



TEACHING READING BY USING COMIC STRIPS TO IMPROVE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' COMPREHENSION

Yondrizal Maulana¹ and Fitrawati²

English Department
Faculty of Languages and Arts
State University of Padang
yondrizal212@gmail.com

Abstract

Reading comprehension is the ability to get information in a text and be able to interpret it appropriately. Reading comprehension is combination information from a text and own background knowledge to understanding the message conveyed by the author. However, not all of the Junior High School students learn reading comprehension easily which is caused by the learning activity which is not really interesting so that the students get bored. A blend of methods and media which the writer trying to describe in this paper, is expected to improve students' skills in reading comprehension. The media used is comic strips and the applying method is PQRST. It is kinds of activity where students are ask to read a comic and trying to understand quickly what the story is contained in the comic.

Key Words: *Reading comprehension, Comic, PQRST (Preview, Question, Read, State and Test) technique*

A. INTRODUCTION

For education, English is a part of the school curriculum and it is needed for all levels especially in informal education. In learning English, the students should master four language skills. They are listening, reading, writing and speaking. According to Harmer (2007, p.265) the skills are divided into two. They are productive skills and receptive skills. The productive skills are speaking and writing, because learners need to articulate words and write to produce language. Listening and reading is receptive skills, because the learners receive language by listening to conversation, music, and video and also by reading comprehension, newspaper, poem, book, etc.

As one of the receptive skills, reading comprehension is very important for students to get much information from a text. Therefore by using the ability of reading comprehension someone will know better what the text is about. Reading without understanding the actual meaning of the text, the reader just completes the recitation and no get any information from the text. So, reading comprehension helps the reader to find and to understand what is the meaning or main point of the

¹ English ELTSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on March 2017

² Lecturer of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang



text. Reading comprehension is one of the important skills in mastering English. In national final exam, reading comprehension is one of the skills tested. This indicates that reading comprehension has to be taught well.

In order to be successful in teaching reading, the teacher needs to consider some factors which are possible to affect the reading learning process. The factors are classified into internal and external factors. First, the internal factor is related to word recognizing and comprehension. Second, the external factor is related to some components that are crucial to support the reading learning process such as the motivation to learn, the facility to learn and the class interaction. Besides, teachers should realize that “those who employ reading strategy appropriately while reading would show higher success in reading comprehension and become good readers” (Arianto, 2017).

Problems on internal factors such as word recognizing and comprehension are those are students difficult to recognize and identifying the words, the speed in recognizing words, and the accuracy and fluency in recognizing words. Indeed, fluent word identification appears to be a pre-requisite for comprehending text. If a reader slowly analyzes many of the words in a text, memory and attention needed for comprehension are drained by word analysis.

Problems on external factors generally come from outside, either from parents should motivate their children to learn, the availability of facilities for students in the process of learning and teaching and student interaction in the classroom. So it can be said that external factors are some important things to help and support students in the learning process.

In fact, not all teachers are aware of those factors. There are still many problems found in the reading teaching and learning process at junior high schools, for example, the problem of students' motivation. Students are less motivated to be active learners in a reading class. The other common problem of reading is related to the teaching material. An ordinary material without any variation makes students feel bored, because they can guess what the next steps that will taught by teacher. For example, teacher usually used one learning source such as handbook or LKS because they do not want to be bothered with different or new teaching methods.

Based on some of the factors above, it can be concluded that the students turned out to have less interest to read because of the lack of source/material which they can get. Teacher tend to use one source only in teaching, it also resulted in a lack of interest in reading. They often get bored because the material and the way of the teaching are often unattractive. Therefore, here the writer wants to make a new step in the learning process by using comic as the media.

