



The use of MURDER strategy to improve students' reading comprehension

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Abstract : The aim of this research was to find out how the use of MURDER strategy can improve students' reading comprehension at SMP Islam 2 Kota Ternate. The researcher used Classroom Action Research (CAR) to conduct this research. There were 22 students as a subject. There were two cycles, each cycle consisted of two meetings. Based on the description of the research results and discussion, it was concluded that implementing the MURDER strategy can improve students' reading comprehension. In the first cycle, only two students achieve a passing grade, meaning 90.9% of students studying at the SMP Islam 2 Kota Ternate failed the passing exam. In the second cycle, however, only 13.63% of students failed to get a passing grade. This means that in the second cycle, 19 students met the success criteria and only 3 students did not yet meet the success criteria. This means that the reading comprehension of students at SMP Islam 2 Kota Ternate has improved significantly compared to the reading literacy teaching and learning process before the implementation of the MURDER strategy.

Keywords : *Reading Comprehension, MURDER Strategy, classroom action research*

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BACKGROUND

Reading is one of the most important parts of learning a language. Reading is a skill that requires, above all, interest and passion, creativity and imagination. Ur (in Zehral, 2017) stated that reading is a term that includes reading and understanding a text. Through reading activities, students attempt to understand the essence of the text. Furthermore, the goal of reading is understanding.

Reading is a seemingly rudimentary skill, but is challenging to achieve due to its susceptibility to personal preference. The act of reading is of great importance in the field of scientific progress as it serves as the main means of disseminating knowledge. According to Huda Babu's research on "An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension at Mts Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru". Data shows that children's reading skills remain low (Babu, 2020). Pupils have low ability to understand reading. Based on the results of the preliminary observation, the students of SMP Islam 2 Kota Ternate actually have some problems in reading. They lack vocabulary mastery, lack of understanding and still translate word for word. In addition, their motivation to learn English and improve their reading comprehension is still low. They also have difficulty understanding texts and finding the main idea of a text. The problems occurred because the method or strategy used did not capture students' interest and they feel bored while learning English, especially in reading skills.

Based on the above explanation, the researcher wants to solve students' reading comprehension problems; The researcher wants to use the MURDER strategy to improve students' reading comprehension. According to Hythecker (1988), the MURDER strategy has many advantages. The mood aspect of the MURDER strategy encourages students to relax and focus on the task. Understanding helps students follow the author's main idea by removing the pressure to understand in detail. Recall helps students rehearse the material, identify the main idea of each paragraph, and convert the material into an oral form and into the students' own words. The detection aspect encourages students to be as accurate as possible in the summary by identifying any errors or omissions. It helps students improve their ability to summarize the material. Elaborate guides students to make the information in the summary more memorable. The final aspect is the review aspect, which guides students to create a summary of the entire passage. With this technique, students work in small groups. They work together to share their understanding of the text. The objective of this research was to know how is the students' reading comprehension be improve by using MURDER Strategy at SMP Islam 2 Kota Ternate.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of Reading

According to Klingender (in Jannete, 2007), reading is the main reason students learn. Without reading you never learn anything. According to Stone, reading is a fundamental goal that children must master to succeed in school and in life. Furthermore, reading is not a passive but an active process, as reading cannot be separated from thinking.

According to Nur (in Lewin, 2003), reading means understanding the meaning of a text. In the reading activity, the reader performs an eye-mind interaction to learn what the author is explaining.

According to (Linse, 2005), reading comprehension can be defined as a set of processes through which readers find information and understand the information contained in a reading text. Specifies that reading comprehension refers to reading for meaning and entertainment. According to Kartawijaya (in Khan, 2016), reading is the receptive language process. This is the process of recognizing, interpreting and perceiving written or printed materials.

Kaganang (in Snow, 2010) mentions that reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and engagement with written language. Reading is also a complex interaction between text and reader, which is shaped by the readers' prior knowledge, experiences, attitudes and the language community in which the readers are socio-culturally located.

