



## **USING DETERMINING IMPORTANCE STRATEGY IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

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### **Abstract**

Students' ability to understand text is very low, because of three factors. The first factor is the lack of students' motivation to read, this problem can cause the decreasing of students' effort to understand text. The lack of practice can cause students not able to comprehend the text and explain what the text is about. The second factor is the lack of students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar that can cause them to not able to understand the meaning of sentences in the text. The third factor is the methods that teachers using in their teaching "*reading comprehension*" activity which still can not motivate students to active in reading. This paper offer a strategy that known as "*determining importance*". This strategy can help students to find the important information among unimportant information in the text. Teacher can begin the lesson activity by activating the students' prior knowledge, then teach them how to use the strategy properly. The result of this strategy can improve students' ability to comprehend the text.

**Key Words:** reading comprehension, English, determining importance

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Reading comprehension is an important skill among four main skills in English, which are reading, listening, writing, and speaking, that need to be possessed by high school students. Students can catch the ideas from the text by reading comprehension and learning from what they read. The idea and the information from reading a text will be useful for them in feature to solve some tasks and tests. Besides, reading can add student's background knowledge and treats ability of students in thinking process. Students who active in reading comprehension activity will get more new vocabularies than the students who aren't active in reading comprehension. By reading, students will integrate their background knowledge to get information from the text which they read. Without reading comprehension, the students will have difficulties in learning English and solve some of English test. Therefore, the student's reading comprehension skill need to be improved.

Pardo (2004:272) argues that reading comprehension is important for students that learn information from a text or a book. She also explains that

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readers will get into a process in which they construct meaning or get information by interacting with the text through combination of background knowledge, ideas in the text, and how they relate to the text itself. According to Yovanoff, Duesbery, Alonzo, & Tindal (2005:6) readers that have mature reading comprehension skill are able to progress from learning to read stage to reading to learn stage.

There are three factors that can make it difficult for students in reading comprehension activity. The first problem is that students get some difficulties in identifying information of the texts, topic, main idea, and another information of the texts because of the lack of students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. The second problem is that most of students have lack of interest in reading, especially reading English material, and make them less motivated to learning reading. Students usually do not active in reading activity, they are not curious to read and do not want to explore some information from the text. The third problem is lack of strategies used by the teachers. Strategy in teaching is directly related to the presentation of the lesson, which a teacher should use, depends on the nature of subject. One of the ways to help students to face these difficulties is using determining importance strategy in teaching reading comprehension.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension give readers opportunity to interact with the text directly. Rice (2009:4) say reading comprehension is a process of interaction between reader and printed language in order to build some information, which reader have to use strategies and problem-solving process in dealing with printed language and the result of the process will be influenced by reader's background knowledge, experience, and purpose of reading. The readers who do reading comprehension will act to deal with the text or printed language by using their skills in reading in order to get meaning and understanding.

Reading comprehension is an activity of reading to deeply understand the information that appears in the text. Hoover & Gough in Yee (2010:12) said that reading comprehension is a process of recognizing words and transforming those words into meaningful information. Readers who do reading comprehension will achieve information, understanding it, and develop that information into a meaningful idea that occurs in one reading activity. Once a meaningful idea is developed by reader, the activity of reading will be an activity to learn. Moreover, readers who do reading comprehension activity will comprehend the details of the text. According to Glenberg (2011:8), reading comprehension is an activity to understand a situation, a dialogue or a text, which that activity can be used to guide the reader into a better action to understand and comprehend some situations, dialogues, or texts. In reading comprehension, the readers act to figure out situation in a text that will lead them to effectiveness of understanding. To wrap up, reading comprehension is an activity of reading to get meaning from the whole text, which is influenced by reader's background knowledge, language skill, and vocabulary knowledge. However, the reader needs to have knowledge of language and use it in order to comprehend the text and to get information.

### Determining Importance Strategy

Determining importance strategy is a crucial strategy for the active readers. According to Gear (2008:22), determining importance strategy is the most important strategies readers need in reading comprehension activity. Without the ability to determine what the text is about, there is so little or no chance that a student will be able to move forward into interactive and clear understanding level of comprehension. Being the most important strategy, determining importance really do help readers to engage with the text deeply. Readers able to explore what they read without having worry to lost or confuse in the process of reading.

