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## GUESSING MEANING STRATEGY THROUGH READING DISCRIPTIVE TEXT FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

### Abstract

Mastering English especially reading is required for the students. As a student, they have to master the text as well as possible. If a student comprehends the texts, they will get various kinds of knowledge through reading. In order to comprehend the text, the students should have a strategy, because the reading strategy that students use will influence the students reading comprehension. Guessing meaning is one of strategy that students can use. This study was conducted to examine the implementation of guessing meaning strategy and to explain the result after the implementation of the strategy. This study was qualitative research which used field notes; interview and students' work as an instrument. The subjects of this study were the teacher and ten graders of students who were studying in a public school located in the suburban area. The data were gathered from the result of observation, the result of students' work and interviews, and the source of data collected from teacher activity and the students. All the data analyzed through three stages such as familiarizing and organizing, coding and reducing, and interpreting and representing. The result of the implementation guessing meaning strategy show that the teacher used guessing meaning strategy with 4 steps including ; decide the word that want to guess; look at the intermediate grammar context of the word that can be the students' reference to guess the meaning of the word; look at the wider context of the word usually beyond the level of the clause and often over several sentences; asked students to try to guess the meaning of the word and after that, the teacher will check the result of the answer. While the result after the implementation guessing meaning strategy showed that several clues in the sentence has enabled language learners to guess the meaning of the word from the context correctly. Vocabulary that language learners have collected during teaching and learning was helpful to understand the text. They also felt easy to find the explicit and implicit meaning of the word because they often used guessing meaning strategy.

**Keywords:** Descriptive Text, Guessing Meaning

### Abstrak

Menguasai bahasa Inggris khususnya membaca merupakan keharusan bagi siswa. Sebagai siswa, mereka harus menguasai teks dengan sebaik-baiknya. Jika seorang siswa memahami teks, maka ia akan memperoleh berbagai macam pengetahuan melalui membaca. Untuk memahami teks, siswa harus mempunyai strategi, karena strategi membaca yang digunakan siswa akan mempengaruhi pemahaman membaca siswa. Menebak makna merupakan salah satu strategi yang dapat digunakan siswa. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengkaji penerapan strategi menebak makna dan menjelaskan hasil setelah penerapan strategi tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif yang menggunakan catatan lapangan; wawancara dan pekerjaan siswa sebagai instrumen. Subyek penelitian ini adalah guru dan siswa kelas sepuluh yang sedang belajar di sekolah negeri yang terletak di daerah pinggiran kota. Data dikumpulkan dari hasil observasi, hasil pekerjaan siswa dan wawancara, serta sumber data yang dikumpulkan dari aktivitas guru dan siswa. Keseluruhan data dianalisis melalui tiga tahapan yaitu mengkrabkan dan mengorganisasikan, mengkode dan mereduksi, serta menafsirkan dan merepresentasikan. Hasil penerapan strategi menebak makna menunjukkan bahwa guru menggunakan strategi menebak makna dengan 4 langkah diantaranya; tentukan kata yang ingin ditebak; melihat

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konteks tata bahasa perantara kata yang dapat menjadi acuan siswa untuk menebak arti kata tersebut; melihat konteks kata yang lebih luas, biasanya melampaui tingkat klausa dan sering kali mencakup beberapa kalimat; meminta siswa mencoba menebak arti kata tersebut dan setelah itu guru akan memeriksa hasil jawabannya. Sedangkan hasil setelah penerapan strategi menebak makna menunjukkan bahwa beberapa petunjuk dalam kalimat telah memungkinkan pembelajar bahasa menebak makna kata dari konteks dengan benar. Kosakata yang dikumpulkan pembelajar bahasa selama proses belajar mengajar sangat membantu untuk memahami teks. Mereka juga merasa mudah menemukan makna tersurat dan tersirat dari kata tersebut karena sering menggunakan strategi menebak makna.

**Kata Kunci:** Teks Deskriptif, Menebak Makna

## INTRODUCTION

Mastering English especially reading is required for the students. There is information in the form of text that occurs around them. As a student, they have to master the text as well as possible. If a student comprehends the texts, they will get various kinds of knowledge through reading. The data from PISA (Program for international students' assessment) shows that reading literacy in Indonesia is too low. However, there are many students still find many difficulties when they try to comprehend a text. Three factors that make a text difficult to comprehend is the amount of previous knowledge that the readers bring to the text. For example, someone who knows nothing about accounting when he reads a text about financial reports, he will rely on words that he knows before such money, tax, and count. The only way that can help them to understand the text is through studying accounting from basic. If they fail to understand the text, they cannot make a good financial report. It shows that reading can be difficult in a few aspects.

