IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH RECIPROCAL TEACHING

Ersy Laksita Rini

Email : ersytarini@gmail.com

English Department, Faculty of Language and Science
Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to improve the reading comprehension of the third semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya by applying reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching refers to an instructional strategy that the teacher takes a part as the first model and guides to practice a set of reading comprehension strategies, and then she is gradually giving responsibility to the students. Those comprehension strategies are questioning, summarizing, clarifying and predicting.This study uses classroom action research which consists of three cycles. It uses observation and test to get the main data. The subjects are 40 students. The result of data analysis is compared with the successful indicator. The results of the first and second cycle can not reach the successful indicator that most of the students' score can not reach the successful indicator (> 70). But, in the third cycle It shows the significant improvement. The result can reach the successful indicator. Therefore, the writer does not continue to the next cycle. In conclusion, from the result above, reciprocal teaching can improve the students' reading comprehension.

Key words: *Reading Comprehension, Reciprocal Teaching*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is considered as the important one since good reading ability has an important role to the development of student's ability in learning English. Dias – Rico (2004) state that reading is the most essential skill for success in all educational contexts. Therefore, it is important for students to have a good reading skill. Based on the explanation above, reading is one of the important skills of English that the students should master. According to Kobayashi (1975) cited in Triyastuti (2007) reading is considered to be the one basic tool of language which means that every aspect of learning uses reading as a major component. In other word, students are hoped to read a lot especially for them who want to increase their knowledge and master English well. reading has very important role in our daily life and gathering new information. That is why, teaching – learning process at reading has a particular importance because reading is a basic skill to learn something and very fundamental for students. Mikulecky (1990) states that the teaching of reading has an important role since

it is the teaching of thinking and talking about text which is required for academic success. Unfortunately, in fact, many students consider that reading seems to be a difficult task. The students have problems in reading class, such as feeling bored and having difficult in comprehending the reading passage. In other word, students do not enjoy reading class because they not only have to read the text but also to activate their prior knowledge and match them with the information they get in order to achieve comprehension. Nuttal (1985:68) says that the main purpose of reading is to achieve comprehension. This fact also occured in the third semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma surabaya University. Based on an observation, the writer found that some students had problems in reading class. First many students were passive and had less attention to the teacher's instruction in teaching reading activity because of feeling bored and having less motivation. Second, the students failed to comprehend a reading passage. They did not know the meaning such as they could not catch

the information from the text or comprehend it. These problems were caused by teaching-learning process which was not able to improve students' reading comprehension. In the previous reading class, the way of teacher taught was monotonous because she did not give the chance to the students to interact among them. Besides, the teacher only gave students assignment and asked them to collect it. Next, the teacher did not give the opportunity for students to interact and discuss with the teacher. Students had a little opportunity to construct meaning from text among them. Based on the description above, it showed that the teacher should teach reading strategies to their students. The writer decided to apply a technique in teaching learning process which could help both the teacher and the students to solve problem in reading class especially in comprehending the text. The suggested technique is reciprocal teaching. Rosenshine and Master (1990) reviewed 16 studies of reciprocal teaching and concluded that reciprocal teaching is a technique that improves reading comprehension. In reciprocal teaching, teacher as the first model the comprehension strategies then she gives students this responsibility to practice these strategies in their groups. By using reciprocal teaching students are taught four comprehension strategies: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. According to Palincsar and Brown (1984) four basic strategies (predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing) help students recognize and react to sign of comprehension breakdown. Palincsar (1986) states that the purpose of reciprocal teaching is to facilitate a group effort between teacher and student as well as among students in the task of bringing meaning to the text. It means that reciprocal teaching involves a high social interaction and collaboration, as students gradually to assume the role of teacher in helping their peers construct meaning from text. Based on these statements, the write chose reciprocal teaching to improve students reading comprehension at third semester students in class of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University.

This study is based on the statement of the problem "Can reciprocal teaching improve the students reading comprehension". And the objective of this study is to find out whether reciprocal teaching can improve students reading comprehension. The significance of the study is, for teacher, to give an alernative way which can be applied in their reading classes. While for students, by using this strategy, they can foster and monitor their own understanding of reading material, and at last improve their reading skill. In this study, the writer focuses on applying reciprocal teaching in order to improve students' reading comprehension. The writer conducted the study to the third semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University, academic year 2015-2016.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
The Teaching of Reading
Since reading is one of an important skill that should to be master in learning English, so the successful of teaching of reading should give more attention in teaching-learning process. Mikulecky (1990) states that the teaching of reading has an important role since it is the teaching of thinking and talking about the text which is required for academic success. It means that the teaching-learning process of reading has a particular importance because reading is a basic skill to learn something and very fundamental for students. That is why students are expected to read a lot if they want to master English well.

