

## **ENHANCING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT USING PARTNER READING STRATEGY**

**By:**

**Ratna Nery**

*English Language Education Study Program at FKIP Islamic University of  
Ogan Komering Ilir Kayuagung, South Sumatera  
nery.ratna@yahoo.com*

**Abstract:** This research aimed to investigate whether the students who were taught using Partner Reading Strategy had better reading comprehension achievement than those who were not. The method used was quasi-experimental. The sample of this study was 70 tenth graders involved experimental group (class X MIPA 2) and control group (class X MIPA 3). Each group consisted of 35 students. The written test in the form of multiple-choice was administered to get data collection. Before giving the test, the test was tried out to non-samples students of the eighth-grade students of SMA Negeri 4 Kayuagung class X MIPA 1 to check the validity and reliability of the test. The data were analyzed using t-test. The result of the t-test was significant at  $p < 0.05$  with  $df = 68$ , the critical value of  $t_{table} = 1.995$ . Since the value of  $t_{obtained}$  (9.304) was higher than the critical value of  $t_{table} = (1.995)$ ,  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_a$  was accepted. It means that the students who were taught using Partner Reading Strategy had comprehension in reading that made their reading comprehension achievement improve better and that those who were not.

**Key words:** reading comprehension achievement, narrative text, partner reading

### **INTRODUCTION**

To get more information in this world, reading practice is needed. As supported by Ali (2015, p. 1), reading is an active process which should be acquired at the early learning age. It means that at the first time when learning reading, someone

does the process of getting information continuously.

Reading skills is one of the language skills that every students needed. According to Ardiana, (2011, p.2), reading, an essential skills must be learned since it is integrated with other language skills. In other words, reading skill must be

taught integrated when the students learn other English language skills.

In fact, the process of understanding the context reading is quite difficult for students. Moreover, the knowledge that the reader brings to the text is crucial for comprehension so that students must find out the purpose of the text to get interpretation about some lessons from the text. Olmez (2016, p.726) adds that the process of reading undoubtedly a complex and intricate skill to define briefly with a few words. The difficult word and how to pronounce the word in the text are the factors why the students' ability in reading is low. Students are afraid if they make mistakes. Fahmi (2013, p.2) also states that students are still unconfident in reading because of feeling afraid to make a mistake in reading new vocabulary spelling and

predicting meaning to answer the question.

Furthermore, Siregar and Gunning (2013, p.2-3) explain that it is difficult to read long passage due to some factors, namely the failure of comprehending the syllable, the clauses, the unity and organization of the sentences, and less of motivation and centralization. Sarwo (2013, p.2) also says that the learners have less comprehension in reading the text because they have problems in identifying orientation, complication, resolution, reorientation, and vocabulary.

Due to the problems happened, the teachers need to improve the students' understanding in reading. One of the efforts is to introduce and apply various strategies, one of them is the partner reading strategy. Partner reading strategy consists of

the strategy that helps the students to discuss and how to process the information with their friends what they learn. They try to get the meaning of the text together with their partner. This strategy makes it easier to know the content of the text. It is supported by Austin (2018, p.2) who explains that partner reading can boost the competency of the readers in terms of accuracy and comprehension. Cheung in Pratiwi (2014, p.4) also adds that partner reading is used to provide the students with opportunities to read the selections. Besides, Partner Reading strategy, the written cooperative learning strategy, is often applied in the classrooms to encourage the development of fluent and automatic reading skills. It is also enjoy and effective pedagogical strategy to enhance the

progress of reading fluency and comprehension (Meisinger, Schwanenflugel, Bradley, and Stahl, 2004)

Furthermore, Partner Reading strategy has some benefits for the students. As mentioned by Kuhn and Schwanenflugel (2008, p.45), Partner Reading strategy can release meaningful amount of period literature loudly or follow along with their partner that is able to manage their time, provides the students with chance to read a passage again and again, and make them receive connection and support from their partner.