Based on the above description, the researcher can conclude that reading is a component of skills that includes completing and understanding the meaning of written material. The act of reading is a complex cognitive process that involves decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning from the written text. In the context of this term, reading serves as a means of acquiring language, facilitating communication, and exchanging information and ideas. Reading is a passive skill that requires an interactive process to understand the intended meaning and extract information or ideas from the written text. Understanding reading skills, including the reading skills of diverse experts with different perspectives, is undeniably critical for reading educators.

Problems of Teaching Reading Comprehension

Teaching reading is a part of the activity in teaching English that needs to be done by the teacher. Some teachers have trouble teaching reading comprehension. The first problem is that the teacher cannot know exactly the students' prior knowledge (Council, 2013). Although the teacher has taught some material related to the topic being discussed, he or she cannot ensure that all students can understand the material well. This becomes a serious problem in teaching reading comprehension because prior knowledge is very important for students' reading comprehension. Teachers find the fact that deciding on appropriate reading tasks makes sense (Rat, 2013) because tasks influence students' understanding of a text. If the teacher can give good and appropriate reading tasks, students will engage in reading and comprehension can be achieved easily. In fact, appropriate tasks and texts help students understand texts.

Another problem that the teacher might face is that he feels that it is quite difficult to find the best method and strategies to teach the students. This is because they face students with different characteristics and intelligence levels. In fact, the methods and strategies the teacher chooses can have an impact on students' reading comprehension. Therefore, teachers need appropriate methods and strategies for teaching reading comprehension.

From the above description, it is clear that the lack of precise knowledge about students' prior understanding, the challenge of formulating appropriate tasks, and the challenge of selecting the appropriate method and approach are problems that arise when teaching reading comprehension appear. Given the above-mentioned difficulty in selecting appropriate methods and strategies, the researcher considers it imperative to apply a specific strategy in teaching reading comprehension.

MURDER Strategy

The MURDER method is the variant of the Cooperative Learning Script developed by Angela O'Donnell and Donald Danserau (O'Donnell, 1999:10). Originally, the cooperative learning script requires each pair member to read the first paragraph of a passage, and one pair member then serves as a recaller, attempting to verbally summarize what they have learned from memory. The other members act as listeners or moderators and attempt to correct errors in retrieval (metacognitive activities) and further facilitate the organization and storage of the material (elaborative activities). In the following sections of the passage, the partners alternate the roles of the remembered and the listener (Hythecker, 1988). To make the script easier to learn and use, it has been divided into six steps and given the acronym MURDER ("mood,"

“understand,” “remember,” “recognize,” “elaborate,” “review”) involves interaction between two partners who learn from a text. First, the learners divide the text into paragraphs themselves. Each learner then reads the first passage individually. The partners then put the text aside and take on different roles: One plays the person being called back, whose job it is to recall the text information as completely as possible. The other partner plays the listener and tries to identify and correct misunderstandings and identify omissions. The partners then work together to develop ways to make the text content more memorable. They can achieve this by linking the information to their own prior knowledge (e.g. through comparisons or links to other topics). After the dyad has worked through the first passage in this way, the next section is read and the roles are swapped. The script instructions can be presented to learners in different ways. Lambiotte (1987) provided the instructions in written form after each paragraph, while Larson (2012) did not provide written instructions to the learners during the collaboration but instead trained the learners on the correct use of the script instructions before the actual collaborative learning phase.

The goals of MURDER are twofold. First, the learners should acquire knowledge of the text content. Secondly, the learners should acquire text learning strategies. These strategies include cognitive skills such as explaining and metacognitive skills such as monitoring.

The Procedures of MURDER Strategy

The steps for using the MURDER strategy are described by Chase (2006). These steps are as follows: (1) The teacher divides the students into some groups. A group consists of 2 students; (2) The teacher distributes the text to be discussed to the students; (3) In the group, the couple creates the right mood by relaxing and concentrating on the learning task. In this step you can chat very briefly. Then they should decide how they will signal to each other when they have finished reading the passage. (4) Next, the step of understanding. Students silently read the same section of the text, starting from the beginning, section by section; (5) After silent reading, the pairs stop. One member of the pair remembers the main points of the passage without looking at the page, while the other tries to recognize and correct misunderstandings and identify omissions; (6) Both then develop the text content to make it memorable by providing examples, opinions and context based on their prior knowledge. The pairs continue to go through the sections or paragraphs of the text, alternating in the roles of summarizing and supervising, until they complete the text and then formulate an overall summary. (7) If students have problems, the teacher can help them but intervene appropriately.