According to Arsyad (2003) media are graphic, photographic or electronic instrument for catching, processing, or rearranging visual or verbal communication. The purpose of media is to facilitate between communication and learning, and to make the learning process easier. Sometimes teacher do not use the interesting and stimulating variation or innovation to the teaching learning process in the classroom so that students often being bored or uninterested to the teaching and learning process in classroom. As the result, they are not motivated

to learn English seriously. In other words, English teacher should be able to find the appropriate media in process of teaching and learning the reading.

One of the interesting appropriate media in teaching reading is comic. Smith (2006: 6) states that a good method to encourage reading is the use of comic as media in teaching process. Comic has been suggested as classroom media due to their broad appeal to almost any age group or learner level because they depict real dialogue and culture.

B. DISCUSSION

Comic is a story being presented with pictures. As Smith (2006:4) stated that comic strips is a comic in the style that appears in a newspaper. These comics utilize panels, having a minimum of one and usually a maximum of three or four. While these strips may centre on the same cast of characters in each strips, the accompanying stories are often meant to stand on their own. While comic is a basically a comic strips that runs on for a number of pages. Although the stories contained within a comic book are, like comic strips, meant to stand on their own, comic books are typically part of a serial story, and frequently require the reader to have knowledge of past issues.

Comic books have always been a favourite for children. Comic books are benefit in education because of its inspiring power. Sherman & Wright (1996) introduced a teaching strategy using newspaper comic strips to promote higher level thinking in elementary and secondary students. They use cartoons in the classroom to support teaching and learning by generating discussion, stimulating investigation and promoting learner involvement and motivation.

Comics can make students inclined towards the regulation of reading, particularly those who do not really take pleasure in reading or have a fear of disappointment or failure. When a student is reading for fun, they feel a certain amount of control in the reading process. In contrast, when they are studying a literary text, there are a little room for innovation and creativity and make the students will be bored and they not understand what they reads.

The key to getting these learners to read is to engage their imagination and interest. Comics are a perfect vehicle. They divide up the text into manageable chunks, which are supported by images. Berkowitz & Packer (2001) point out comic books as motivational an educational tool can be used in a variety of teaching and training settings.

PQRST method is one method of reading which is similar or even same as the SQ3R method. PQRST method is a method of reading the passage which consists of five activities; preview, question, read, state / summarize, and test and some additional activities that consist of discussing the questions, discuss the answers, determining the main sentence, sentences, main ideas, and ideas of explanatory. PQRST actually is a method or strategy of reading a book which is especially intended for the benefit of the study, but researchers can borrow concepts and measures for the benefit of this method of teaching read in school, especially for students who are already classified as readers advanced (Nurhadi, 1987).

The PQRST method helps to enhance students' comprehension of a text. In teaching reading comprehension using PQRST, there are some steps which have to be noticed. First, the teacher will introduce the strategies to the students. It can be done by presenting the step in applying PQRST technique in the reading process. Then, the teacher will provide the text which will be comprehended. Then, the students will follow the PQRST technique steps (preview, question, read, state, and test). The last is evaluating the learning process by asking the students whether they comprehend the text or not.

1. Preparation

Dewey (1938) warned that preparation was a treacherous idea when applied to education. It means the teacher should have the brilliant ideas in teaching in the class room, so the teaching process runs well.

In teaching reading, teacher has several steps that will be implemented to support the activities of the students in the reading process.

- a. Teacher prepares the necessary materials or media in learning and the student in a condition ready to carry out learning activities.
- b. The teacher distributes materials / media in the form of a collection of comic strips to the students and make sure all students get the material.
- c. Teacher explains what activities students will do later.
- d. Teacher ensure all students are able to read properly and well, that is by asking a few students who are considered less able to read it back.
- e. Teacher evaluates students to see if they really understand what they read.

2. Implementation

Teaching reading to junior high school students through PQRST technique, there are some teaching procedures that have to be done by the teacher. These procedures are divided into three parts: pre-teaching activities, whilst-teaching activities, and post-teaching activities.

1) Pre-Teaching Activities

Before beginning the teaching and learning process in the classroom, a teacher has to do pre-teaching activities. Some activities in pre-teaching like pray, take attendance, and brainstorming.

