IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION OF THE EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 4 SUKAWATI IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/2023 THROUGH RAP

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at figuring out whether the subjects' reading comprehension can be improved through the RAP strategy. The subjects were the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Sukawati. The strategy in this present study which have three elements such as: Read, Ask, Put. Thus, to achieve the objective the researcher was conducted classroom action research design. The data which were needed for the present study were collected through RAP strategy in two cycles and the obtained data was analyzed quantitively from the pre-test, post-test I and post-test II; then qualitatively from the questionnaire. In conclusion, it could be concluded that reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Sukawati in academic year 2022/2023 could be improved through RAP strategy.

Keywords: Improving, RAP Strategy, and Reading Comprehension.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah pemahaman membaca subjek dapat ditingkatkan melalui strategi RAP. Subjek penelitian adalah siswa kelas VIII SMPN 4 Sukawati. Strategi dalam penelitian ini yang memiliki tiga unsur yaitu: Read, Ask, Put. Dengan demikian, untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut peneliti melakukan desain penelitian tindakan kelas. Data yang diperlukan untuk penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui strategi RAP dalam dua siklus dan data yang diperoleh dianalisis secara kuantitatif dari pre-test, post-test I dan post-test II; kemudian secara kualitatif dari kuesioner. Kesimpulannya, dapat disimpulkan bahwa kemampuan membaca siswa kelas VIII SMPN 4 Sukawati tahun ajaran 2022/2023 dapat ditingkatkan melalui strategi RAP.

***Kata Kunci:** Meningkatkan, Strategi RAP, dan Pemahaman Membaca*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the four skills in English that is very important, reading plays an important role in enhancing students' English ability. Reading is a complex skill, that is to say, that it involves a whole series of lesser skills (Broughton, 2003:89). Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that reading is a complex process of thinking in assigning materials that involves most of the readers' intellectual act, such comprehension to get ideas or information extended by the text. Reading is one of the most basic skills in English, and it requires more than word-for-word translation and understanding of certain paragraphs in a text. Those skills must be learned all by English language learners because reading skills can help improve other language skills and reading gives students a lot of information and allows them to expand their knowledge. Besides that, diligently reading can also be used to help them improve their pronunciation, vocabulary, and knowledge of spelling words, all of which can affect their four language skills in English.

Reading is also the most important skill for EFL learners especially in an academic context because students need to comprehend and deal with all reading aspects and difficulties. Reading is not a simple skill in learning English, it is difficult to master. Woolley (2011:15) stated that the goal of reading is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain the meaning from isolated words or sentences. According to Johnson (2008:3), reading is the practice of using text to create meaning. Based on this definition, the researcher concludes that reading must develop, so that readers can understand the meaning of reading and also capture the meaning of the text, while increasing interest in reading in students becomes an important point for teachers because it may be constrained by several problems.

Reading is the main reason why students learn a language without reading, the learners never know about anything. Randi Stone (2009:39) states that reading is a fundamental goal that children must master to be successful in school and life. Therefore, the teacher as a material provider has an important role to help increase students' reading interest. This student requires to read short excerpts from the material and rearrange the content, including main ideas and specific details, in their own words. Reading can help students improve their memory for important information According to Cline et.al (2006: 2), states that reading is decoding and understanding written texts. Decoding requires translating the symbols of the writing system (including Braille) into the spoken words which they represent. Understanding is determined by the purposes for reading, the context, the nature of the text, and the readers' strategies and knowledge to improve reading comprehension.

Reading cannot be separated from comprehension. Comprehension has the same meaning as understanding. In learning English as a second language, reading is an active cognitive process of interacting with print to build up meaning. When the readers read a text, they need to comprehend what the writer tells about. Comprehension is the capacity to grasp meaning from the writer's idea in a text. Some experts have shared their definitions of reading comprehension according to Anderson et.al in Karen R. Harris and Steve Graham (2007:2). Based on the description above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is an active process of grasp meaning from the content of the writer's idea about the topic in a text by coordinating a number of skills related to decoding, word reading, fluency and the integration of background knowledge, vocabulary, and previous experiences.