METHODS

This study employs the Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology. Action research, according to Burns (1999), is the application of fact-finding to practical problem-solving in a social setting to improve the quality of action within it. It entails the cooperation and collaboration of researchers, practitioners, and laypeople.

The researcher adopted the CAR model from Kemmis (1982): planning, action, observation and reflection. “Planning” is about determining the question that needs to be answered and determining the strategy to answer it. In the “action” phase, the practitioner tries out the strategy. The “Observation” phase involves recording data about the outcome of the method and keeping a journal of the practitioner's thoughts and reactions to the entire experience. Finally, in the “Reflection” phase, the researcher draws conclusions so that a new cycle can begin.

The study was conducted at SMP Islam 2 Kota Ternate. The researcher took Class VIII as the subject of this research. The class consisted of 22 students. The class consists of 9 boys and 13 girls.

This class is selected based on a preliminary study in which the researcher found that students in this class perform worse in reading comprehension than the other classes. Similar to other CAR, this research is carried out in cycles (pre-cycle, 1st cycle, 2nd cycle). Each cycle consists of four steps: planning, action, observation and reflection. Each step consists of several tasks as follows:

- a. Planning: In this step, the researcher determines the success criteria, prepares the lesson plan and prepares the instrument used for the research.
- b. Action: In this step, the researcher implemented the teaching and learning process using the MURDER strategy.
- c. Observation: In this step, the researcher and a cooperating observer observe the classroom activities during the teaching and learning process. A checklist of observations is used to assess student learning behavior. This includes their attention to the teacher's explanations, their interaction in the classroom and also the teacher's performance.
- d. Reflection: In this step, the researcher considers and analyzes the ongoing outcome and participates in discussions with the class and the collaborative observer to determine the need for additional cycles.

The observation checklist, which consists of student and teacher observation sheets, was the instrument used in this study. Additionally, reading texts is used to administer the test.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

There were two cycles, with two meetings in each cycle. The pupils' development in relation to the success criteria. The attempt to maximize the students' comprehension of what they read is one of the success criteria. It was put in place to determine whether or not the pupils have made progress. The score serves as the basis for success criteria. The success of this research is demonstrated by the students' passing grade of 70, which the school determined to be the passing grade. This indicates that the success criteria has been met and the strategy's implementation has been successful.

a. Research Findings in Cycle I

Ss	Scores	Passing grade	Result
S1	44	70	Unsuccessful
S2	48	70	Unsuccessful
S3	40	70	Unsuccessful
S4	36	70	Unsuccessful
S5	36	70	Unsuccessful
S6	28	70	Unsuccessful
S7	44	70	Unsuccessful
S8	48	70	Unsuccessful

S9	28	70	Unsuccessful
S10	72	70	Success
S11	60	70	Unsuccessful
S12	52	70	Unsuccessful
S13	52	70	Unsuccessful
S14	40	70	Unsuccessful
S15	84	70	Success
S16	48	70	Unsuccessful
S17	36	70	Unsuccessful
S18	36	70	Unsuccessful
S19	28	70	Unsuccessful
S20	8	70	Unsuccessful
S21	28	70	Unsuccessful
S22	48	70	Unsuccessful
Total	944		
Mean score	43		

The application of the MURDER Strategy has not yet satisfied the requirements for success, according to the examination of the teaching and learning process and the students' results in the above table. Since only two students are able to pass grade 70, S10 received a score of 72, and S15 received a score of 84. Because of this, the researcher and collaborator decided to carry over the MURDER strategy into the following cycle.