The second factor that makes a text difficult to comprehend is the complexity of the concept expressed. There is a difficult idea to understand and the readers have to read more than once to understand. Some readers are successful in one time reading while others need to read three or four times to understand it. It is explained stages in readers (Iser, 1993). Vocabulary and code used in a text become the third difficult factor to comprehend a text. For the reader who has limited vocabulary, they will find difficult to understand the content of the text. Limited vocabulary has been proved to challenge readers' understanding toward the text especially EFL students (Ivone, 2005)

The other factors that make a text to be difficult to comprehend are the structure of the text, the grammar of the language to read, and cultural conventions. The reader should make an effort to master new words in vocabulary framework to improve their comprehension skill. Therefore, reading difficulties are the biggest obstacles for students in the class so that it is necessary to improve students reading habit through innovative strategies such as guessing meaning strategy. There were standard competences on 2013curriculum that expected ten graders to be able to comprehend several texts including discriptive text. The students are required to think deeply to develop their cognitive competence by providing exercise in high order thinking. Based on it, students expected to be good readers in reading. It shows that reading comprehension is very important.

To have good reading skills, students must practice because someone is called successful in reading if they can understand what they have read. Reading also becomes a source of information in every subject. The students will find material in the form of the text based on subjects that they have taken. If they do not have a good reading ability, they will fail to understand the text in every subject. The ability and willingness to read will affect students' knowledge and skills. If the students understand what they read, they will have a lot of knowledge and help them be better in the future. Reading also becomes the core of comprehension (Tavakoli & Hayati, 2011). Understand or comprehend the message and the meaning of a written text is the main reason for engaging in reading and at the same time, to be able to understand the contents of a reading material. Reading requires the ability to read a good understanding too. Understanding is one of the important aspects of reading activities. It is so because in essence the understanding of reading material can improve reading skills themselves and give purposes to students to achieve excellent readers. So, the ability to read

can be interpreted as the ability to understand reading material.

Reading becomes a source of information when the readers can comprehend the text (Siregar, 2019). However, reading comprehension focuses on the knowledge that the reader brings to the process of understanding. Understanding is important to recognize that reading can be a transformative experience, influencing the thinking and learning of the reader. Moreover, reading comprehension is very important (Clarke, Truelove, & Hulme, 2014)

Several parts in reading comprehension indicate students' comprehension of the text. The students can successfully link the unit of meaning within each sentence. They accurately read and understand the word used. The units of meaning within each sentence successfully integrate the meaning of a successive sentence, establish how the whole text fits together and the students can discover the main idea. Other than that, students are to identify detail and to distinguish between fact and opinion (Nayton, 2013).

Reading comprehension is processes to recognize or identify text, then recall the contents of the text. Reading comprehension can also mean as an activity to make a sequence about the describing or organizing the contents of the text. It can also evaluate and respond to what is written or implied in the text. While understanding a text, the reader relates to barrel with speed. Understanding is the ability to read to understand: main ideas, important details, and all understanding. Reading comprehension or reading for understanding which means here is a kind of reading that aims to understand: Reading comprehension also an important component in a reading activity because, in essence, the understanding of reading can improve reading skills or interests themselves as well as for certain goals that have been determined or want to be achieved. Understanding also the ability to read and understand writing.

This is understandable because understanding is the essence of reading activities. Thus, if someone after reading activities can retrieve messages from reading, then the process said to be successful. If someone completes reading activities but cannot take the message conveyed by the author, then the process has not been successful. If someone can capture ideas correctly in the reading, it means that someone understood the reading to comprehend the text, the students should have a strategy because the reading strategies that students use will influence students' reading comprehension (Hosseini, Sarfallah, Bakhshipour & Dolatabadi, 2012).

Reading strategy is leaning techniques, behaviors, problem solving, or study skills that make learning more effective and efficient (Li, 2010). Reading strategy can help the students to understand the text. If the strategy is associated with the reading process, the strategy interpreted as a way for the reader to understand the symbols to proceed with reading comprehension. Learning to read means students can read. It is a process that involves all mental activities and thinking in understanding, criticizing, and reproducing a written discourse. The activities in reading can be completed by students depend on their reading level. There can be very diverse depending on the reading strategies applied by the teacher or reader in learning. The explanation earlier provide an overview of learning to read consisting of several activities aimed at understanding the content of the text. The activity also applies to learning readingskills to be specific and all subjects.

