating students' background knowledge and model how to apply this strategy. The connections that students made will help students to comprehend the text and it is hoped that they reading comprehension ability increase as well

Key words: reading comprehension, making connections strategy

A. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of important English skills that has to be mastered by students since it always supports their achievement for now and in the future. Because of the important of reading skill for students' life, reading becomes a skill that must be taught at school. Even though reading lesson has been given to students, they are still difficult in reaching the main goal of reading which is comprehension. In fact, comprehension is not an easy task because comprehension is a complex process. Linse and Nunan (2005: 71) state that reading comprehension is very complex because it requires high level of thinking, it more than just decode specific word. It can be understood that when someone

¹ English ELTSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on....

² Lecturer of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang



wants to comprehend a text, he should think aloud because he does not only translate the word that he read on the text, but he should also obtain the meaning that writer tells on the text and it is not easy.

According to The RAND Reading Study Group in Pardo (2004:272) comprehension is “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language”. It means that comprehension cannot be achieved without contribution of interaction and involvement reader with the text. Unfortunately, most of students do not interact actively with the text that they read and as the result, they fail to obtain the meaning of the text.

Tovani (2000:14) divides struggling readers in to two. *First*, word callers who can decode the word but do not understand or remember what they have read. *Second*, resistive readers, they can read but they choose not to. They assumed that reading is wasting time because they will not understand what exactly they have read. They have already judged themselves will not understand the text, even before actually reading the text. They also attend to cheating others when they do the exercise or wait teacher explanation. The second types show that they have low of motivation and it affect they give less effort in understanding the text.

To overcome these problem, teacher needs to teach them the available reading comprehension strategy. McNamara(2007) says that using appropriate reading comprehension strategy really influence students’ reading comprehension. Because of that the writer recommend *making connections* strategy to improve students’ reading comprehension ability.

Harvey and Goudvis (2000) promote a strategy called as *making connections* strategy. In this strategy, students will be guide to connect the text with themselves, the other text, and the world. When students make these connections, it means that they have interacted with the text actively. The interaction between the readers and the text are very important in comprehending text, Harvey and Goudvis (2007:17) state that readers cannot understand what they read without connecting the information from the text with what they have already known. In simply, it can be said that connecting background knowledge with the text is a necessity that readers must do when they want to comprehend the text and *making connections* strategy help them to develop it. There were some researchers which had been conducted related to teaching reading. One of them was the research which was conducted by Wulandari and Amri (2013) which was focused on the use of OK4R in improving students’ reading comprehension.

Making connections strategy is much needed for students in comprehending a text. This strategy drills the students to comprehend the text because students will bring new information to what they have known. When the students do it, they will more involve with the text and at the same time their reading comprehension increase, too. Harvey in Harvey and Goudvis (2007:15) states that by improving students’ ability in connecting the text with their self and the world, students’ ability in storing knowledge will be increased. When their store knowledge develop, it will increase their ability to develop their insight as well. They will think more deeply and critically during reading a folk tale, an editorial, a feature

article and so on. On the other word, the role of connections between background knowledge and the information in the text which made by students is very important.

Since the relevancy of reading comprehension with the ability of students in connecting their background knowledge with the information on the text is very close, there are three types of connection that will help students in enhance their comprehension. There are text-to-self connections (T-S), text-to-text connections (T-T) and text-to-world connections (T-W). (Harvey and Goudvis ,2007: 92-97)

The first connection is text-to-self connection which is coded as T-S (Harvey and Goudvis, 2007: 92). In this connection, readers will connect the information that they find in the text with their personal experience. Students can connect the characters, problems, and event to themselves. The second connection is Text-to-text connections (T-T). According to Harvey and Goudvis (2007: 96-97), the purpose of this connection is to connect ideas and themes across text. Several things that might include in text-to-text connections are comparing characters' personalities and actions, comparing story events and plot lines, comparing lessons, themes, or messages in stories, finding common themes, writing style or perspectives in the work of a single author, comparing the treatment of common themes by different authors, and comparing different versions of familiar stories.

The last connection is text-to-world, which is coded as T-W. This connection demands students' background knowledge about the topic that is discussed in the text. Harvey and Goudvis (2007: 100) state students will get advantages from their background knowledge because it will make them easy to relate the issue on the text with the world. When students accustomed to connect the text with the world, the lesson can be received well by the students because the information that they get from the text can be compared with reality in real life.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Implementing *Making Connections* Strategy in Teaching Reading Comprehension at Senior High school

Before implementing *making connections* strategy, the teacher has to prepare material, media, and lesson plan. Teacher can use video and worksheet to activate students' background knowledge. Then, teacher also has to make lesson plane in order to make the process of learning flows smoothly.

