



## Improving Students' Reading Comprehension of Expository Text through A-C-T-I-V-E Technique at SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar

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### Abstract

Reading comprehension is a necessary skill throughout schooling and a vital component of the successful transition to adult responsibilities. A-C-T-I-V-E is strategies that specifically support students' comprehension of factual text and goals to improve teaching of reading in the classroom. The purpose of the study is to find out whether the students' comprehension in reading expository text improved if it is taught by using A-C-T-I-V-E technique. Classroom action research was conducted in this study. The result of research indicated that there was improvement on the students' reading comprehension which was taught by A-C-T-I-V-E technique. It was proved by the data which showed that the mean of the students in the second cycle, 79.06, was higher than in the first cycle, 67.34 and also in the pre-test 49. The quantitative data were taken from test a pre-test and two tests in post test in cycle I and post test in cycle II. The qualitative data were taken from diary notes, interview sheet, observation sheet and questionnaire sheet also showed that the students' interest in reading comprehension increased because they could share their knowledge and their opinion each other and also find the definition of difficult words together.

**Keywords:** *Reading comprehension, expository text, a-c-t-i-v-e technique.*

### Abstrak

Pemahaman membaca adalah keterampilan yang diperlukan selama sekolah dan komponen penting dari transisi yang sukses ke tanggung jawab orang dewasa. A-C-T-I-V-E adalah strategi yang secara khusus mendukung pemahaman siswa tentang teks faktual dan tujuan untuk meningkatkan pengajaran membaca di kelas. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah pemahaman siswa dalam membaca teks ekspositori meningkat jika diajar dengan menggunakan teknik A-C-T-I-V-E. Penelitian tindakan kelas dilakukan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peningkatan pemahaman membaca siswa yang diajar dengan teknik A-C-T-I-V-E. Hal ini dibuktikan dengan data yang menunjukkan bahwa rata-rata siswa pada siklus II 79,06 lebih tinggi dibandingkan siklus I yaitu 67,34 dan juga pada pre-test 49. Data kuantitatif diambil dari tes satu pre-test dan dua tes pada post-test pada siklus I dan post-test pada siklus II. Data kualitatif yang diambil dari catatan harian, lembar wawancara, lembar observasi dan lembar angket juga menunjukkan bahwa minat siswa dalam membaca pemahaman meningkat karena mereka dapat berbagi pengetahuan dan pendapat mereka satu sama lain dan juga menemukan definisi kata-kata sulit secara bersama-sama.

**Kata kunci:** *Pemahaman membaca, teks ekspositori, teknik a-c-t-i-v-e.*

### INTRODUCTION

Learning English in a foreign language is now one of the most important subjects. Learning English is never an easy task, and some students struggle more than others. There are four skills that are needed to draw on specialized functional components within general language system, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and text, resulting in comprehension. The text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is. The purpose for reading and the type of text determine the specific knowledge, skills and strategies that readers need to achieve comprehension. Reading comprehension is an important academic skill. It underpins school learning and becomes increasingly important in all subject areas

as students progress through the grades.

Reading in English as a foreign language has some difficulties for the students. They have difficulties in phonetic, vocabulary, fluency and structures. Reading is thinking process to get the comprehension. In order to get the comprehension, the readers should have prior knowledge about the text. If the students accustom to read lots of book, newspapers, magazines or novels, they will have much information in their mind as their prior knowledge.

According to (Gersten *et al.*, 2001; Swanson, 1999: 252), students' success in comprehension is influenced by how interesting and relevant they find the text they are reading, their competencies in recognizing, decoding, and pronouncing words fluently and accurately, their awareness of different purposes associated with reading and facility with comprehension monitoring strategies.

However, if students are reading to learn, they need to use effective strategies that will vary depending on whether the text is narrative or expository. Graesser *et al.* (1991: 267) suggest that several characteristics of narratives make them easier to comprehend than factual texts (expository texts), mainly because the topics covered and the organizational strategies used in narratives tend to be more familiar than those employed in, for instance, textbooks. Because factual texts are written communicate information, they are more likely to incorporate a greater variety of text structures and therefore to require the use of multiple comprehension strategies.