Based on preliminary observations, there are several problems that the teacher might have to pay attention to when teaching reading, the first is that students are expected to be able to speak fluently and after reading they will immediately find the main idea of the text. However, when faced with reality while reading children have difficulty understanding English words, phrases, and sentences so they lose interest in reading. Several cases that occurred in the eighth grade of SMPN 4 Sukawati were when after reading they were asked to find the main idea while students had difficulty identifying paragraphs of text and understanding the content so they had difficulty getting the main idea of the text. This is hard work to

get students interested in reading, some students think that reading is boring. To help them, the teacher must provide an appropriate teaching strategy, especially in reading problems and finding the main idea of the text given. Therefore, the students will enjoy learning in class, and will increase students' interest in reading and they don't think that finding main ideas is not as hard as they thought.

Based on an interview with a teacher at SMPN 4 Sukawati, the teacher us ed Reading-Aloud as a text reading technique. According to Huang (2010:148) reading aloud is an important part in education for all around development, which has several functions in English teaching. By reading aloud, students can test themselves whether the pronunciations that they are saying are correct or not. If the pronunciations are not correct, the researcher can easily revise them. In addition, Huang also said that reading aloud is used a major way to improve students' oral English. In the classroom, the students are going to get an explanation about pronunciation and the teacher give the example about reading aloud of a text, then the teacher is going to divide the students into groups and discuss how to pronounce the text, after discussing the teacher is going to ask each group of the students to come forward reading the text given with correct pronunciation. In the end, the students are asked to find the main idea after reading the text. Besides, this is where the student's difficulties are also the teacher's concern in reading and finding the main ideas in the text, students only focus on pronunciation in reading but do not understand the contents of the text they read. The reading process is not given enough attention, especially on how to find the main ideas.

Reading-Aloud is a technique in the teaching and learning process in the classroom that helps students in reading to improve good pronunciation and speak fluently because the text that is read repeatedly will make students remember vocabulary. However, on the other side, students are also expected to be able to find the main idea in the text with a lack of clear directions. Therefore, there are still many students who do not understand the learning process, especially when finding the main idea. Gabrielatos (2002:3) stated that learners may read aloud fairly competently in terms of pronunciation of individual words but fail to understand the meaning of what they are reading. In addition, if we are going to find the main idea, we must be able to understand the contents of the text we read, while some cases in learning that occur still lack clear directions to solve these problems. Huang (2010:148) states that there are at least a few disadvantages of reading aloud. First, reading aloud frequently will slow down our reading speed that we always emphasize to improving. Second, reading aloud can only give a few students a chance to practice while the others feel bored. Third, the students are easy to be embarrassed when reading they will read worse when being corrected by the teacher. Fourth, compared to the conversation and discussion reading aloud skill has little practical value unless the student will be the announcer in the future. Finally, this kind of reading is aimless every student has original material results only a few students can continue reading regardless of the embarrassment.

To solve this problem, many strategies can be applied in classroom action research, especially in finding the

main idea in the text. (Hua et al., 2014). Using the RAP strategy makes participants focus only on important information in the text more easily. Participants can also identify the main idea of a paragraph and the correlation between paragraphs with a lower level of difficulty than before. Through the RAP strategy, the students not only know how to get the main idea but also help the students to become more interested in the process of reading and build their critical thinking in comprehending the reading text (Hagaman, et. al., 2010). The RAP strategy has several advantages compared to other interventions: it can be used with students at all levels, elementary school, junior high school, or high school (Hagaman & Reid, 2008). The RAP strategy is carried out by reading, asking questions, and putting the main ideas into words or paraphrasing using your own words. So, in the RAP strategy R stands for *read*, students read Descriptive text fluently, A stands for *ask,* students ask themselves to find the main idea, and the last is P which stands for *put*, students put the main idea and paraphrase to support the details in the text. The researcher chose the RAP strategy to be applied in this study as a means of proving how the strategy works to solve students' problems in eighth grade. with the title Improving Reading Comprehension of Class VIII Students of SMPN 4 Sukawati Academic Year 2022/2023 Through RAP. Therefore, this strategy is very suitable for improving students' reading comprehension, where students will be asked to read a short text and reconstruct its content including main ideas and specific details in their own words. this strategy helps them remember important information and improves reading comprehension.