2. Teaching procedures

a. Pre-teaching

Pre-teaching activity is the first stage in teaching process where teacher prepares the students' readiness to start the lesson mentally and physically.

- 1) The teacher will check students' attendance and classroom's situation, for example, teacher asks students to check the cleanness of the classroom, then teacher also ask students to pray.
- 2) The teacher stimulates students' previous lesson and ask them to connect it to the topic today.
- 3) The teacher also gives some motivations for students before coming to the lesson.

- 4) In addition, if the teacher will use in focus, she or he must check whether is it working well or not.

b. Whilst-Teaching

There are three phases in whilst-teaching. They are exploration, elaboration, and confirmation.

1) Exploration

- a) The teacher guides students to activate their background knowledge by giving them a worksheet that consist of several pictures which related with the topic that will be read in the text. Its' purpose to help the students build their schemata. There are some of examples of the question on worksheet:

- Do you have social media?
- Do you like to use social media?
- What kinds of social media do you have?
- How much do you spend your time in checking social media?
- Who are the highest user of social media nowadays?
- Do you think social media have bad effect for the user?

- b) The teacher shows a video, picture, or song that related to the topic.
 c) The teacher invite student to sharing their opinion toward the video.
 d) After students seem have already had background knowledge about the topic that will be read in the text, teacher introduce them to *making connections* strategy.
 e) The teacher explain about the advantages of using *making connections* strategy for developing students' ability in comprehending the text.
 f) The teacher shows a table of connections types, in each of types consist of several questions that will help students connect the text with themselves, the others text and the world.

Quote from the text	Connections type
	Text-to-self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is this similar to my life? • How is this different from my life? • Has something like this ever happened to me? • How does this relate to my life? • What was my feeling when I read this?
	Text-to-text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this remind me of another book that I have read? • How is this text similar to the other text that I have read? • How is this different from other

	<p>books I have read?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I read about something like this before?
	<p>Text-to-world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does remind me of the real world? • How is this text similar or different from things that happen in the real world?

(the questions are adapted from Drapper,2010)

2) Elaboration

- a) Teacher will distribute a text about social media are bad for teenager and ask them to look it briefly.

(The text retrived from http://www.belajarbahasainggris.us/2016/02/contoh-analytical-exposition-text_3.html)

- b) Teacher gives opportunities to some students to read the text aloud. Others also should pay attention to the text.
- c) Teacher will read text aloud then take a quote from the text and connect to her- self. Then, the teacher writes it in the column Text-to-Self.

There is an example of connections that is made:

Quote from the text	Connections type
<p>Social media Web sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and many others have become nearly inescapable facets of modern life, particularly for teenagers. Social media is becoming more than just a part of their world, it's becoming their world. Teens are spending more and more time online, usually on a social media platform like Facebook or Twitter. Most teens now have smart phones where they are on social media networks all throughout the day. They are constantly texting, tweeting, and posting pictures via Snapchat and Instagram. However, hyper-connected to social media could be bad for them.</p>	<p>Text-to-self: It reminds me about my younger brother. Almost his time is spending by checking his social media.It seems that he can not pass a day without his social media. I think it gives bad influence for him and I get what the writer mean why social media bad for teenager.</p>
<p>Today teens don't know how to disconnect. Social media has allowed them to take their life online from the</p>	<p>Text-to-text I ever read article about how social media influence teenager's mental</p>

<p>time they wake up till they back to sleep via their smart phone. A new study has found that teenagers who engage with social media during the night could be damaging their sleep and increasing their risk of anxiety and depression. Teenagers spoke about the pressure they felt to make themselves available 24/7, and the resulting anxiety if they did not respond immediately to texts or posts. Teens are so emotionally invested in social media that a fifth of secondary school pupils will wake up at night and log on, just to make sure they don't miss out.</p>	<p>health. It is similar with information in the text, social media make teenager become anxiety and have low self esteem because they always compare themselves with other in social media. It make them stress.</p>
<p>Another impact social media has had on teens is teens being more comfortable online doing things that they should be more sensitive to doing. A separate study by the National Citizen Service found that, rather than talking to their parents, girls seek comfort on social media when they are worried.</p>	<p>Text-to-World Nowadays, many parents complaints about their children prefer to share their feeling in social media rather than talking to their parent. It looks like they more comfortable to spending their time with their social media rather than interact with their family</p>