Guessing meaning strategy was one of the ways that a teacher can use to teach reading. Shokouhi & Askari, (2010) believe that contextual guessing meaning strategy is a useful tool in teaching and learning reading comprehension. Guessing meaning strategy is the activity that is done by the readers when they do not understand the word. The reader tries to guess the meaning by looking at the sentence around it. According to Patel & Jain (2008) contextual guessing strategy is a strategy to guess the meaning of the word and it is important for the English learners because it can improve the ability to think and the ability to connect the word with the context of the discourse. It trains the learners to understand the text because they have to recognize and understand every single word before they can comprehend the meaning. It also made students think critically which in line with the goal of 2013 curriculum. This strategy is also the most useful skill that learners can acquire and apply inside and outside the classroom. There are two main factors affect guessing meaning ability.

The first factor is the reader – related variables. The thing that includes in readers related variables are cognitive and mental effort, language proficiency, vocabulary size, reader characteristics, knowledge of grammar and attention to details The second factors are text

related variables which includes the presence of contextual clues topic familiarity, word characteristics, and text characteristics, (Kaivanpanah & Alavi, 2008). The teacher used descriptive text as a text to apply guessing meaning strategy because descriptive text is a type of text in the form of fantasy stories, real stories that are fabricated, or fairy tales. Descriptive text tells a story that has series of chronological events that are interconnected and the purpose of descriptive text is to entertain the reader. Descriptive text also can be fiction or non-fiction. This text also contains a lot of vocabulary in the form of present tense.

This text can be the way to implement guessing meaning strategy because when the students have to understand the whole text they have to know the meaning of the sentence that supporting the text. They have to guess the meaning of the word first so they can understand the whole text. The challenge is that the students never find the word because the descriptive text contains present verb, not the basic one those EFL students normally familiar with. In guessing strategy, EFL students do not have to look at the dictionary. They will try to guess the meaning of the word by looking at the clue around the word in one sentence. Descriptive text also contains a lot of the word that may be unfamiliar for them if compared with the language that often they used in daily life so that it will make a good text to train guessing meaning strategy.

Several studies in guessing meaning strategy to help the students in reading activity showed that a large proportion of the unknown word can be successfully deal with guessing meaning strategy (Clarke & Nation, 1980). Guessing meaning also become the most popular strategy in teaching reading (Manga, 2014). However, the study does not investigate the specific result toward using guessing meaning strategy for senior high school students. Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine the implementation of guessing meaning strategy and to explain the result after the implementation guessing meaning strategy in senior high school students. The researcher conducted the research at one of school in suburban area. The researcher chose that school because the school has been implement guessing meaning strategy as well the teacher and the students used the strategy in teaching and learning process.

## **METHOD**

The researcher conducts the research by using a qualitative research design. According to Creswell (2007), a qualitative research design is an effective model that occurs in a natural setting. It is to describe what is happening during the implementation of guessing meaning strategy. Then the results of the research explained descriptively.

The subjects of this study were ten graders of science 2 senior high school and the teacher in suburban area. It consisted of 34 students. The focus of the study was firstly to examine the implementation of guessing meaning strategy used by teacher in the class and secondly to explain the result after the implementation of the strategy for the students whether the strategy helpful or the other way around.

In collecting the data, the researcher used field note, interview and students' work to answer the first and second researcher's questions. Field note used to explain what was going on during classroom observation. This was to generate information based on something that heard and seen by researcher in real time. The activity that has been observed such were to help researcher to get the real situation of classroom when guessing was meaning applied. Semi structured interview was held to gain the information of the students after the implementation of guessing meaning strategy. In semi structure interview the researcher prepared core questions which then developed to gain further information that she needed. The core question made the researcher more focus on the data to answer the second research questions. The first data of this study was taken from the result of the field notes. The data described the activities that happened during the teaching and learning process. The sources of data were the teacher activity when teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text. The second data were taken from the result of the interview and the result of students' work.