When applying Partner Reading strategy, the teachers should follow the steps. As Pratiwi (2014, p.4) mentions that the procedure of Partner Reading is as follows. First, the students do the practice reading

in pairs and the teacher provides try to increase opportunity to practice it. Second, the teacher makes rank the students' reading levels in terms of their performance from highest to lowest to pair them. The students who have the highest score will be paired with the student who has the lowest score. Third, the students will be explained the roles, rules, and the text by the teacher. Fourth, in the process of Partner Reading activity the students will complete three tasks, there are; error correction, retell the story, and make a summary in a paragraph. The teacher gives a chance to the students to do it step by step. In five minutes, the first student reads orally until the time is over. Then the teacher gives feedback during the oral reading process. The teacher checks the correctly read word, asks the correct

response, says the right word, and prompts to read again. Having understanding the partner reading and mistake correction steps, the teacher asks questions to students to assist them comprehend and memorize the text read. The teacher discusses the passage and partner reading strategy result with the class.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the quasi-experimental method was applied. To choose the sample, the purposive sampling was used. Since there were several classes, the two classes were taken as sample because of having the same total number in terms of gender and being taught by the same teacher of English. The sample consisted of experimental group and control group. The population in the study was all the tenth graders of

SMA Negeri 4 Kayuagung. The total number of students was 168. As a result, class X. MIPA 3 was as an experimental group and class X.MIPA 2 was s as a control group that consisted of 35 students.

The Procedure of teaching reading using Partner Reading strategy is as follows;

- 1) The teacher explains the partner reading briefly.
- 2) The teacher prepares the instrument or material related to narrative text
- 3) The teacher separates the students into some groups consisting of two students
- 4) The teacher asks one student in each group to read the text and another one as a listener.
- 5) The teacher ensures all students follow the instructions.

- 6) The teacher prompts the students to comprehend the text by asking each other in each group.
- 7) The teacher asks one of each group to retell what information they got from the text.
- 8) The teacher commands all groups to have discussion.

The content validity of the test was checked by using the English syllabus and table of the test specification. The readability of the text was counted by using a Flesh-Kincaid method to know whether the texts were suitable, easy to be read, and to be understood by the tenth graders of SMA or not.

The data from the test were firstly analyzed in terms of its normality and homogeneity. After that, the data were calculated using t-test; paired and independent

sample. The data calculation used SPSS version 20.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The mean score of pretest in the experimental group before giving the treatment was 48.08. After giving treatment based on the result of the paired sample t-test of the experimental group, it was found that the difference between the mean score of pretest and posttest was 31.60 with  $t_{\text{obtained}}$  (14.98) was higher than  $t_{\text{table}}$  (2.03). It meant that students who were taught using Partner Reading Strategy could improve their reading comprehension in reading narrative text. This strategy instructed students to respond the inquiries stated in a narrative text background which were correlated their knowledge and

enriched students' knowledge since they predicted what they had read.

The mean score of pretest in the control group before giving the treatment was 45.00 and the mean score of the posttest after giving treatment was 67.09. Based on the result of statistical analysis, it was found that the difference between the mean score of pretest and posttest was 22.09  $t_{\text{obtained}}$  (17.16) was higher than  $t_{\text{table}}$  (2.03). In conclusion, the students' in learning reading achievement improved because the students had known and still active in replying the reading process. Besides, the students were more active when the teacher taught about reading narrative text. The students asked the teacher if they had found the difficult words and when they read a text.

Based on the result of the independent sample t-test in which the results of the posttest between the experimental group and control group were compared, it was found that  $t_{\text{obtained}}$  (9.30) was higher than  $t_{\text{table}}$  (1.99) and  $p_{\text{value}}$  (0.000) was less than  $\alpha_{\text{value}}$  (0.05). It meant that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and consequently the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted. In other words, there was a significant difference in reading comprehension between students who were taught by using Partner Reading Strategy and that of those who were not. It meant that students who were by using Partner Reading Strategy could improve their reading comprehension.

Furthermore, the students who were taught reading narrative text by using Partner Reading Strategy had

higher achievement because the student monitored his/her peer that made them have good concentration in doing the comprehension of reading. As a result, they could understand the text and identify the information in details. It is inline with the research result done by Katz and Susan (2007) showed that the students observe the reading of a peer student when applying Partner Reading strategy so that the students' fluency, reading rate, and word attack skills develop and assist them to observe their understanding.

## **CONCLUSION**

Partner Reading strategy was able to improve students' ability especially in reading narrative text. This strategy helps the students to increase their knowledge and encourage them to find elements of

the story and generic structure of the text. Also, during applying Partner Reading Strategy, the students followed every step in every meeting. Consequently, students' reading comprehension improved.

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