- d) Teacher asks some students to connect the quote from the text that they read to themselves, the other text, and to the world. The volunteer students will write down his connections on the board, so that the other students can understand the ways to apply this strategy.
 - e) Next, teacher asks all of students to read the text again and write the connections on the table as it is shown. When the students connects themselves with the text, the other text that they have read before, and the real world with the information the text, students will fell more enthusiastic in reading. In addition, through making connections activity, reading more will make sense for students.
 - f) To check students' comprehension, teacher gives several questions based on text. Teacher will also ask what type of connections that they make in order to comprehend the meaning of the text and how those connections help them to understand the text.
- 3) Confirmation
- a) Teacher and students discuss the answer together.

- b) Teacher gives clarification toward students' answers. If there are several problems that students face during using *making connections* strategy, teacher will guide them to fix those problems.
- c) Teacher gives motivation for students who are still difficult to comprehend the text. If they are still confused about how to use *making connections* strategy, they are allowed to ask the teacher or to their friends.
- d) Teacher gives a new text as an assignment or homework for students to practice *making connection* strategy by themselves.

c. Post-Teaching

- 1) Teacher and students conclude the lesson that day and give the chance to students to ask about the lesson.
- 2) Teacher reminds students to keep practicing and do the homework. The homework will be collected in the next meeting.
- 3) Teacher close the class.

3. Advantages of the *making connections* strategy

There are several advantages of *making connections* strategy in improving students' reading comprehension :

- a. *Making connections* strategy increases students critical thinking because they do not only read the text literally, but they have to make connections their previous knowledge to the text. (Harvey and Goudvis, 2007:15).
- b. By applying *making connections* strategy, students are trained to always involve their background knowledge whenever they read every kinds of text.(Harvey and Goudvis, 2007: 101)
- c. *Making connections* strategy will make reading activity more fun and interesting for the students (Richardson, et al:122)
- d. Through text-to-self connections, students will understand more what the writer wants to tell because they also involve their feeling toward the event in the text because they have been in the same situation with the event in the text (Harvey and Goudvis:95)
- e. Text-to-text connection will help students in linking what they have read from other texts such as from other lesson, newspaper, articles, and so on to the information on the text. It is helpful to make students always remember what they have already read and learned.(Harvey and Goudvis: 96-97; Richardson, et al:122)

C. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusion

The existence of reading comprehension is always needed for increasing students' reading comprehension ability. One of those good strategy is *Making connections* strategy. This strategy improve students' reading comprehension through activating their background knowledge. The involving of students' background knowledge during reading the text is very important because it will make them more interest and motivate to read the text. *Making connections* strategy help students to see the text not only based on the information that are presented by the writer in the text, but they are also demanded to connect the text with their experience, previous knowledge, and the reality around them.

There are three types of connection that students should make when they want to comprehend the text. The first type is Text-to-Self (T-S) connections. In this connection, students have to relate the information in the text with their own experience. For example after reading the information from the text, it reminds him to the similar event that has ever in to his life or the information that he get from the text is different with his life and he compare about it. Next type of connections is Text-to-Text (T-T) connection. Students connect the information on the text with the others information from their previous reading. For example someone ever read an article which also talk about that topic, but the writer offer different view. The last connection that students make is Text-to World. This connections make students see the topic in the based on the reality in the world. Through that connecting, students will more involve actively with the text and reading will make sense for them. So, their reading comprehension increase as well.

2. Suggestions

For *Making connections* strategy will be more effective, writer suggest several things: Teacher should create motivate classroom' atmosphere. It will make students involve actively in learning teaching process. Teacher has to select interesting text in teaching reading. More interesting and familiar topic that is chosen will make students easy to connect their background knowledge with the information that presented in the text. Teacher is suggested to check the connection that students made to clarify whether the connection is important or not in helping students comprehend the text. Teacher have to master the text before teaching especially when she or he teach students how to apply *Making connections* strategy. When teacher do not understand the text completely, it will make her or him difficult to model how to connect text with self, other text, and the world. There is always a possibility where students find trigger words that distract their attention and cause they make unnecessary inferences. The students should to stop a while and check that word are important for meaning or not.

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