

THE APPLICATION OF MURDER TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

NI WAYAN KRISMAYANI

*English Education Study Program,
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar*

ABSTRACT

Reading is a complex process involving skill and intelligence in which readers make sense of the text by combining their prior knowledge, purpose of reading and the information given in the text. This study addresses some important point regarding MURDER technique in fulfilling the need of University student in reading comprehensively. The researcher then implemented MURDER (Mood, Understand, Recall, Detect, Elaborate, and Review) technique on his attempt to solve the problem face by the fourth semester students of English Education Study program FKIP Unmas denpasar in academic year 2014/2015. The classroom action research was carried out in two-planned cycles that were proceeded by administration of pre-test. The result of the tests, pre-test and post-tests, showed that the students' reading comprehension improved significantly. To get the supporting data, structured questionnaire, showed positive responses concerning the students' responses toward the implementation of MURDER technique. These results were considered as the findings of this study. In conclusion, the findings of the present classroom action research have achieved the expected result, that was, improving the low level mastery of reading comprehension; furthermore, it can be, of course, accomplished because of the implementation of MURDER technique.

Keyword: *MURDER, reading comprehension.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension has always been an interesting topic to several studies. Reading is one of four major skills that should be mastered as it is very important. Reading is a critical skill and it is recognized as the foundation for future learning. It means that if students do not read and even they are not able to comprehend what they read they will get trouble in later years as more and more materials to be learned is presented in English written form. Reading comprehension is the process of deriving meaning from connected text. It involves word knowledge (vocabulary), sentence structure (grammar) as well as thinking and reasoning. Therefore, this process is not a passive process but an active one. The readers actively engage with the text to construct meaning. This active engagement includes making use of prior knowledge. It also involves drawing inference from the words and expression that a writer uses to communicate information, ideas, and viewpoints.

In addition, to have a good reading class activity, teacher must involve all the students during the lesson. The study must be student-centered. Teacher just needs to manage both students who have low achievement and high achievement in reading comprehension to have the same opportunity to actively participate in the lesson. No one dominates the others. Though competition is important in the class and it is not prohibited, it needs to understand that it is much more important if all of the students can help one another to be successful together and finally can increase their achievement, especially in reading comprehension. To make students read comprehensively is a challenge for teacher. A study in reading instruction explains several effective instructions such as previewing the text, read the text and subsequently students are instructed to summarize the text. Such general instructions do not seem solve the problem.

Problem is not only caused by the students but also by the teaching technique used by the teacher which is considered unsuccessful. In English Department of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, students interest in reading gradually decrease since the lecturer apply the technique monotonously. It must be noticed that teaching reading in the classroom is not a simple thing to do. Many aspects must be paid attention if teacher wants to successfully hold teaching learning process in the class. One of the crucial aspects is to make sure that students really understand what they read. The students normally start reading without thinking what subject they are reading and whether or not they have background knowledge of the topic. Teacher does not care with this situation and only orders the students to read. As long as they are able to read, teacher considers it enough. It makes them fail to understand the text because they do not relate the information that they have already known to the content of the text.

In order to create teaching learning process that is enjoyable and meaningful, teachers should take their role through varying their teaching techniques or creating strategy that might attract the students to put their best attention to teaching learning process. The latter might be done in various ways; moreover, it can be done through implementing different kinds of teaching techniques. The technique that was used in this study is called MURDER. MURDER is the acronym of Mood, Understand, Recall, Detect, Elaborate, and Review. The MURDER technique is one part of cooperative learning. The practice of MURDER technique in the classroom can actively increase student comprehension. It employs student to read intensively without having pressure since they work in pair makes students aware of reading process, and create challenging situations for students. Both teacher and student are engaged in the process of learning. Students will experience reading class very attractively. They are out of fear because they have partner to discuss and solve their reading together, anxiety is either disappear which create a lower affective filter and then their confidence is boosted. In result, reading comprehension can be enhanced effectively and it produces enthusiasm as well as confidence.