b. Research Findings in Cycle II

Ss	Score	Passing grade	Result
S1	72	70	Success
S2	60	70	Unsuccessful
S3	84	70	Success
S4	72	70	Success
S5	76	70	Success
S6	76	70	Success
S7	80	70	Success
S8	84	70	Success
S9	80	70	Success
S10	92	70	Success
S11	72	70	Success
S12	76	70	Success
S13	76	70	Success
S14	72	70	Success
S15	92	70	Success
S16	76	70	Success
S17	76	70	Success

S18	72	70	Success
S19	80	70	Success
S20	48	70	Unsuccessful
S21	76	70	Success
S22	60	70	Unsuccessful
Total	1668		
Mean Score	76		

It is clear from the results of the teaching and learning process and the students' performance in the above table that using the MURDER Strategy can help students become better readers. Just three students fall short of the passing grade, with 19 out of 22 students achieving it. Three students received their scores: S20, S22, and S2. Student S2 received a score of 60. Student S20 received a score of 48. Therefore, the researcher can say that the MURDER Strategy's implementation met the requirements for success in the second cycle.

Discussion

In this study, it was found that the reading skills of students at SMP Islam 2 Kota Ternate have improved significantly compared to the reading skills teaching and learning process before the implementation of the MURDER. strategy. The improvement could be seen from the student assessment results in each cycle.

The above tables represent the result marked "Success" (indicating that the student has successfully achieved the required grade) and "No" (indicating that the student has not achieved the required grade). The result can be observed by using the frequency (f), which has a significant variation between the 1st cycle and the 2nd cycle.

In the first cycle, only two students achieve a passing grade, meaning that 90.9% of students in the SMP Islam 2 Kotar Ternate failed a passing grade. In the second cycle, however, only 13.63% of students failed to get a passing grade. This means that in the second cycle, 19 students met the success criteria and only 3 students did not yet meet the success criteria. Although the three students' scores improved compared to the first cycle, they did not receive a passing grade.

Geta Ariani (2015) stated in her research that the MURDER strategy enhances students' reading comprehension, supporting the findings of earlier studies. The reading comprehension skills of the students have improved in terms of their ability to comprehend words and find main ideas, detailed information, cohesive devices, references, and communicative purposes. However, according to Siska Ria Pandiangan (2020), the students felt and responded that the murder strategy is very appropriate and effective to help them improve their reading comprehension on descriptive text based on the results of field notes and observation sheets.

Based on the results of the above previous research, the researcher concluded that the MURDER strategy can improve students' ability in imparting learning activities. Therefore, the researcher agreed that implementing the MURDER strategy can improve students' reading comprehension. It is a new alternative route for the students of SMP Islam 2 Kota Ternate.

In keeping with that assertion, the researcher used the theory of the MURDER strategy, which Jacob (1998) claims captures the essential idea of cooperative learning. Students can use the MURDER Strategy in pairs or groups. Each pair or group is given a passage to analyze. It gave the pupils fresh insights and information. Furthermore, the MURDER strategy has numerous benefits, according to Hythecker (1988). Students are encouraged to unwind and concentrate on the assignment by the Mood component of MURDER Strategy. By relieving

the need for in-depth comprehension, Understand aids students in following the main idea of the author. Recall aids in the students' rehearsal of the content, their ability to recognize the primary idea of each paragraph, and their conversion of the text into an oral form using their own words.

Based on the previous research and the theory explained above, the researcher proposes a research plan that is new and very interesting to develop, with the great hope that the results of this research can make an important contribution to teaching reading comprehension for teachers. Students, readers and future researchers would like to develop similar research in the future.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description of the research results and the discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the MURDER strategy can improve students' reading comprehension. As in the first cycle, only two students achieved a passing grade, meaning 90.9% of students in the SMP Islam 2 Kota Ternate failed a passing grade. In the second cycle, however, only 13.63% of students failed to get a passing grade. This means that in the second cycle, 19 students met the success criteria and only 3 students did not yet meet the success criteria. Although the three students' scores improved compared to the first cycle, they did not receive a passing grade. This means that the reading skills of students at SMP Islam 2 Kota Ternate have improved significantly compared to the reading skills teaching and learning process before the implementation of the MURDER strategy.

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