

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION USING MIND MAPPING CONCEPT

Noor Chairani

Ahmad Dahlan University, Yogyakarta
chair_raini91@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

In the global era, English is needed as one of international languages. English is learned by many people in the world to access information and to convey or communicate ideas to solve problems of life. Reading as a basic skill of language has to be mastered because reading comprehension is crucial for academic success to achieve the purpose of learning language. A strategy is needed to increase learners' reading comprehension actively and practically enable learners to understand a text comprehensively. Learners who do not know or use appropriate strategies in language learning especially in reading comprehension often learn passively and slowly. There are some factors that may influence the learners' success in their reading comprehension. One of them is applying a technique in their reading activity. Mind-mapping concept is considered as one of techniques hopefully used to improve learners' reading comprehension. The strategy makes learners to become active because they are involved independently in teaching and learning process. The more learners are involved in learning and teaching process, the more they can comprehend the materials learned. The mind-mapping concept can be applied to improve learners' reading comprehension ability to help them understand information or get inputs from the texts. By applying mind-mapping concept, learners can understand and remember the contents of text easily.

Key Words: English language, Reading Comprehension, Mind-Mapping Concept

Introduction

English is regarded as an international language that is learnt by many people in the world included Indonesia. In Indonesia, English is learnt as a foreign language because it is learned in schools, universities and other places of English courses. It is used with a purpose as a communication tool to communicate with other people in the world. It also has other specific purposes such as for getting information, business, and etc. Because it is important to communicate to other people in the world and for the other purposes, in Indonesia it is used as one of subjects that are examined in final national exam to evaluate the competency of learners.

If learners will be able to master English well, they can compete with other people in the world to exist in building the world with their consciousness toward global issues. A lot of information is available in English. People can understand them all by mastering English. Understanding problems in the world means there is an opportunity for every person to solve the problem. So mastering English is a must to enhance the ability of communication and improve knowledge to open people's understanding of the world.

In learning English there are some skills that is always been exercised in mastering it. There are reading, writing, listening and speaking. Reading and listening are receptive skills because in reading and listening learners get a lot of input from what they read and what they listen. Whereas writing and speaking are reproductive skills because learners have to produce written language and spoken language based on their ideas, concepts, or thoughts.

Teaching English skills needs to be prepared by methods, strategies or techniques used in learning and teaching process. Those can invite learners' motivation to learn English and it can influence their academic achievement. By using an effective and efficient technique, learners can be motivated in learning English and will be able to comprehend the target language.

Reading Comprehension

Reading is an activity that has some purposes. May be people do reading to get information to know the situations happen in the world. Readers also do reading to learn something based on their interest to improve their knowledge and get new insight. The other readers do reading only for pleasure. They choose interesting reading text for entertaining them. Reading is a process to understand the concept of life through the texts written by the writers.

Reading is a pillar of English skills that has to be exercised continuously so that it can influence on the other language skills. Reading is as a basic skill because there are some aspects that can be mastered through reading. Learners can find a lot of new vocabularies in reading text. They can learn the parts of

speech of every single word. Then they also learn the patterns of sentences, how the sentences work in a text. They have to pay attention to the structure of every sentence used. Learners also learn how a word produced. It means how the writing of a word and also the spelling of a word. Then, they can learn the content of a text or how a text produced.

On the other words, reading is one of language skills and it becomes a basis in developing knowledge on inserting insights for learners. In reading process, learner will learn many aspects included vocabulary, pronunciation and also grammar. When learners read a text, they can find new vocabularies of the text. A text is composed by sentences and paragraphs inside. Learners can find a lot of vocabularies that they have known before or the new words of it. Learners can learn the part of speech of every single word. So reading comprehension can enrich and develop learners' vocabulary mastery.

Reading is a skill that in the process of learning and teaching it makes learners not only will be able to enrich a lot of new vocabularies, but also to know pronunciation of words and to be able to understand the patterns of sentences and paragraph. Then it makes learners understand the kinds of texts. Reading is as a reference for developing the other language skills. A challenge in teaching reading is how to make the learners consistent in developing the reading aspects included how to understand the texts given.

