

Conference Paper

Teaching Descriptive Texts to Tenth Grade Students in Deli Serdang

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to describe the teachers' ways of teaching reading of descriptive texts to tenth grade students in Deli Serdang, Indonesia and to reveal the underlying reasons for these approaches. This study was conducted by using a descriptive qualitative design. The subjects were two English teachers who taught the tenth grade students at SMA Swasta Melati Hamparan Perak in the 2018/2019 academic year. The data were collected by observing, video recording and interviewing, and were analyzed by using Miles and Huberman techniques. The findings show that the approaches that the teachers used were not focused on enabling the students to be independent or skilful readers. Most of the ways directed the students to become good at reading texts or translating the texts into *Bahasa* rather than teaching how to comprehend descriptive texts. Most of the approaches were focused on translation, vocabulary enrichment, stating ideas, pronunciation and managing the class. The approaches did not facilitate reading comprehension. This was due to the misperception of the concept of teaching reading comprehension.

Keywords: teaching, reading comprehension, descriptive text.

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1. Introduction

As an international language, English is used to communicate with all people around the world. In Indonesia English has been taught as a foreign language. The people should master English starting from the primary to the university levels. The government, education ministry has established English as a compulsory subject at schools so that all students have to learn English. By learning English, the students will comprehend many texts from all over the world to support their learning process. It can be concluded that English has an important role in education. Because of it, people have to learn and master English to face the world globalization.

In English there are 4 skills that should be learnt by the learners. They are speaking, listening, writing and reading. Each skill has its own difficulties. This is different from

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teaching speaking, listening, writing and reading. Teaching is an essential part of education.

Teaching has the special function which transfers the knowledge, develops understanding and builds the characteristic and someone's behavior. Gage (2009) argues that teaching is a form of interpersonal influence aimed at changing the behavior of another person. Teaching is not an easy activity to do. People who do the teaching activity are called teachers and the people who are taught by the teachers normally are called students. The process of teaching related to transferring the knowledge, developing understanding and skill and building the behavior and for this the teacher must be qualified in all the activities related to teaching.

Reading can be challenging, particularly when the material is unfamiliar, technical, or complex, Danielle (2007). When someone reads a text, it is not just reading the text word by word; he or she needs to comprehend the text deeply to understand what it is said in the text. To get the point, to get the information in the text, the readers are not only reading the text word by word but also they need to go beyond the text to get it. The students who like reading will get knowledge and new insight which improve their intelligence so that they are ready to face life challenge in the future. But all knowledge can be obtained by simply reading a text. The reality shows that many students fail in reading comprehension because they are not taught reading well especially in descriptive text. Senior High School Curriculum has a recognition that reading comprehension is a part of the language learning process. With regard to a need of the reading comprehension of the students, School Based Curriculum (KTSP) presents a syllabus of English subject of Senior High School that entrusts some indicators of success in teaching reading comprehension. This can be used by the teacher as guidance in the teaching process of reading comprehension to the students. But the reality is that some teachers usually are oriented to the textbooks in teaching reading. The teachers just follow the materials of the textbook by reading the text, translating into *bahasa indonesia* and then answering the questions related to the text. These activities do not give any influence for improving student's ability in reading comprehension because it cannot give contribution to students; it makes the students only passive in the teaching learning process. It means more teachers focus on teaching "reading" not "understanding" or "comprehending" as the consequence and also some teachers simply help the students to comprehend certain texts and helping them answer the questions from the text. As a result, the students tend to have poor reading skill and habits or in other word the students cannot be independent readers. So if the students are given other text, they cannot comprehend the text without their teacher's help. To

ensure this idea, this study is conducted with the title of “The Teaching Descriptive Text to the Tenth Grade Students in Deli Serdang”.

2. Literature Review

Klingner (2007: 2) defines that reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that includes word reading, word and word knowledge, and fluency. The meaning construction takes place through the coordinations of a number of complex processes that include word reading, word and word, knowledge and fluency.

Gage (2009: 51) states that in teaching reading comprehension there are six variable processes, they are (1) presage variable, (2) context variable, (3) teacher thought process, (4) process for content of teaching, (5) student thought process, and (6) student achievement.

Pardiyono (2006: 163) says that a descriptive text is about the description of something or someone that consists of characteristics, something special, quality and quantity because by knowing the organization of the structure well, the reader will know what happens next in the text. Wishon and Burks (1968: 322) states description text gives sense of impression of feeling, sound, taste, smell, and look of things. Emotion may be described such as happiness, fear, loneliness, gloom, joy. Description helps the reader through his imagination, visualize a scene or a person or understand a sensation or an emotion. Descriptive text is a text which says what a person or thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing. Descriptive text stretches out many information about certain people, things, and person clearly and in details.

Klingner (2007:76) asserts that when the students are familiar with the way a text is structured, this knowledge can help them (1) form expectations about what they will read, (2) organize incoming information, (3) judge the relative importance of what they read, (4) improve their comprehension, and (5) enhance their recall. However, when the structure of a text is different from what the reader expects, comprehension can break down. Struggling readers are likely stronger. Yet explicit instruction can help struggling readers become more aware of various text structures and augment their comprehension and memory.