Readers will effectively get author's most important information by using determining importance strategy. Raphael (2009:17) says determining importance is a major feature of reading comprehension activity in native language, which the reader will get into a process of reading and able to understand what the authors want them to know. There will be more than one important information, and readers use clues from the text to determine which the information they think the most important from the author. Raphael (2009:17) also add determining important information is a strategy that helps readers differentiate between essential ideas that will help readers to understanding the meaning of the text and the supporting details. It can concludes that determining importance strategy is an effective strategy to understand what the text is about. It helps readers get the most important information that authors want them to know and comprehend. Using determining importance strategy can train readers spend their time in reading comprehension wisely.

### Teaching Reading Comprehension

Teaching reading comprehension to second-language students is a challenging task for the language teacher. The students need to learn to think in English in order to read effectively in English. According to Mikulecky (2008:13) teaching reading in standard English to second-language students is to help them to understand the way of thinking about text that are practiced by native speakers of English. In addition Scott (2009:8) argues that teaching reading comprehension just not about to simply teach students know how to read but only comprehend the information that lies on the text even though the text not in literature field. Teachers have to know how to make students able to understand the idea of texts that have different subjects, such as biology, geography, and social matters. it can be conclude that teaching reading comprehension is not easy task for the teacher. Students need all the helps that they can get from teachers to be able not only know how to read but also can understand and comprehend the information on the text. Teacher should be well prepared before begin teaching reading comprehension activity and use some effective approaches in order to improve students' reading skill.

### The Procedure of Teaching Reading Comprehension by Using Determining Importance Strategy

In applying this technique, The teacher can divide the teaching process into three stages, they are: pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching. This division will make the teacher easier to manage the time for each parts.

a. Pre-teaching

In this stage, the teacher should prepare the students, both psychologically and physically to join the learning process. The teacher needs to create a good atmosphere to make the students feel comfortable and enjoy to study. The teachers can start by greeting the students and asking their condition to build a good relationship with them.

b. Whilst-teaching

Whilst-teaching is the most crucial part in teaching because the teacher will apply determining important strategy in this part. This is the core activity during the process of the teaching and learning. according to scientific approach (2013), this part divided into five phases, they are: observing, questioning, collecting information/experimenting, associating, and communicating.

1. Observing

In this opening activity the teacher build the background knowledge of students by asking several questions related to their narrative text material. Then teacher should use interesting media to catch their attention. Here, the teacher presents the material through the pictures. In this case, the teacher presents a picture about a crane, a snake, a crab, and a mongoose.. In this phase, students should pay attention to the picture and observe for a few minutes. Then teacher lead a discussion by asking some question based on the pictures that presented.



Figure 1. Pictures of a crane, a snake, a crab, and a mongoose

By showing the interesting media related to the topic, the teacher can stimulate and activate students' background knowledge about the topic. Then teacher give each student a page of narrative story that related to the pictures that been discussed together with.

### **The Crane and The Snake**

In a forest close to the river bank mere lived a crane with his wife. They were very unhappy. Every time the wife laid eggs in their nest, a big black cobra who lived in a hollow in the tree, would eat them up. The crane had a friend the crab. He went to his friend the crab and shared his misery. "I feel so hopeless....That sneaking thief has eaten our eggs again," complained the crane angrily.

"Don't worry," said the crab comfortingly. "You need not be hopeless when you have a friend like me. We will come up with a solution."

The crab sat to think of a plan. Suddenly he jumped up and rushed to the crane.

"Friend, I have a wonderful plan," said the crab and whispered something into the crane's ear. "Friend, I have a wonderful plan," said the crab and whispered something into the crane's ear.

The crane flew back to his nest and told his wife all about the crab's plan. He was very excited.

"Are you sure this will work?" asked the wife.

"I hope we are not making a mistake. Think twice before going ahead with the plan."

But the crane was eager to try out the plan. The crane flew down to the river bank and began to fish. He caught several little fishes and went down to the hole in which a mongoose lived. He dropped a fish at the mouth of the hole. Then he took another fish and dropped it a little further away from the first one. Repeating this, he made a trail of fishes leading to the tree where his nest was.