Based on small survey during teaching practice at last semester, it is certainly found that students' comprehension of expository texts can further be complicated than another texts. Expository texts are harder to read because they explain particular contents unlike fictional texts in which readers can easily follow the plot. Many early childhood educators ignore the teaching of expository texts (Duke, 2000). When students are reading, sometimes it is difficult to understand what they are reading. This can be extremely frustrating for students. Students generally also experience problems in recalling textual ideas, identifying main ideas and they tend to have difficulties monitoring their comprehension and relating new information to what they already know.

A-C-T-I-V-E is comprehension strategy that can be applied to expository texts. This strategy is based on research that emphasizes the importance of activating students' background knowledge in order to assist them in constructing meaning from purposeful reading (Anderson, 1999: 79). This strategy makes use of chart divided into six categories:

**A : Activate prior knowledge**

**C : Cultivate vocabulary**

**T : Teach for comprehension**

**I : Increase reading rate**

**V : Verify reading strategies**

**E : Evaluate progress**

Teacher leads a class discussion on what students think they already know about topic and writes down every response the students offer. After the brainstorming session is complete, the teacher elicits and list comments from students about what they want to find out about chosen topic. At the completion of the activity, students can direct the teacher to cross out the things they thought they knew but which proved inaccurate during their exploration of the topic. During the time set aside to record what was learned, students can clarify vocabulary, categorize new knowledge, and reflect on the amount of learning that has occurred (Ogle, 1989: 271). From the explanation above, the research will be conducted to see how the application of A-C-T-I-V-E technique can improve students' comprehension on reading, particularly reading expository text.

## **METHOD**

Classroom action research was conducted in this study. The main function of action research is to facilitate the reflective cycle and this way provides an effective method for improving professional action. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that action research is one of research used in education field which is conducted in a classroom to improve the teaching and learning quality. Action research aims to improve students' learning and the outcomes of teaching learning process. Since it is a short period of research time, this study will apply two cycles by implementing the four steps namely; Planning, Action, Observation and Reflection. This research was conducted at SMP N 1 Pematangsiantar. It is located on Jln. Merdeka, Pematangsiantar. The sample

of the research is one class which consisted of 32 students (grade IX). The instrument of data collection were used Qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data is used to describe the situation during the teaching process and the quantitative data is used to analyze the score of the students. The procedure of data collection of this study was conducted by administrating two cycles. Each cycle consists of four meetings. Since the pre-test and interview was given before to know the knowledge of students about expository text, there are seven meetings left to conduct the research. Each cycle consists of four steps namely; Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection. The procedure of research. The technique of data analysis of this study was collected by using quantitative and qualitative data.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research involved quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were obtained from reading test, and the qualitative data were obtained from diary notes, questionnaire and observation sheet. The data were taken from a class consisted of 32 students. This research was accomplished in two cycles. The first cycle including the pre-test was conducted in two meetings. The second cycle was conducted in two meetings also, so there were four meetings altogether. The qualitative data were taken from observation sheet, questionnaire and diary notes. Observation sheet and interview sheet were used to write down the situation when teaching and learning process was running. Observation sheet were useful for recording students' and teacher activities for identifying all the condition in teaching learning process. Questionnaires were used to identify the problems which were faced by the students in studying English. Diary notes were used for recording students' feeling, problem during the teaching process.

### Quatitative Data

The quantitative data were taken from the result of some reading tests during the research that was conducted in three meetings. The test was given three times; a times a test was a pre-test, and two tests in the cycle I and cycle II. The first test as a pre-test was given before conducting action in the first cycle. So the test was given to the students without any treatment. The test of the post test cycle I and cycle II were given to the students after teaching for each cycle had been completely finished. The score of the students from the pre test, post test in cycle I and the last post test in cycle II showed improvement of the students' achievement in reading comprehension by applying A-C-T-I-V-E technique was shown in the following table:

**Table 1.**  
**The Students' Score from Pre-Test until the Post-Test in Cycle II**

No.	Students' Initial Name	Pre-Test	Post-Test Cycle I	Post-Test Cycle II
1	ALP	50	55	80
2	AND	45	65	75
3	ANG	50	60	85
4	ANY	50	65	75
5	ARI	30	80	85
6	BIMA	75	80	90
7	BOLU	30	50	80
8	CIND	55	60	75
9	DEF	40	80	85
10	DES	40	70	75
11	DIA	50	75	80
12	DIM	55	65	80
13	DIN	55	65	75
14	FERN	75	80	95