II. UNDERLYING THEORIES

2.1 Reading Comprehension

By reading, people can grasp many information and knowledge. Harmer (2007:99) argues that reading is useful for language acquisition. Provided that students more or less understand what they read, the more they read, the better they get at it. Reading also has a positive effect on students' vocabulary knowledge, spelling and writing. Someone's ability in comprehending a text will be different one to another. Reading is a complex activity that requires a deep understanding. For that reason, readers are put in some level. There are two levels of reader, they are upper and lower level. For those who are upper level, they are decoding and establishing meaning at the same time as they are responding to what they read, selecting particular aspects for consideration and evaluating effects. At the lower levels emphasis is placed on accurate and fluent reading and on reading with understanding. From this explanation, the upper level will be more critical than lower. Their respond, including evaluating their understanding of

what they read was really useful to gain meaning of the reading passage compared with the lower level reader.

Reading comprehension is defined as the level of understanding of a text/message, vocabulary and grammatical knowledge have a big role within this context. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text. Comprehension is at the heart of what it means to really read. Reading is thinking and understanding and getting at the meaning behind a text (Serravallo, 2010:43). She emphasizes that reading activity must be directed toward the understanding and catching the idea that the text provide. It is important for the reader to activate prior knowledge before, during, and after reading a text. They think about what they already know about a topic before they read; they connect to their personal experience, other books, and the world as they read; and they think about these connections after they are finished reading.

Johnson (2008:109) states reading is the act of creating meaning with text. The two key words are creating and meaning. It means that If there is no meaning being created, there is no reading taking place. To do this practice, the way how people can understand and create the meaning of what they read will depend on how they can percept as well as to make sense words, sentences, or even a connected text in their mind or thought. This process will require the people to use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience of the readers to help them in comprehending the written text.

While, Moreillon (2007:10) states that reading is making meaning from print and from visual information. However, reading is not simple. Reading is an active process that requires a great deal of practice and skill. Pronouncing words and identifying picture and then make them mean something is a must to take the students' ability in reading. In addition, according to Sweet and Snow (2008:48), reading comprehension may be simply defined as the ability to obtain meaning from a written text for some purpose. It is a complex process which depends on two component processes that is word recognition and language comprehension.

2.2 MURDER Technique

Cooperative learning is one strategy that make student involve and engage in reading activities. In cooperative learning, teacher are required to make the students involved in a team for studying together, and supporting each other to reach the team goal (Kagan, 2009). That is why teachers need to use MURDER to improve the students' reading comprehension. MURDER is the acronym of Mood, Understand, Recall, Detect, Elaborate, and Review. MURDER provides several effectives steps that serve the students to read cooperatively with their pair or group. It starts with M (Mood). In this section, teacher needs to find a comfortable atmosphere that set a positive mood. The students are reinforced to be in less anxiety condition which helps in raising confidence. It is believed student will easily understand the lesson whatever skills teacher deliver, whether it is listening, speaking, writing, or reading. The following is U (Understand). In this section, the student marks any information in the text that he or she does not understand by circling it, highlighting it, or simply drawing a question mark next to it. The teacher can ask the student to work in pair or group. The following step is R (Recall). In this section, Students are instructed to recall their understanding, including ideas or several information regarding the text. Students can leave his or her text and summarize or paraphrase in their own words. Next is D (Detect/ Digest), here another student is holding the text regard of correcting his pair if he finds mistakes. However, teacher can instruct the students to exchange the duty of recaller and detector in order the students will get same role in each section. The E (Elaborate), here the teacher suggests that the students should go back and start asking and attempting to answer questions about the specific topics that he or she still does not understand even after completing the detect/digest step. The last step would be R (Review). In this section, the students are required to build the summary of the whole text and look at how much of the information they can remember.

2.3 The Use of MURDER in Teaching Reading

The practice of MURDER technique in the classroom can actively increase student comprehension. It employs student to read intensively without having pressure since they work in pair makes students aware of reading process, and create challenging situations for students. Actually, MURDER technique can be used into all the skill, they are reading, listening, speaking and writing. But in this study, MURDER is used for teaching reading. Here is the explanation of procedure in teaching reading:

- a. First the teacher put the students in pair. The teacher can start by telling motivational story or joke to set the students' mood or engage them with the learning condition.
- b. The teacher asks the students to read the text silently. Here the students can mark difficult words or vocabularies, note for special uncommon information, and discuss them with pair. If they can not get the meaning, they are encourage to look up from the context of the sentence and find the meaning from other resources which give better explanation, e.g., dictionaries or even asking the teacher.
- c. After the students have finished read the reading passage, the teacher ask the students in each pairs to summarize what they have read to their partner alternately, the key ideas of the section without looking down at the text (Recaller).
- d. While Detector job looks at the text, detects any errors, omissions, or unnecessary information in the summary and discusses theses with the recaller. However, teacher can instruct the students to exchange the duty of recaller and detector in order the students will get same role in each section
- e. In elaborating step, the teacher asks the student to discuss about the reading text. They, in pair, can discuss about what they got from the reading text. Moreover, student tries to relate the text to their real life situation.
- f. When the entire text has been completed, the pair combines their thoughts and then summarizes the entire text.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Based on two weeks preliminary research on the third semester students of English Education Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar in academic year 2014/2015, the researcher found that the students still faced difficulty in reading comprehension. Therefore, the fourth semester students of English Education Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar, which consisted 8 males and 24 females, were chosen as the subject and this research was intended to solve their problem and to improve their reading skill through MURDER. This research made use of Classroom Action Research (CAR). The teaching and learning processes were planned into some cycles where each cycle consisted of two sessions. Each session consisted of four interconnected activities, namely: Planning (P), Action (A), Observation (O), and Reflection (R). The research instruments which were used by the researcher to collect data for the pre-test, post-test and structured questionnaire.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the pre-test, which was administered to figure out or quantify the students' weaknesses, pointed out that the fourth semester students of English Education Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar still faced problem in comprehending a reading text. It was clearly shown from the low mean score of 41.2. Since this study was intended to improve the students' low mastery in reading comprehension, the researcher applied a teaching technique, that was, MURDER (Mood, Understand, Recall, Detect, Elaborate, and Review). The result of the data analysis undoubtedly confirmed that in cycle I, which consisted of two sessions, there were quite significant improvement of each session though it was still not satisfying. It could be obviously seen from the result of post-tests in each session: 56.2 in session 1 and 64.6 in session 2 and the mean figure was 60.4 The results did not yet fulfill her expectation. Consequently, the second cycle was prepared in order to get worth result.

Revised planning of the second cycle was prepared on the basis of post-test in cycle I, the result of observation during the teaching learning process in cycle I. The results of the post-tests also showed increasing mean score figure which was 72.5 in session 3 and 79.0 in session 4. In addition, the grand mean of cycle II was mean figure of 75.7. The findings yielded from the present study had come out with the evidences that there was significant improvement of the previously problem faced by the fourth semester students of English Education Study Program.

To support the main data resulted from the tests in pre-cycle, cycle I and cycle II, the researcher administered a structured questionnaire which was administered at the end of the last cycle. The questionnaire was constructed on the basis of multiple choice items of four options. The percentage calculation respectively from A, B, C, and D resulted the percentages as follows: 61.18%, 34.47%, 43.4 % and 0 %. It clearly indicated that the subjects of the study gave positive response toward the teaching technique implemented by the lecturer.

This proved that the subjects' learning behaviors changed positively, that was their attitudes and motivation heightened significantly. This also indicated that teaching reading comprehension through MURDER could make active and creative participation. It means that the subjects' ability in English would be gradually improved. The findings yielded from the present study had come out with the evidences that there was significant improvement of the previously problem faced by the fourth semester students of English Education Study Program. It can be clearly seen from the increase of mean score of post-tests administered at the end of each session. In addition, it also can be clearly seen from the computation grand mean of cycle I and cycle II. The result of these data analysis suggested that the students' problem in reading comprehension can be solved through implementing MURDER Technique. The students involved in the class activities and they seemed more interested in comprehending the reading text by using MURDER.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

To conclude, MURDER is technique of cooperative learning which concerns with establishing the activity of the students to find, process, and report information from any sources that are going to be presented in classroom. MURDER is aimed to reinforce learning, foster the sharing of successful responses in the whole class and to decide how information shared among team member. Moreover, it create the students to be independent, responsible and also cooperative learners at the same time. By applying this technique, all of the students will take a part in the lesson since it promotes discussion and both individual and group accountability. Students will understand that reading process is not just read, but they need to draw big picture of the text.

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