It was to describe the students' result as learning activity during teaching and learning process, learning media used in the classroom and material selection of descriptive text that supported guessing meaning strategy. Those were to help researcher to get the real situation of classroom when guessing was meaning applied. Semi structured interview was held to gain the information of the students after the implementation of guessing meaning strategy. In

semi structure interview the researcher prepared core questions which then developed to gain further information that she needed. The core question made the researcher more focus on the data to answer the second research questions the first data of this study was taken from the result of the field notes. The data described the activities that happened during the teaching and learning process. The sources of data were the teacher activity when teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text. The second data were taken from the result of the interview and the result of students' work. It was to describe the students' result after the implementation of guessing meaning strategy and the source of data were from five students that have been interviewed afterwards.

There were three stages that researcher used to analyze qualitative data. They were familiarizing and organizing, coding and reducing, interpreting, and representing. All the data from observation, interview, and students' work were analyzed with these stages. The first stage was the researcher analyzed by familiarizing and organizing the data. He re-read and classified the data which taken from the field notes and students' work. While for the data taken from an interview were analyzed by listening and understanding the recording and change the audio into transcript document. After the researcher transcribed the interview then he classified and organized the data that taken from observation and interview.

The next stage was coding and reducing. In this stage, the researcher found similarities and differences of the data. Data sorted and reduced to get which he needed to answer the first and second research question. The last stage was interpreting and representing. The researcher interpreted and represented the data in the form of a word.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the study included the implementation of guessing meaning strategy, the result of students' work, and the result of the interview. This research has been done in three meetings.

### The implementation of guessing meaning strategy

The teacher implemented the strategy during three meetings and he also divided the teaching and learning process into three parts such as pre-activity, whilst activity and post activity. Based on the result of field notes, in every meeting the teacher made the atmosphere of the teaching and learning process more enjoyable with ask the question that related to the material that will deliver by the teacher. He also review the previous material before explain the new material.

At the first meeting the teacher asked students about guessing meaning strategy and he gives a brief explanation about guessing meaning strategy. The teacher gave a text about legend to the students. After that the teacher discuss about descriptive text that explain about the definition, goal language feature, and generic structure of descriptive text. The language features that used descriptive text were past tense, adverb of time, and direct speech. The generic structures of descriptive text were orientation, complication, resolution, and coda. Then three students were selected to read the text and the teacher corrected the mispronounced of certain words. After that, teacher decided the difficult word that students have to guess. Then the teacher asked the students to use guessing meaning strategy. Beforehand, the teacher asked the definition of guessing meaning to the students to make sure that they knew what it was. The students have to look at the intermediate grammar context of the word first that can be the students' reference to guess the meaning of the word. After that the students have to look at the wider context of the word usually beyond the level of the clause and often over several sentences. After discuss about the definition of guessing meaning strategy the teacher gave 10 minutes to find the word and tried to implement the strategy. Afterwards, the collected answers were discussed together. The students also answered the question about comprehending the text included 5w 1 H. Almost all the students answered the questions correctly because they were familiar with the text, *Malin Kundang*.

At the second meeting the teacher explained kinds of descriptive text besides legend. There were fable, myth, and firry tale. The teacher also mentioned some kind examples of fable, myth, and fairy tales. There was a question and answer section. The students asked the thing related to the material that they did not understand. In the beginning of lesson the students

received a new text from the teacher. The teacher asked the students to read the text after that they had to do the exercise A and B using guessing meaning strategy. Exercise A consisted of ten items about the meaning of the word that has been prepared by the teacher. While exercise B consisted of five items about comprehending the text. The teacher gave 20 minutes to do the exercise. After the time was up the students had to submit their work to the teacher. Then the teacher asked the students randomly to conclude what is on the text.

At the third meeting the teacher asked students to submit their homework about the legend that happened around them. The teacher asked one by one the title of the legend. There were a lot of legends that students wrote. Mostly they found the text on the internet. Every student had a different title from the others. After that, the teacher asked to give their work with friends beside them and vice versa. Then the students had to read the text that their friend had prepared. Next, the students should find the difficult word and should try to find the meaning by using guessing meaning strategy. The students seem to enjoy it when they had to use guessing meaning strategy. After that the students had to identify the genre of the text based on its generic structure and summarized it. The teacher gave 30 minutes to do the exercise. After that the teacher chose randomly a few students to answer the question and discussed it together. The students looked enthusiastic when they joined the teaching and learning process. In the end of section the teacher asked the students the difficulty when they used guessing meaning strategy during teaching and learning process and the teacher give some trick that can help them.