15	FERO	60	70	75
16	FREN	60	65	70
17	GOM	50	75	85
18	IND	40	75	80
19	INT	55	70	75
20	IRMA	45	70	80
21	JHON	45	65	70
22	JONA	45	60	80
23	KRIS	45	55	80
24	LUCY	40	75	80
25	MHD	45	70	75
26	NUR	65	75	80
27	ODNI	40	65	85
28	PUT	60	65	75
29	SAM	40	60	70
30	SITI	55	65	80
31	WID	45	70	85
32	ZUL	40	55	70
Total $\sum X$		1575	2155	2530
Mean $\bar{X}$		49.21	67.34	79.06

### The Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were taken from observation sheet, questionnaire and diary notes. Observation sheet were used to identify all the condition teaching learning process, questionnaire were used to know the feeling, problem and other condition of the students, while diary notes was used to write important notes in all meetings. By using observation sheet, questionnaire and diary notes. It could be seen whether there were significant improvement both on teacher improvement in teaching reading and on students' achievement in reading comprehension.

### Analysis of Quantitative Data

The mean of the students' score in the post-test in cycle II is the highest of all the tests given. So, it could be concluded that the A-C-T-I-V-E technique increased the students reading comprehension score from 49.21 to 79.06. The percentage of students who got the points up to 75 also showed the improvement of the students' score from the pre-test to the post-test in second cycle. In the pre-test there are only two students who got the score up to 75 points. In the post-test of the first cycle there are eight students who got the score up to 75 points. And the post-test of the second cycle, where the teacher used the A-C-T-I-V-E technique, there were a significant improvement, it showed by the students who got the score up to 75 points there are 28 students. Therefore, it could be concluded that the use of A-C-T-I-V-E technique could improve the students' reading comprehension score.

**Table 2. The Percentage of the students who got the points up to 75**

Test	Students who got the score up to 75	Percentage (%)
Pre – Test	2	6.2%
Post – Test Cycle I	8	25%
Post – Test Cycle II	28	87.5%

The improvement percentage from the pre-test to the post-test of the first cycle was 18.8%. The improvement percentage from the post-test of the first cycle to the post-test of the second cycle was 62.5%. There was a significant improvement percentage from the pre-test to the post-test of the second cycle, it was 81.3%. The result of research indicated that there was improvement on the students' reading comprehension which was taught by A-C-T-I-V-E technique. It was proved by the data which showed that the mean of the students in the second cycle, 79.06, was higher than in the first cycle, 67.34 and also in the pre-test 49.21. The quantitative data

were taken from test a pre-test and two tests in post test in cycle I and post test in cycle II. The qualitative data were taken from diary notes, interview sheet, observation sheet and questionnaire sheet also showed that the students' interest in reading comprehension increased because they could share their knowledge and their opinion each other and also find the definition of difficult words together.

### **Interpretation and Discussion**

From the findings, it can be interpreted that A-C-T-I-V-E technique can improve students' reading comprehension. Why?

#### **Easy to understand**

Because from the Active prior knowledge it is beneficial to engage the student in an activity that gets them thinking about what they already know about the topic reading. Then, we take Cultivate vocabulary. It is very good activity for building students' vocabulary skill that is related to the key word. After that, we are going to Teach for comprehension that the class reads together and discusses how they are understanding what is written. Next to Increase reading rate is called repeated reading. They understand more when reading something twice at a faster reading rate than reading it slowly only one time. And Verify reading strategies its mean that students can work together under the direction of the teacher in sharing and evaluating strategy use. And the last Evaluate progress the students reading the journal about their reading rate after doing the activity. Reading journal helps the students see the progress and effective way to evaluate making in class. (Anderson 1999: 79).

#### **Enjoy in the classroom**

Because we can be demonstrate familiarity with the practical classroom techniques of teaching reading. And we have opportunities everyday to interact with the learners in our classroom. The single goal that we have not yet accomplished is having set goals for improving ability to teach reading. We can learn more from them than they will ever learn from us. (Anderson 1999: 84).

### **CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the data, it was found that the students' reading comprehension increased from the first cycle to the second cycle. To improve students' reading comprehension through A-C-T-I-V-E technique, it's better to make class discussion than small group because the teacher can encourage the students who do not contribute. There are: Use articles that the words are familiar to the students, Give time to discuss about the difficult words before the students allow read the text, Ask the students to re-read the text even though they have finished taking notes, Monitor the students to ensure that they do every step in A-C-T-I-V-E technique.

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