The mongoose smelt the fish and came out of the hole. "Ah, a fish!" exclaimed the mongoose joyfully and quickly ate it up. He then followed the trail of fishes. As he neared the tree where the cranes and the snake lived, the trail ended. Finding no more fishes, he looked around.

Suddenly he came across the black cobra at the foot of the tree. Seeing the mongoose, the cobra fought for his life. Both fought for a long time and in the end the mongoose killed the snake. The cranes who were watching the fight from their nest sighed with relief.

The next day the mongoose began to follow the same trail hoping to find more food. When he came to the tree where the trail ended, he decided to climb the tree in search of food.

The cranes who were away at the river bank returned to find the mongoose climbing down the tree. On looking in their nest, they discovered that this time, the mongoose had eaten up all their eggs.

"Alas! We got rid of one enemy only to find another," said the crane to his wife.

Figure 2. The Crane and The Snake text

2. Questioning

In this phase, the students can ask the teacher or their classmates about the information in the previous story that they do not understand. For example, the students ask the teacher about orientation, complication, resolution, and reorientation or coda or about new vocabulary.

3. Experimenting/ Collecting Information

In experimenting, the teacher will apply the determining importance strategy in reading comprehension strategy. Teacher will show students a graphic organizer that will help students to use determining strategy in their reading activity. By filling the box of graphic organizer, the students will only focus on important information in the narrative text that teacher give and discuss about.

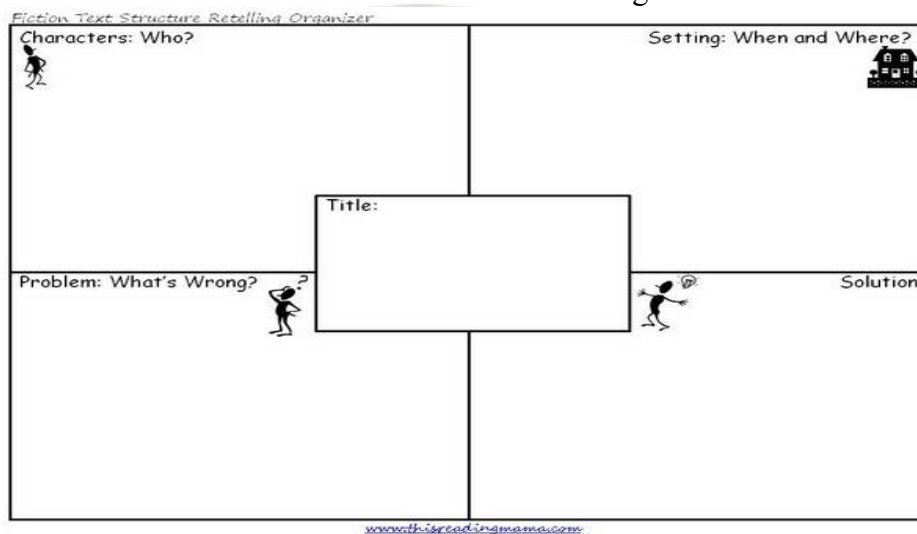


Figure 3. Graphic organizer with students' answer

4. Associating

In this phase, the teacher asks the students to form a group of four and discuss the answers that they got. Then teacher explain to students how they are going to work as a group and what they are going to make.

5. Communicating/ Networking

In this phase the teacher and students will discuss what the students make as the conclusion from filling the graphic organizer as using the determining importance strategy. The students that make group of four will presenting their conclusion in front of the class and other groups can elaborate or come to the agreement. Then, teacher will correct the conclusion and give the explanation about the text and material.

**C. CONCLUSIONS**

It can be concluded that using determining importance strategy in teaching reading comprehension at senior high school's students brings many advantages for the students in language learning process. There are some advantages of using determining importance strategy in teaching reading comprehension. It helps students to focus on what will they have to read without have to stuck in the middle of reading activity and waste much time on unimportant information. Students can decide and remember the key point of the text and learn anything

from it better by using determining importance strategy on their reading comprehension activity. Through this strategy, students will be able to understand what the authors want them to know accurately.

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