Teaching of reading is not easy job and not easy task. In line with Eskey, Abbot et al. (1981) state that teaching reading is not an easy task since it will not automatically follow on from oral work. Because when the teacher teaches reading subject she/he should give the strategy that help the students how to comprehend the text and think on their own mind. So it can help them to become independent readers. Besides, in reading activity the students not only have to read the text but they have to comprehend it. The goal of reading class is to express the meaning short of functional text and various kinds of essays in daily life context and to access knowledge. From this statement we can conclude that in reading activity, students should be able to express the meaning of text and essay. Since the teaching of reading is important role, the teachers are expected to teach a reading strategy to the students in order to help them in comprehending text and to be a good readers.

Reciprocal Teaching
Reciprocal teaching is an instructional strategy based on modeling and guided practice in

which the instructor first models a set of reading comprehension strategies and then gradually cedes responsibility for these strategies to the students (Palincsar and & Brown, 1984:20). Pioneer reciprocal teaching researchers Palincsar and Brown (1984) developed this strategy to reinforce comprehension in L1 and ESL reading classes. In other word, reciprocal teaching is a teaching technique in which the teacher leads a discussions of the text while modeling reading comprehension strategies then she begins to have the students take the role of teacher or dialoque reader. As students begin to lead the dialoque process, the teacher assumes the role of guide or facilitator, rather than leader. Reciprocal teaching is an instructional approach designed to improve reading comprehension in which the students are encouraged to use reading strategy. According Lori D. Oczuks (2003:2) the original goal of reciprocal teaching to improve students' reading comprehension. Reciprocal teaching has four main strategies that teacher and students employ together to comprehend the text. Those are questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting. Palincsar and Brown (1984), in there original research, used four discrete reading comprehension strategies within reciprocal teaching: questionning,summarizing,clarifying and predicting.

1. Questioning : involves the identification of information, themes and ideas that are central and important enough to warrant further consideration. The central or important information, themes, or ideas are used to generate questions that are then used as self-test for the reader. It is used by the reader for exploring the text more deeply and assuring the construction of meaning.
2. Summarizing : It is the process of identifying the important information, themes, and ideas within a text and integrating these into a clear and concise statement that communicates the essential meaning of the text. It provides the impetus to create a context for understanding the specifics of a text.
3. Clarifying : It involves the identification and clarification of unclear, difficult, or unfamiliar aspects of a text. These aspects may include awkward sentence of passage structure, unfamiliar vocabulary, unclear references, or obscure concepts.
4. Predicting : It involves previewing the text to anticipate what may happen next. It involves combining the reader's prier knowledge, new knowledge from the next, and the text's structure to create hypotheses related to the direction of the text and the author's intent in writing.

The general methodology of reciprocal teaching involves the instructor and students, usually in small groups, reading section of text. In addition, Arends (1997) cited in Rizqi (2009:17) states that reciprocal teaching refers to an instructional procedure developed to teach students in comprehending the text by applying four strategies:questioning,summarizing,clarifying and predicting. From the statement above, we can concluded that reciprocal teaching is a strategy in which teacher as the first model then she has the students to conduct the four strategies (questioning,summarizing,clarifying and predicting).

The Advantages of Reciprocal Teaching

As stated before, the original goal of reciprocal teaching to improve students' reading comprehension by four strategies : questioning, summarizing, clarifying and predicting. Here are the advantages of Reciprocal Teaching (http//www.ehow.com/advantages-disadvantages-reciprocal-teaching.html#ixzz1LrFUUph2):

1. Students involved in a reciprocal reading activity scored higher on reading comprehension tests than students in a control group not using this teaching strategy.
2. It can help the students to monitor their own comprehension students will be a ware of their level of comprehension and be able to correct in complete comprehension.
3. It allows the teacher and students to scaffold and construct meaning in a social setting by using modeling, think aloud and discussion.

4. Students can improve their summaries with practice and work more independently.
5. The Reciprocal teaching classes saw fewer disruptive student behaviors, possibly because the students were more cognitively engaged in the material.
6. It helps students to develop interpersonal communication skills since they have to interact with other students and the teacher.