Understanding of academic texts is an important thing. There are many books, modules, and references can be used as the source of reading. These can be used for reading activities in understanding the structure or patterns of texts and also context. Reading activities is important to exercise the learners in the class or they can learn it independently. Menamara (2007:3) said that reading is an achievement when a learner realizes a numerous steps and components that have to be mastered. Whereas Harrison (2004:3) said that in reading process, there is a psychological process correlated with thought, imagination, emotion, moral development and perspicacity. He emphasized on why reading is more important than the general purpose of reading that is getting information of the text. Reading uses brain activities to understand the aspects of it.

Whereas Snow (2001:11-12) stated that there are three elements to understand a text. The first is namely *reader* that is a person who is trying to understand the text. The second is text that is understood by the reader and the third one is the activity that is as the process of understanding the reading text. The three elements emerge social interactive activity in a class. Reading is a written communication where a writer communicates with the readers through a text. Therefore mastering reading comprehension ability is needed.

Wainwright (2007:35) mentioned that reading comprehension is a complex process. After reading, reader should be able to recall information afterwards. Readers should be able to select the important points from what they have read and be able to draw general conclusions. They should look for key words and phrases. Readers should be able to differentiate between fact and opinion. What learners can recall and how much learners can recall depends on many factors. It is included what kinds of techniques learners use in reading.

The Importance of Teaching Reading

In teaching reading, teachers should prepare many things included methods, strategies, techniques or materials of varied texts produced with the various forms and purposes. Reading class is started to make learners recognize various reading techniques used in reading texts. The techniques are used to understand the text from general thing to specific one. Learners are hoped not only trying to understand the texts using the techniques but also analyzing and then giving critical thinking of the given texts.

Teaching reading has a purpose to strengthen learners' ability to understand texts. Text is as a source of reading needed to carry out the aspects of language that have to be mastered, namely vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. The learners can also expose the contexts of texts. Teacher should invite learners' effort to do activities to make learners understand texts well. Teachers teach learners how to read by applying types of reading activities to improve reading skill. In other word, the teachers should prepare methods, strategies, or techniques in reading activities to make the given materials can be understood by the learners.

For the beginner, learners are usually given simple or interesting texts such as narrative texts to invite learners' motivation and because the content of narrative texts is simple and easy to read. It consists of simple words and comfortable for them because the purpose of narrative text is for entertaining the reader and giving interesting moral values. Then learners are asked to understand the kinds of texts such as descriptive, narrative, procedure text and etc. It has a purpose that learners can be able to understand the patterns of sentences and develop the other factors of reading.

Reading class brings benefits for those learning English. By teaching reading, learners can understand the use of language adapted from texts read in formal or informal forms. They also can understand different types of texts such as descriptive, narratives, procedure, cause and effect, etc. The materials of texts give new insights for the readers. Learners can comprehend English through reading text from the meaning, form and use of each word.

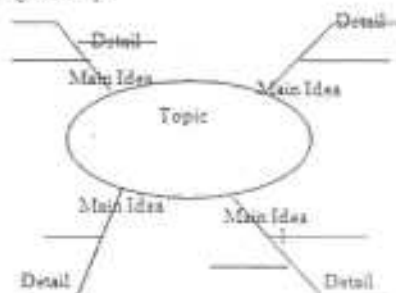
Some techniques are learnt in reading class such as skimming, scanning, understanding main ideas etc. to make readers or learners comprehend texts well. Readers have to know the general ideas, specific ideas, understanding the main ideas and then can illustrate the map of ideas from the general to specific ones. Therefore skimming, scanning, finding topics, inferring and other techniques should be taught by teachers to learners. Learners hopefully can be able to understand how the texts of reading are structured or the patterns of texts. So, the teachers should equip learners with techniques, strategies or methods used in teaching reading to make English can be more understood effectively and efficiently.

Teaching Reading using Mind Mapping Concept

There are many ways to recall what have learners read. One of them is by using mind mapping concept focuses on the content of a text. Mind mapping is a technique to take a note information that comes from Tony Buzan. A mind mapping concept digs the subject that is being discussed. It illustrates the ideas of information in reading text that is correlated each other. This concept facilitates readers to understand the core of ideas and the development of it.

For those who have limited memory, the concept is effective to recall the point of information given and the slot of it by making a mind map. Mind mapping concept is useful to organize or communicate ideas, to map information, to find a basic idea, to develop correlated ideas and to stimulate the power of thought visually by giving colors, symbols, rows etc to make the reader easy to read. It is useful to memorize information of the text and to summarize the text as the source of information. So it is a way to illustrate the patterns of a text from the core of the text to the explanation visualized in a map. It makes reader easy to remember and understand the slot of writing.