By implementing the RAP strategy, the process of learning to read will be easy (Brown, 2006:8). Teaching becomes an interaction between teachers and students. The teaching and learning process must be effective where teachers are required to take advantage of appropriate approaches, methods, or techniques used in the teaching and learning process. In the learning process, the researcher uses the RAP strategy, Hagaman and Reid (2008:222). Provide that this three-step strategy can improve the reading comprehension of students with and without disabilities and is extremely flexible. It can be used for elementary, middle, and high-school students across many different content areas. In applying of this strategy students will be asked to read a short text and restructure its contents including the main idea and specific details in their own words. This strategy helps them remember important information and improves their reading comprehension of students and also helps the teacher to manage the class's more controlled learning situation. Based on the problem faced by the students, the researcher considers the benefits of the RAP strategy to involve students in reading comprehension, the researcher chooses the RAP Strategy which will be applied in this study as a means to prove how problem-solving strategies work in class VIII students of SMP N 4 Sukawati. The researcher believes this strategy can be well implemented in school to improve reading comprehension.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher considered the RAP strategy to stimulate and regulate the students' understanding learning process, the

researcher chose this strategy to prove that this strategy worked well in overcoming the difficulties faced by the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Sukawati. In addition, it will be the best solution for them, this strategy is also appropriate for students to make them more active in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the researcher believes that this strategy will improve students' reading comprehension and their grades as well. The researcher conducted the present study entitled "Improving Reading Comprehension of the eighth-grade Students of SMPN 4 Sukawati in Academic Year 2022/2023 through RAP.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is the overarching method that a researcher uses to combine diverse components of a study coherently, ensuring that the researcher effectively addresses the research problem. The purpose of this study was to see how well students understood retelling text. Because the researcher wanted to improve student's reading comprehension through the RAP strategy, the research method was a Classroom Action Research (CAR) procedure. According to Arikunto (2009:58), "Classroom action research is an action-research which is carried out in the classroom aimed to improve learning practice quality". It means that this method can help the quality of teaching-learning ability and solve real problems in the classroom through new methods, skills, and strategies through collaboration between researcher and teacher. There are many ways to improve knowledge about teaching. Many teachers practice personal reflection on teaching, while others conduct formal empirical studies on teaching and learning. Classroom Action

Research is a part of various kinds of action research out of some other themes like participatory research, critical action research, and action learning. (Phillips & Carr, 2010:2). The process of learning and doing action research enables preservice teachers to grow a strong and trustworthy professional voice to engage students, parents and colleagues in critical conversation for change. Classroom Action Research is a method of finding out what works best in an own classroom so that teachers can improve student learning. There are many ways to improve knowledge about teaching. Burns (2010:2) states that Action research is part of a broad movement that has been going on in education generally for some time. It is related to the ideas of reflective practice and the teacher as a researcher. Action research involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your teaching contexts. In action research, a teacher becomes an investigator or explorer of his or her teaching context, while at the same time being one of the participants in it. It means that one of the main aims of action research is to identify the problematic situation or issue that the participants may include teacher and students. By considering the benefits of the RAP strategy to stimulate and engage students in reading comprehension, the researcher chose the RAP strategy to be applied in this study as a means to prove how the strategy works to overcome students' problems. This research investigated the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text. Therefore, the method of research is a Classroom Action Research (CAR) procedure since the researcher intended to improve students' reading comprehension.

According to Ferrance (2000:1), classroom action research is a process in which participants systematically and carefully examine their own educational practice, using the research strategy. Classroom action research in education can be applied to such areas as curriculum development, teaching strategies, and school. Classroom action research has been applied around the world in education especially in improving teaching and learning. In addition, Ferrance (2000:2) states that Classroom Action Research is the idea that teachers will begin a cycle of posing questions, gathering data, reflecting, and deciding on a course of action. Classroom action research has a variety of functions, such as changing students learning behavior, improving professional competency, upgrading self-confidence, and the growth of knowledge.