Based on the teacher implementation of guessing meaning strategy he 4 steps when implement guessing meaning strategy in teaching and learning process. The first step was the teacher decide the word that want to guess. In the second step, the teacher asked the students to look at the intermediate grammar context of the word that can be the students' reference to guess the meaning of the word. The third step was to look at the wider context of the word usually beyond the level of the clause and often over several sentences. While the last step was the teacher was asked students to try to guess the meaning of the word and after that, the teacher will check the result of the answer. Those all steps that the teacher did were in line with Clarke & Nation (1980) that he mentions if there are for steps when implement guessing meaning strategy.

### **The Result after the implementation of guessing meaning strategy**

The result after the implementation of the strategy can be seen from the result of interviews and students' work. The interview conducted with five students in the third meeting. The researcher chose the students based on the category of their study score such as high, low, and intermediate categories. The students were two males and three females. The researcher asked them one by one about what they felt after they used guessing meaning strategy. There were five questions that students have to answer such as whether the students like reading or not, how often the students use strategy when they were reading, how far they know about guessing meaning strategy, the benefit of guessing meaning strategy and the difficulties when they have to used guessing meaning strategy. To make the interview easier for the students, the researcher used the Indonesian language when conducting the interview. He hoped to get the best data from the students and the students understood the questions very well. Then the result transcribed in English by the researcher.

From the results of the interview, it is known that teacher can make students more confidence and be brave person. It can be seen from the way teacher ask students to use guessing meaning strategy. Students have to confidence to guess the meaning of the word by looking of the sentence around the word that will they guess. It regenerates students to confidence to try new thing. From the answer it shows that guessing meaning strategy also give many benefit from them especially when they have to read a text. The benefit were it helped them to remember the word in long term memory so if they found a different text which mentioned the same word they have studied before they could understand the text easily, it also helped them to think critically when they found something in the text such as implicit and explicit meaning. Guessing meaning strategy also Improve their vocabulary it make them understand the whole of text easily and they do not rely on dictionary. Moreover, it is known that guessing meaning strategy is suitable to the implementation in reading a text, it because

the students can understand the basic thing first before understand all of whole text . The students also can apply this strategy in different kind of text too.

For the result students work the researcher was collected on the second meeting. The students received a new descriptive text in which they had to answer several exercises. The exercise consisted of part A and B. Part A consisted of 10 questions about the meaning of the words and all the unfamiliar words were taken from the text. While exercise B consisted of 5 questions of comprehension text. The results of the students work were 24 students answer correctly on part A and the researcher analyzed the students' work on part A which showed the text that provided a rich context or had many clues help students found the answer easily. While exercise B consisted of 5 comprehension text and 28 students answered correctly, 5 students get 1 wrong answer and 1 student get 2 wrong answer. There were several criteria taken from consideration for students comprehension there were they can discover main idea, know implicit and explicit meaning. It could be seen that the average of students answer correctly on exercise B. it means the students were capable to use guessing meaning strategy well. They also understood the text that they read which showed that students mastered the text completely and probably thanked to guessing meaning strategy which was implemented in exercise A.

Both of the results from interviews and students' work there were many benefits that students get when they used guessing meaning strategy. It is in line with the students' works it shows that the average of students answer correctly in both of 2 kinds of exercise. The one benefit that students get also in line with Patel & Jain (2008) he mentions that guessing meaning strategy can help the students think critically.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study the researcher concluded that there are four steps that teacher do when he was implement the guessing meaning strategy. The first step was the teacher decide the word that want to guess. In the second step, the teacher asked the students to look at the intermediate grammar context of the word that can be the students' reference to guess the meaning of the word. The third step was to look at the wider context of the word usually beyond the level of the clause and often over several sentences. While the last step was the teacher was asked students to try to guess the meaning of the word and after that, the teacher will check the result of the answer.

Based on the students' results after the implementation of guessing meaning strategy, students comprehended the text after they completed exercise A which was about guessing meaning of the unfamiliar words. It could be seen from the result of the interview and students' work in finding the meaning of the word and answering comprehension questions. The text in second meeting provided many clues which enabled language learners to guess the meaning of the word from the context correctly. New vocabulary the students were getting assisting them to easily understand the text and to understand the text in several aspects. They were able to find the explicit and implicit meaning of the word and also the main idea because they had discovered the meaning first by implementing guessing meaning strategy in exercise A.

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