2) Whilst – Teaching Activities

In this part the teacher tell a short story and ask the student's knowledge about the story, and after all students understand about the story or get the point on the aspects of the story like, characters, time and places, teacher begins with give same comic book to whole students in the classroom, and ask the students to read the comic book before.

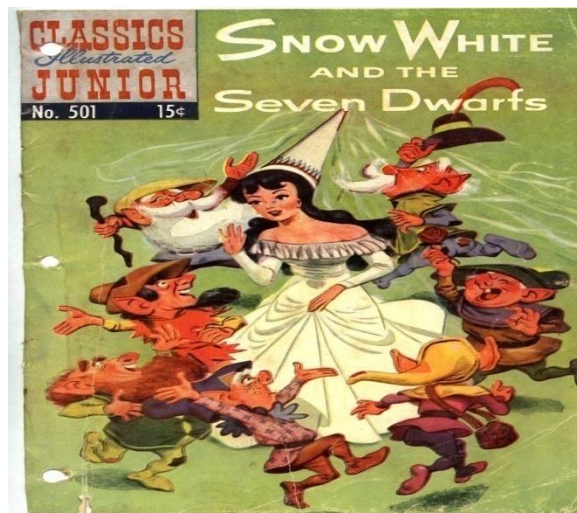
a) Exploration

Students will use comic strips as a media for teaching reading by using PQRST method, before teacher proceeding to the main activity. Teacher needs to explain what steps will be done by the students in this activity. The activities are as follows:

- (i) **Preview**, in this step the teacher shows the picture related to the topic they are going to be learned in order to activate their prior knowledge.

Teacher asks the students what is the first think that arise in their mind about the picture. In this case the teacher let the students answer freely.

1.1 Cover of the comic strips



(ii) **Question**, the teacher develops questions to which the students want to find answers. This question is a question that arises out of curiosity after reading in general.

b) Elaboration

(i) **Read**, the teacher asks students to read the comic strips and if there is any difficult words, students should note the words and then the teacher will discuss it with the students.

(ii) **State**, the students are asked to make a summary of the comic strips they have read carefully beforehand. Of course, this summary should be done using their own language, and not allowed to copy and paste. The teacher chooses one of the students and asks them to present their work in front of the class.

c) Confirmation

(i) **Test**, the teacher checks students understanding about the comic they have read. Teacher can test them by giving some questions related to the story of the comic strips.

3) Post-Teaching Activities

Post teaching is the end of all process of teaching activity. Here the teacher reviewing, summarizing and assessing the material he had taught. In this stage

the teacher seek for understanding of the students about what material they have mastered. To do it, teacher can give homework or assignments. Teacher gives the students comic and ask them to read at home.

a) Preparation

In this step, the teacher should prepare several things before teaching speaking pronunciation in the class, which are:

(i) Selecting Teaching Materials

Teacher should choose materials that are appropriate with syllabus and also curriculum. That material must be appropriate with students' ability level and their interest. It is the film which are appropriate with Senior High School students.

(ii) Preparing Media

The media that will be used for are laptop, projector, LCD, and speaker.

(iii) Preparing Lesson Plan

In making a lesson plan, there are several essential elements in preparing lesson plan. They element is objective, material, limitation of time, and what students and teacher do in the classroom that is activities itself.

3. Teaching Procedures

Teaching procedures are divided into three parts. They are Pre-Activity, Whilst Activity, and Post Activity.

a. Pre-Teaching Activity

In this phase, there are some preparations that teacher has to do before presenting the lesson in the classroom.

- 1) Preparing the students, both psychologically and physically to join in the learning process. Teacher can start the lesson by greeting the students in order to catch their first attention and asking students' condition. Then, check students' attendance.
- 2) Before coming to the lesson, teacher has to create a good atmosphere in the classroom in order to make them enjoy and comfortable to study and teacher checks the readiness of the students.
- 3) Teacher builds students' background knowledge by asking several questions related to lesson—the expression of complimenting.

b. Whilst Teaching Activity

In the whilst-teaching, there are some processes which involve, they are exploration, elaboration, and confirmation.