The purpose of this classroom action research is to improve the student's reading comprehension. According to Ary et al. (2010:519), there are a series of steps to be taken in conducting the teaching-learning process such as planning, action, observation, and reflection. Planning is developed for taking action and gathering information and data to observe or capture the experience or monitor the practice. In action, the researcher implements the plan or changes a practice, and collect data, data may collect from a variety of source. Then the teacher carries out the lesson plan in the classroom step by step. The collaborator would collect the data from field note, observation checklist, and reading comprehension test. In reflection, the research analyze the result based on the data that had been collect to determine the text action in the next cycle. The researcher and collaborator make a reflection to evaluate the teaching learning process and students' understanding on reading comprehension.

In conducting the classroom action research, the researcher necessary to do an initial reflection by interviewing the English teacher, observing the subject, and administering the pre-test. The purpose of administering the pre-test is to know the students' achievements before implementing the strategy. The step on action research is according to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) and adapted from Burns, (2010:8). This research was held around two cycles. The teaching and learning process divided into two cycles in which each cycle consisting of two sessions. The first cycle may become a continuing, or iterative, spiral of a cycle which recurs until the action researcher has achieved a satisfactory outcome and feels it is time to stop. (1) Planning-a problem or issue is identified and a plan of action is developed to bring about improvements in specific areas of the research context; (2) Action–the plan is put into action over an agreed period time; (3) Observation–the effects of the action are observed and data are collected; (4) Reflection–the effects of the action are evaluated and become the basis for further cycles of research.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
Findings

In this present study the researcher used Classroom Action Research as a research design. The objective of the study was to figure out whether or not the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of the SMPN 4 sukawati especially in class VIII F in academic year 2022/2023 can be improved through RAP. The reading comprehension which was

improved in this study focused on reading descriptive text particularly in finding out general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference.

There were two kinds of instruments used to collect the data for the present classroom action research. The researcher collected data from the eighth-grade subjects of SMPN 4 Sukawati in academic year 2022/2023. The researcher gathered the data by using tests (pre-test and post-test) and questionnaire. The process of collecting data was begun by administering the pre-test. The result of pre-test was used as the basic consideration for conducting the teaching and learning process which consisted of two cycles. Pre-test in reading comprehension was administered to the subject under study to obtain their pre-existing ability in reading comprehension. Post-test was given after the teaching learning process had been carried out. Post-test was administered twice; once in cycle I and once in cycle II. The questionnaire was given to the eighth-grade subject of SMPN 4 Sukawati to find out the subjects' responses to the application of the RAP Strategy in teaching and learning process in the classroom in order to improve their reading comprehension.

The subjects of the study were taken from eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Sukawati especially VIII F that consisted of 36 students. From that number, there were 22 males and 14 females. According to the English teacher, the subjects under study had some problems in English reading skill especially they were identifying general information, textual meaning, and textual reference on a reading text. Moreover, those problems were proven by their pre-test result on the reading comprehension test. Thus, the

subjects under study must be treated by using the RAP techniques. In this study, the subject was taken from eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Sukawati.

Discussion

The present study used classroom action research which was consisted of four interconnected activities such as; planning, action, observation, and reflection. The present classroom action research was divided in two cycles, namely cycle I and cycle II in which in each cycle consisted of two sessions. This study was begun by doing the pre- cycle completed with the pre-test. Cycle I and Cycle II were also ended by administering Post-test I and Post-test II which were given after the subjects were taught by using RAP strategy in the end of each cycle.

The result of the study in pre- test which was done in pre-cycle was 55.61. It means that the initial reading comprehension low because from 36 subjects who followed the pre-test there were only 8 subjects who could achieve the minimum passing grade that was 71. Most of the subjects had difficulties in reading especially in finding specific information, general information, textual reference, and textual meaning of reading recount text. In addition, this fact showed the subjects' reading comprehension was needed to be improved in which the improvement was done by using RAP in the teaching and learning process in cycle I and cycle II.