The Application of Reciprocal Teaching in Teaching Reading

There are four steps involved in implementing the reciprocal teaching strategy, those are : questioning, summarizing, clarifying and predicting. In reading class by using reciprocal teaching, the students begin by all reading the first paragraph or passage of the same text silently in small groups. According to the international Journal of Teaching and Learning (http://www.isetl.org/ijthe/) the general methodology of reciprocal teaching involves the instruction and students, usually in small groups, reading a section of text. Then the teacher models the reading comprehension strategies.

1. Questioning

During this modeling process, the teacher encourages students to ask questions about the material at the first paragraph. Here, they are encourage to identify key ideas of a text and connect them to their prior knowledge (Rosenshine & Meistes, 1994). In this step, when the students begin generating questions, they have to identify the information, theme and idea that is significant enough to provide the substance for a question. Then, they pose this information in question form and as self-test to ensure that they can answer their own question.

2. Summarizing

In this step, the students are asked to retell what they have read in their own words. They work to identify the important information in the text. Then they begin to summarize in one or a few sentences.

3. Clarifying :

In this step, the students try to identify why the text is difficult to understand, such as : unfamiliar vocabulary, unclear references and unfamiliar concepts, and clarify it by explaining giving examples, or making other clarifying statements.

4. Predicting

In this step, gets the students to speculate on what will be discussed next in the text. Here, students can make prediction on what the author wants to tell the next.

After the teacher modeled these strategies at the first paragraph, the students begin to take the role of instructor and practice it in their groups in the next paragraph. Here the teacher assumes the role of guide or facilitator. When applying this strategy, teacher gives them worksheet as an aid. It can help teacher to monitor the students when apply this strategy. About (1981) says that worksheet can be an aid during the actual reading of the text.

METHODS

This research is done to find out the improvement of students' reading comprehension of the third semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kususma Surabaya University by using reciprocal teaching. Based on statement of the problem and the objective which have been mentioned previously, this research design used in this study is classroom action research. According to Kunandar (2010:44) Classroom Action Research is an action research that is done by teacher as researcher or the researcher collaborate with classroom teacher in classroom. The purpose of classroom action research is changing and improving the quality teaching and learning.In this study, the writer collaborated with another teacher. The writer was applying the strategy in teaching learning process, while another teacher took part as the observer. The observer would observe the application of the writer technique and write everything that she saw in the classroom by using observation checklist. Here, the writer uses an action reflection spiral model as proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart in Arends (2001:451) which consists of planning Stage, Action Stage, observing stage, reflecting stage.This research started by doing identification of the problem that happened to the third semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University. Based on an observation, the problem was found in the class was, first the students felt bored and less had motivation in reading class because there were no interaction between teacher to students and students to student, so it made students passive, and not be interested in reading class. Second, the students

failed to comprehend a reading passage. They did not know the meaning such as they could not catch the information from the text. Based on the problem above, the writer tried to give a technique that could help the third semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University to comprehend the text by using reciprocal teaching.

Subjects of the Research

The subjects of this study is the third semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kususma Surabaya University This class consist of 40 students. They are 17 male and 23 female students. The researcher took this class because they had difficulties to comprehend the texts that they had read. Because of this reason, they need to improve their reading comprehension.

The Instrument of the Study

In this stage, the researcher uses test and observation checklist for both the teacher and students as the main instruments of the study. While a questionnaire was used to gather any information which relate with the students' problem that occured in the class. It was given to the students before giving the treatment in order to know their problem in the class

Data Collection Technique

The data collection techniques in this study are doing tests and observations.The test was used to obtain the data of learning result from the students' learning process in the form of score. The form of this test was comprehension questions. There were two kinds of test that is used by the writer during this research. The first is pre test. It was given to the students before treatment in order to know the ability of the students. This test contained of 10 items. The second test was test that given to the students at the end of each cycle after the treatment had been given to them. It was used to know the improvement of the students. This test contained 15 items. In this research, the writer used observation checklist to get information while doing observation. It was used to control the activities of the teacher and the students in the teaching learning process in the class.