3. Research Method

This study is conducted by descriptive qualitative design which describes and interprets what it is. As Creswell (2007) states that descriptive qualitative research describes the phenomenon being studied, conditions or relationship that exist, processes that are going on or effects felt. The data were taken from the teachers' ways in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text to the students. Data analysis is a process where researcher systematically searches and arranges the data in order to increase her understanding of it and this research followed some steps of analyzing the data stated by Miles & Huberman (1994: 10):

1. Data reduction

Data reduction reduces a large amount of data into a smaller number of analytic units.

2. Data display

Data display is meant as a visual format that presents information systematically. In data display, the data will be organized to answer research problems.

3. Conclusion and verification

Conclusion involves stepping back to consider what the analyzed data mean and to generate their implications for the research question. Verification is integrally linked to draw conclusion, revisiting the data as many times necessary to cross check or verifies these emergent conclusions. (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

There were several procedures that should be followed in this research:

1. The teachers were recorded in the process of teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text to the students.

2. The data recorded were analyzed into form of tabulation of teacher's teaching process.

3. The way the teachers' teaching descriptive text was used to answer the research problem.

4. Doing the interview with the teachers asking them why they performed such ways in the process of teaching descriptive text to the students.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Result

Some findings are found after analyzing the data. The findings in this research are as follows:

1. The English teachers are teaching reading comprehension to the students by performing 8 main ways. Based on the content, there were 23 ways performed by the teachers. The ways performed by the teachers are not yet focused on enabling the students to be independent or skilful readers. Most of the ways are directed to make the students good at reading text or translating the text into *Bahasa* rather than to teach them how to comprehend descriptive text. Most of the ways performed are just focused on translation, vocabulary enrichment, telling idea, pronunciation and managing the class.

2. The underlying reasons of teacher's way in teaching reading comprehension are due to five reasons, they are; (1) the teacher believes that knowing definition is the very first step to comprehend a text (2) the teacher believes that the theory of the text is facilitative to reading comprehension (3) the teacher believes that translating is facilitative to reading comprehension (4) the teacher believes that answering question is the indicator of text comprehension (5) the teacher believes that the way the students tell their ideas in English shows that they comprehend the text.

4.2. Discussion

The research is dealing with Gage's model (2009) for the study of classroom teaching process where it is focused on process of teaching activities in the classroom. The process variables refers to what is happening or what is being done by the teachers and the students during the teaching process. This research is also dealing with the theory of Klinger (2007) for the study of teaching reading comprehension focused on the importance of teaching the text structure towards reading comprehension skill of the students. Therefore, the focus on this research is the teachers' verbal ways in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text.

There are a few researches similar with this research, such as "*Teachers' Individual Practical Knowledge about Teaching Reading Comprehension*" by Rahmani (2014). This study is conducted to study the language teachers' practical knowledge about teaching reading comprehension to engineering major students. There are 10 open-ended questions in questionnaire given to 36 teachers who get master and doctoral degree and teach ESP course in order to get the result. The participants are informed

about the purpose of the study. There are six categories given to the teachers, which are subject matter knowledge, student knowledge, knowledge of student learning and understanding, knowledge of purpose, knowledge of curriculum, and knowledge of instructional techniques. The result of this study is the teachers who focus on the subject matter category, prefer to discuss the subject matter in their teaching. In addition, the teachers who focus on students' knowledge believe that the students' knowledge should be the hint of their teaching ways. The correlation of this study to this study shows the teacher's practical knowledge could affect the teacher's ways in teaching. So it could be a reference for this study.

The second study is "*The students' Genre Awareness and Their Reading Comprehension of Different Text Types*" by Rozimela (2014). This study is conducted to analyze how the students understand the characteristics of 10 texts of 5 different genres and comprehended the texts. The students are required to answer 60 questions testing their knowledge about genres and 80 questions for reading comprehension. The results of the study show that there is a strong indication of the relationship of these two variables. On average, the students' genre awareness is low as they could only answer about 23% of the questions. Their reading comprehension indicates a similar result. They could answer only about 37% of the questions on average. This conclusion is also affirmed by the fact that the students whose genre awareness is good also have good reading comprehension, and vice versa. Interestingly, some other factors that apparently influence the students' reading comprehension are also evident, the background knowledge about the content of the texts and field-related vocabulary. The correlation of this study to this study is the analysis of the students' knowledge of genre and the students reading comprehension are similar to this study, in which this study is analyzing the teachers' ways in teaching reading comprehension text as a genre in the students' reading comprehension.

5. Conclusion

Some conclusions are found after analyzing the data. The conclusions in this research are as follows:

1. The English teacher teach reading comprehension to the students by performing 93 total variations of ways and these ways take place into 8 main ways. Based on the content, there 23 ways performed by the teacher. The ways performed by the teachers are not yet focused on enabling the students to be independent or skilful readers. Most of the ways are directed to make the students good at reading text or translating the

text into *bahasa* rather than to teach them how to comprehend descriptive text. Most of the ways performed are just focused on translation, vocabulary enrichment, telling idea, pronunciation and managing the class and etc.

2. The underlying reasons of teacher's way in teaching reading comprehension are due to five reasons, they are; (1) the teacher believes that knowing definition is the very first step to comprehend a text (2) the teacher believes that the theory of the text is facilitative to reading comprehension (3) the teacher believes that translating is facilitative to reading comprehension (4) the teacher believes that answering question is the indicator of text comprehension (5) the teacher believes that the way the students tell their ideas in English shows that they comprehend the text.

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