Figure 1: example of mind mapping concept



Visualizations help us to remember things. If readers can see them by providing a series of pictures or the key words, they can recall the important information and the patterns of text. Mind mapping concept can be useful to illustrate an organized text. It is one of the best ways to facilitate learners in understanding the organization of a text well in various activities in class with individual, peer work or group work.

In learning and teaching activities, teachers should deliver technique used in reading, one of them by using mind mapping concept to generating ideas. The utilities of mapping are to gather data systematically, to analyze ideas, to recall concepts of text by simplify ideas of texts. Learners can select important information by exercising the brain activity because mapping is full of creativities.

There are four elements as shapers of mind mapping. Firstly learners should write a central image. A topic or a subject will be a central discourse located in the middle of paper. Second, subtopics are written as the branch of central image that have grouped base on specific category. Subtopics can be developed to be more specific subtopics. Third, steps of the patterns of text can be drawn to show the correlation among central image and the subtopics based on analyze which is done before. Then hierarchical lines are made to give signs to explain the correlation of cause and effect, time, place, and etc. Colors, lines, words/keywords, key image and structure can be made to make the mind mapping easier and more interesting to be understood. Creativity and bravery in making mapping design is needed to make our brain easier to recall information of text. To make the best result, the process of making mind mapping has to be done continuously and periodically.

Teaching is a complex process, action and behaviors which teachers carry out in the classroom and effects of these on learners. Teachers have to control the learners by selecting learning activities, preparing students for new learning, presenting learning activities, asking questions, conducting drills, monitoring and checking learners' understanding, giving feedback, and reviewing given materials.

Conclusion

Mind mapping has interactive and purposeful process. The concept is one of the best ways in learning and teaching process. By using mind mapping concept, it can be used as evaluating learners' reading comprehension. It checks learners' understanding through evaluating their summarizing text using illustrated concept by using mind mapping. It is used to illustrate the patterns of texts used as one of reading materials. It can dig learners' multiple intelligences by drawing the main ideas and the supporting ideas using symbols, pictures, words/phrases.

The purpose of using mind mapping is to assess learners' understanding in drawing generalizations of identifying topic, main ideas, details or recognizing text structures (main idea and supporting details). Analyzing the form of text, then they will be able to summarize a text well. Learners are asked to show their work by gallery walk. Teachers can apply jigsaw method or other methods in showing learners' works. Feedback can be given in presenting the works. Mind mapping concept boosts learners' creativity in visualizing texts given.

References

- Adler, C.R. (Ed). 2004. *Seven Strategies to Teach Text Comprehension*, pp. 49-54, National Institute for Literacy. <https://edc448uri.wikispaces.com/file/view/Adler+2004.pdf>. Diakses pada 28 November 2014.
- Brown, Douglas. 2004. *Language Assessment Principles and Classroom Practice*. New York: Pearson Education Inc.
- Buzan, Tony. 2003. *The Mind Map Book – How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain's Untapped Potential*. London: Plume.
- Gunning, T.G. (2010). *Reading Comprehension Boosters: 100 Lessons for Building Higher Level Literacy for Students in Grades 3-5*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Harris, Karen R & Graham Steve. 2007. *Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Difficulties*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- Mcnamara, Danielle S. 2007. *Reading Comprehension Strategies*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Novak, Joseph D. & Gowin, D. B. (1984). *Learning How to Learn*. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richard, Jack C. 2006. *Communicative Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richard, Jack C. and Charles Lockhart. 1996. *Reflecting Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richard, Jack. C. and Willy A. Renandya. 2002. *Methodology in Language Teaching*. USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Swadarna, Doni. 2002. *Penerapan Mind Mapping dalam Kurikulum Pembelajaran*. Jakarta: PT Elex Media Komputindo
- Snow, Catherine. 2002. *Reading for Understanding: Toward a Research and Development Program in Reading Comprehension*. Pittsburg: Rand Education
- Ur, Penny. 1996. *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Wainwright, Gordon. 2007. *How to read faster and recall more: Learn the art of speed reading with maximum recall*. UK: Oxford University Press.