Data Analysis

Because of the writer used a test as an instrument, she analysed the result of the students' scores to know the students' improvement. The result of their score in every cycle was compared in order to know the improvement of students' reading comprehension. The researcher used the mean by using this formula:

Data Analysis:

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Explanation:

M = Mean

$\sum X$ = the sum of students' score

N = the number of students

The writer also calculated the percentage ultimate student' success in learning and use the formula as follows:

$$P = \frac{\sum who\ inmproved}{\sum students} \times 100\%$$

The standart minimum score was ≥70. It means that the students should get the minimum score 70. The successful of indicator of this research was 75% from the number of the students in the class. The total of the students was 40 students. So, 75% from 40 students was 30 students. In other word, the successful of indicator was reached if there were 30 students got score ≥70.

Procedure of the research

First Cycle

This first cycle was done on October 9,2015. The allocation of time was 2x50 minutes. The subject of this research was the thrd semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University. In this cycle the writer applied reciprocal teaching technique in order to improve the students' reading comprehension. This cycle included four steps, they are: planning, acting observing and reflecting.Since the result of data analysis of the first cycle did not show the significant improvement result, the writer decided to continue this technique to the second cycle.

Second cycle

This second cycle was done on October 18,2015. The allocation of time was 2x50 minutes. At this cycle, the writer would use the same technique like the previous cycle to the students.The writer arranged the lesson plan based on the syllabus. She revised the activities in the teaching learning activity in the lesson plan of the first cycle. Next she began to make a new lesson plan. Then she prepared the teaching material which contain different topic from the previous cycle. Besides, she also prepared the instument which were the observation checklist and test. The last, she prepared the woksheet. In this cycle the writer would apply the same technique.The writer analyzed that the success indicator could not be reached in this cycle. From the observation

result, the writer found the weakness in this cycle. Few students still be passive because they confused about the technique. The result of data analysis of the second cycle did not show the significant improvement result. From this reason, the writer decided to continue applying this strategy to the next cycle

Third Cycle

This third cycle was conducted on October 25, 2015. The allocation of time was 2x50 minutes during the application of reciprocal teaching in reading class. This was the third cycle, the writer would apply the same technique in this class.

In the reflecting stage, the writer would describe the result of students' working while applying this technique. The students had showed the progress. In this cycle, the students showed the significant improvement. In other words, the successful indicator had been reached. Therefore, the writer stopped the cycle.\

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before applying reciprocal teaching technique in reading class, the writer conducted the identification of the problem that happened to the third semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University. This identification included the observation, interview and result of questionnaire. The writer found that the students had difficulty in reading class expecially in comprehend the text. After the problem had been identified, the writer gave them pre test to in order to know their first score before giving the treatment.The writer gave the students text and the comprehension questions. The form of this test was subjective and it contained of 10 items. After getting the result of the beginning test which had been given to the students before treatment, the writer analyzed it in order to know their beginning scores. During the pre test to the students, there were two students who were absent in the class, so the number of the students who joined the test was 38 students, and all of them could not reach the standart minimum score (KKM) $\geq$70. Based on the result of the pre test, the writer concluded that the students failed to comprehend a reading passage. Besides that, they had difficulty to catch the information from the text or to gain the meaning from the text. From these reasons, the writer decided to apply reciprocal teaching

to improve students' reading comprehension in reading class.

As stated previously, this study took three cycles since many of the students could not reach the standart minimum score in the first and second cycles. In the first cycle, the taecher got some problems while applying the strategy. The students could not perform well the four steps of Reciprocal Teaching strategy: questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting. They seemed not accustemed to doing this strategy so that the teacher had to repeat each step for several times, and it surely spent a lot of time, more than it was predicted.

In the second cycle, the situation got better, but there were still some problem encountered. Only few students could work well, the others could not focus on the tasks. Therefore, the teacher changed the members of the goups. And it worked well in the third cycle that almost all of the students could perform and work together anthusiastically.

The successful indicator has reached if the students could reached the standart minimum score (KKM) $\geq$70 and the percentage ultimate student' success in learning 75%. From the table below, although there was an improvement from the first cycle, but it showed that there was no significant improvement from this cycle. In other word, there were only 5 students who got $\geq$70 score. It was 12,5 % students, and it was still lower than 75%. It means that the successful indicator could not be reached at the first cycle. From the result of score of the first cycle, the writer concluded that the successful indicator could not be reached in this cycle. Therefore, the writer decided to apply this technique to the next cycle.

Based on the table bellow, it could be seen that although there was an improvement but there was no significant improvement from the second cycle. There were still 19 students who got $\geq$70 score, so it was 47,5%. It means that the successful indicator could not be reached in this cycle. Therefore, the treatment was continued to the next cycle.