1) Exploration

- a) After building students' background knowledge about the materials—the expression of complimenting, teacher gives students a dialog of expression of complimenting by giving the printed out.
- b) Teacher gives questions about the dialog.

- c) Teacher asks the students to work in group. The members of group consist of 2-3 students each group and should be seated next to partners so they can practice with each other.
- d) Teacher asks students to pay attention to the dialog that has been given and try to analyze how to express and speak in English intonation from the dialog.
- e) After the students analyze the dialog, teacher asks students to practice the dialog in group.

2) Elaboration

In elaborating process, the students are given an example of dialog through English film. In this case, teacher presents the film by using laptop, projector, and speakers because it is more interesting. The teacher shows the film which is related to the lesson. After that, the teacher asks students to pay attention to the dialog of the native speakers speak.

After watching the film, the teacher asks the students to practice the dialog from the film in group. After that, they discuss the information about expression and intonation form from the dialog.

After practice and discuss the dialog by using English intonation, the teacher needs to do these processes:

- a) Teacher explains how to apply the intonation by displaying the text on a whiteboard by giving a graphic of the sentences from the dialog the film showed.
- b) After explaining the dialog using English intonation, the students are asked to practice the dialog was used in film by letting them apply the intonation that they learned.
- c) Asking the students in groups to play the dialogues that they learned in front of class.

3) Confirmation

In this process, the teacher and the students discuss the result of the elaboration. The teacher leads the students to elaborate their understanding about the materials. The students do the task given by the teachers in group. The teacher then gives some rewards for the students as the achievement of the learning.

c. Post-Teaching Activity

In post-teaching activity, the teacher and the students evaluate the process of learning. The teacher creates conclusion of the materials by doing reflection of the activities that have been done. Teacher gives feedback from process and the output of learning. Then, the teacher and students conclude or summarize the lesson together. At the end, the teacher may give the students homework as follows up activities and conveys briefly the lesson for the next meeting.

C. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that teaching reading by using comic strips as media and also supported by a different technique

which is PQRST technique is kind of a new method in teaching English skill to junior high school students. This strategy helps English teacher to create a pleasurable circumstance in the classroom, and the process of teaching and learning can be more interesting for students.

In order that comic strips as media for teaching reading can be used effectively and efficiently, some suggestions for the teaching and learning English are proposed as follows: The English teacher should be selective in choosing teaching media/aids to help his/her job in explaining the material, teacher also should not remain passive and give up all efforts to make improvements both in his/her performance in class and the understanding of the students to the material.

Note: This article is written based on the writer's paper with the advisor Fitrawati, S. S., M.Pd

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arianto, M. A. (2017). Critical Reading Strategy in Terms of Gender Used by the Four Graduate Students in the ELT Program of Universitas Negeri Malang. *DISERTASI dan TESIS Program Pascasarjana UM*.
- Azhar Arsyad, 4. 2003. *Media Pembelajaran*. Jakarta: Rajawali Press.
- Berkowitz, Joy., Packer, Todd. 2001. *Heroes in the Classroom: Comic Books in Art Education*. National Art Education Association
- Dewey, J. 1938. *Experience and Education*. 1997 edition. New York: Touchstone.
- Harmer, J. 2007. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Longman.
- Nurhadi. 1987. *Membaca Cepat dan Efektif*. Bandung: Sinar Baru.
- Smith, Andrew. 2006. *Teaching with Comics*. University of Lethbridge: Canada
- Wright, P., McCormick, B., Sherman, S., & McMahan, G. 1996. *The role of human resource practices in petro-chemical refinery performance*. Paper presented at the 1996 Academy of Management meeting, Cincinnati, OH.