The result of Post-Test I which was administered by the researcher in the end of cycle I was 72.38. It means that there was an improvement of the subjects' reading comprehension after they were taught by using RAP strategy because 25 subjects could achieve the minimum passing grade

of 71. However, they were still lack in identifying general information, specific information, textual reference, and find the main idea of the text.

The result of the Post-Test II was 82.94 It means that there was significant improvement of the subjects' reading comprehension. It could be showed on the subjects' achievement in cycle II in which there was 35 subjects who did Post-Test II, could achieve the minimum passing grade. It could be indicated that the success indicator in this study had completely achieved. Therefore, the study could be ended in this cycle. It also showed that RAP strategy in teaching reading could improve the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Sukawati in academic year 2020/2021.

In this study, the researcher gave a questionnaire to find out the subject's responses regarding the implementation of the RAP Strategy during the learning process. The questionnaire consists of 10 items and five choices. There were 5 options such as: Strongly Agree (*Sangat Setuju*) which has 5 points, Agree (*Setuju*) has 4 points, Undecided (*Ragu-ragu*) has 3 points, Disagree (*Tidak Setuju*) has 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (*Sangat Tidak Setuju*) has 1 point. The questionnaire used Bahasa Indonesia. Based on the data that already calculated, it showed that the percentage of subjects responded for Strongly Agree was 41.1%, 56.3% of the subjects responded Agree, 2.3% of the subjects responded Undecided, 0.3% of the subjects responded Disagree, and 0% of the subjects responded Strongly Disagree about implementation of RAP Strategy in teaching-learning process for improving students' reading comprehension. Based on the data, it meant

the subjects' responses of implementation of RAP Strategy were positive.

Based on the finding of pre- cycle, cycle I and cycle II, the objective of this study that was to figure out whether or not the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade Students of SMPN 4 Sukawati in academic year 2022/2023 could be improved through RAP strategy had been answered. It showed that the subjects' reading comprehension could be improved through RAP. The success of RAP strategy in improving the subjects reading comprehension showed from the result of all tests which were administered in this research. By looking at the achievement which was achieved by the subjects, it could be clearly show that the implementation of RAP strategy in teaching learning process could improve the subject's reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data, it can be concluded that the reading comprehension of class VIII students of SMPN 4 Sukawati for the 2022/2023 academic year can be improved by using the RAP Strategy. In this study there were 2 cycles carried out by researchers consisting of 2 sessions in each cycle. At the end of each cycle the researcher gave a post-test. In addition, at the end of this study the researcher gave a questionnaire. Therefore, researchers collected data from pre-test, Post-Test I, Post-Test II, and questionnaires.

Based on the data, it shows that the average value of the pre-test is 55.61, the average value of Post-Test I is 72.38, and the average value of Post-Test II is 82.94. This shows that the data experienced a significant increase from the pre-test to Cycle II. In the pre-test, only 8 out of 36

subjects passed the minimum passing grade. In Post-Test I there was an increase. This shows that 25 out of 36 subjects passed the minimum passing grade. In addition, the data showed that the Post-Test II was better because there were 35 out of 36 subjects who passed the minimum passing grade. That is, there is an increase and students' reading comprehension can be improved by using the RAP strategy.

SUGGESTION

Based on the data in this study, the researcher provides advice to English teachers and students of SMPN 4 Sukawati and to other researchers who will carry out the RAP strategy to improve students' reading comprehension.

First, for English teachers at SMPN 4 Sukawati, the researcher suggests during the teaching and learning process to consider using the RAP strategy to improve reading comprehension. Based on the data that has been shown, this strategy is proven to improve students' reading comprehension.

For students at SMPN 4 Sukawati, the researcher suggests to be more active and motivated in learning English, especially reading. Therefore, increasing their reading knowledge is very important. Students also need to develop good reading habits to improve reading comprehension. The researcher also suggests for future researchers who will conduct the same research to develop their research for the better. Future researchers can use this strategy at different levels or grades of students to improve their reading comprehension.

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