From on the table bellow, it could be seen that there was still the improvement in this cycle. There were 32 students got $\geq$70 score. It was 80% students. Based on the data, it showed the significant improvement. It means that the successful indicator had been reached in this cycle. After knowing the result of the last cycle, the writer concluded that the reciprocal

teaching could improved students' reading comprehension.

Based on all cycles, the writer showed the overall result in the diagram below:

Diagram 4.1 The Improvement Diagram
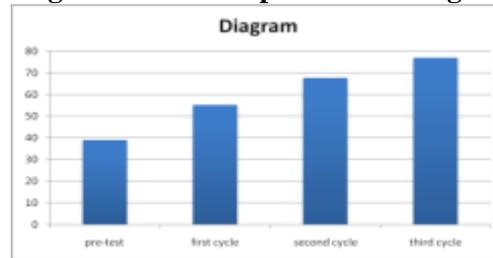
The diagram above shows the improvement of the students. It could be seen that in each cycle the score of the students' tests increased. It means that reciprocal teaching that had been applied in the class could improve the students' reading comprehension.

Conclusion and Suggestion

In this section, the writer will make conclusion based on the data of the research entitled Impoving the students' reading comprehension using reciprocal teaching to the third semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University. First, before doing the application reciprocal teaching technique, the writer gave the students pre test in order to know them first score. From the result of the students' pre test in form of score, it showed that the students had low scores. Almost all of the students in the class got score below ≥70. Based on the result of the observation, questionnaire and pre test, the writer concluded that the students had problem in comprehending a reading passage. That is why, the writer applied reciprocal teaching technique to improve students reading comprehension.

Before giving the treatment, the students had score under the average. But after giving the treatment, the result of the studets' score in each cycle showed the improvement. From the reason above and the result of the students progress the writer concluded that reciprocal teaching could improve students' reading comprehension.

The writer might give some suggestions for the teachers that they are supposed to use reciprocal teaching in the class especially for teaching reading skill. By using this technique, it allows the students to make group so they can discuss together to understand the text. Besides, when applying this technique in the class, the students can be active and do not depend on the teacher. And for the students, they can improve their reading comprehension by using reciprocal teaching to comprehend the text. Besides, they know how to overcome their comprehension failure and can find the information from the text to answer their own question. By applying reciprocal teaching, the students can develope interpersonal communication skill and thereby improve their communication competence in the target language.

REFERENCES

Abbot,Gery, John Greenwood, Douglas McKeating, and Peter Wingard,1981. *The Teaching of English as an International Language:A Practical Guide*.London:Collins.

Arends, Richard I. 1997. *Classroom Instruction and Management.* USA: Mc Graw. Hill.

Cohen, Andrew D. 1990. *Second Language Learning and Use Strategies.* Minnesota: University of Minnesota.

Diaz-Rico, Lynne T.2004.*Teaching English Learners:strategies and methods*. USA: Pearson Education,Inc.

Diptoadi, L.Veronica,M.Sc. *All about Reading*

Doolitte,Peter E.,Hicks, David and Triplett.Chery F.*Reciprocal Teaching for Reading Comprehension in higher Education:A Strategy for fostering the deeper Understanding of Texts*. International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Felipe Vela Izquierdo: 2004. English Teaching Forum article: *Reciprocal Teaching*. Volume 42. Number 2. Page 20-25

Heilman,Arthur W.,Timorthy R.Blair and William H.Rupley.1981.Principles and Practices of teaching Reading.Fifth

Edition.Ohio:Charles E.Merril Publising Co.

Helms,Samuel. *Advantages & Disadvantages of Reciprocal Teaching.* Reterieved on May02,2011.From:http://www.ehow.com/info_advantages-disadvantages.recprocal-teaching.html#ixzz1LrFUUph2.

Hodgess and Harriss. 1995. *Reading and Information Transfer (Retrieved on May, 12th. 2011).* *http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/summer wokrhop/lewis/edliteslide006.html*.

Kunandar,Spd,M.Si.2010. *Langkah Mudah Penelitian Tindakan Kelas sebagai Pengembangan profesi Guru*. Jakarta:PT Rajawali Pers

Mikulecky,Lynne. T.2004. Teaching English Learners: strategies and Methods. USA:Pearson Education, Inc.

Nunan,David.2003. *Practical English Language Teaching*.New Yotk:The McGraw-Hill.

Oczkus,L.2003. *Reciprocal Teaching at work:Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension*.Newark,DE:International Reading Association.