

THE USE OF PICTURE BOOK TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING SKILL AT MTS MA'ARIF NU

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Abstract

This research aims to explain the benefits of picture book as an alternative learning for students in particular and society in general to improve the knowledge of its readers. The purpose of this study was to find out whether the use of picture books in teaching English improves reading comprehension of second-year students of MTU Ma'arif NU. The research design of this study was classroom action research (CAR) conducted in one cycle consisting of four meetings. The researcher was limited to the second year students of MTs Ma'arif NU which consisted of 34 students. In this study researchers used several instruments; namely: field notes to retrieve information on student activities in class and reading tests to determine student achievement. This research discusses the use of picture books in improving students' reading skills. Before conducting research, the reading skills of students in second grade MTs Ma'arif NU were not good. In this connection, he hopes that this research can encourage principals to issue policies that provide opportunities for teachers to apply picture book learning and to develop alternative methods to make teaching and learning fun and effective.

Keywords: Reading motivation, students, reading comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the English language abilities students should learn. It is the most fundamental skill for academic learning in school. According to Sholihah (2012), reading is an important part of the four necessary language skills needed to obtain knowledge and information. Considered as the most important skill, the researcher concludes that reading gives a big effect on the success of the learners to master three other skills. As the opinion of the expert, Kucukoglu, (2013) and Sanopao, (2016), says that reading is a crucial key for students when they want to succeed in school. According to Block and Israel, 2005 (as cited in Mujtahid, 2018) a person's ability to read fluently can be measured by how often he is reading. Reading is a lifelong ability which can be used in school and also in real life. Despite the importance of reading. It is one of the most challenging areas in the education system. Certain methods can be used by English teachers in reading practices. To reach their goals, every teacher should choose the right one. In Indonesia, for example, the majority of the classes are considered to be large. For each class, these classes consisted of 30 to 34 students or more. As a result, it is difficult for the teacher to handle these large classes. The teacher

finds it difficult to make direct contact with the student, especially those in the back row. The teachers have difficulty controlling each student one by one. On the other hand, students also find it difficult to ask for and receive individual attention. If the teacher wants to directly engage the students in the learning tasks, it would take longer to do so. The use of picture books can increase student confidence to support his success in reading activity (Kane, 2007).

Most students are not interested in reading, or they may not have the habit of reading. According to Mi (2016), the biggest problem students have is when they do not have an interest in reading. Most of the reasons for lazy reading is the lack of books that interest readers, such as monotonous thick books. Reading also includes the heart, feelings, and values as Weaver (2009) said that what is thinking in somebody's brain is very important in their reading process: knowledge/information (or ignorance, lack of information), text processing techniques, moods, worries, and joys — all of which. Another expert describes reading as an event in which readers react to a text that is related to their previous knowledge of Spratt, Pulverness, and William (2005) and makes sense. Since reading a book isn't an easy activity, the advantages aren't immediately felt as if we were watching television programs or talk shows and others, making them less like learning. In conclusion, there are several issues related to teaching reading (there are some challenges that teachers frequently encounter while teaching reading), most of which are not interested in reading or may not have good reading habits.

In MTS Ma'arif NU, teaching reading has been implemented every week which aims to improve students' reading skills. Based on the researcher's experience when the researcher did his internship in this school, there were some problems from the students in learning English, especially in reading. Most of them are not competent to understand English texts well because the students are not interested in reading and lack motivation. The average value of students is 61.5, indicating that many students can read the words in perfect sections but they cannot answer questions because some students find it difficult to understand that part, sometimes students only know the meaning of the text without understanding what they are reading. Without reading skills, students will not be able to understand the information stated in books. If they are reluctant to read books and prefer to use the internet, they should still find it difficult to understand information because most of the websites and blogs on the internet are written in English.

What a teacher has to recognize as a challenging task is how to develop the reading course with methods and techniques to help students perceive the writer's point of view in the text. Several experts have discussed a lot of approaches and methods in which the students learn how to communicate with the text they read. Based on this background, research was conducted. This research tries to overcome the students' problems related to reading skills and vocabulary mastery, using simple media, namely picture books. The picture book is one of the good solutions to make students interested in reading. Because picture book has a lot of pictures that make the reader can better understand the material or story that appears, besides picture book, also have beautiful colors that attract readers. The teacher tries to review some theories about picture books as a promising way to learn reading. The picture book is an

interesting book that is contained of several pictures that make students prefer to read. Hope that students do not get bored in reading.

The purpose and benefits of picture book media help students' emotional development. It helps students learn about the world and its existence, learn about others, the relationships that occur and the development of feelings, get pleasure in appreciating beauty, and to stimulate the imagination. Because stories and materials tell the same story, students should be more interested in reading. Picture books can provide a more complex reading experience because readers are invited to participate in the storyline (Booker, 2012). Also, Wolfenbarger and Sipe (2007), states that true stories of texts and images are told in picture books (as cited in Booker, 2012).

One of the most important basic skills that students must master is reading. The problems are the uses of a monotonous thick book and do not have a good habit in reading. One of the great solutions is a Picture book. The picture book is the book which is conduct with a picture and some material. The picture and the text are telling the same story. And picture books can be read by everyone. Other than that, picture book will make the students do not get bored with reading. Because the picture book has an interesting look.

RESEARCH METHOD

The type of this research was classroom action research (CAR). This research is a feature of reflective analysis done to improve the rational stability of the students' actions in executing duty and develop the comprehension toward the condition in learning practice (Muslich, 2009). Classroom Action Research starts with the serious concern of teachers about their performance in their teaching, the quality of their students ' learning, the actions of their students, the learning difficulties of their students, and the learning environment they evaluate to prepare, implement and assessing change throughout the entire instruction process (Borgia, 2003). Classroom action research designed to solve practical problems in the process of teaching and learning, especially in teaching reading. The design that will be used by the researcher is adopted from Kemmis& Mc. Taggart theory (1988).

This type of research was chosen because it provides a media that can be done by researchers and teachers to improve educational practices by studying the problems they face, especially in reading. Researchers in this study should focus on improving student reading skills through media picture books.

The research conducted at MTS Ma'arif NU located in jl.Sudimoro, Mojolangu, kec. lowokwaru, Malang, East Java. The objects were the second-grade students of MTSMa'arif NU. This school chosen by the researcher's experiences. Most of the students of the second grade in this school have the poor ability in reading comprehension and the teacher did not apply some technique in the class yet.

This research was carried out in the form of cycles through four steps: 1) planning, 2) implementation, 3) observing, and 4) reflecting as indicated. Planning is made by considering the analysis and findings forming a preliminary study (reconnaissance). Researchers plan

everything related to action research such as success criteria, instruments, lesson plans, teaching materials, and media. The next step is to implement the plan. While researchers apply the plan, collaborative teachers collect data by observing actions in class.

Data collection was also done at the end of the cycle, in which the writer scores the students' final test. After the data were collected, the writer and the collaborative teacher analyzed the result of the data collected. The data analysis was done in the reflection based on the evaluation, and the result of the reflection determines whether the action is successful or not.

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In the preliminary study, the researcher observed the class and scores of students from the teacher to ensure that students' reading comprehension was low and identified students' problems in reading comprehension. The researcher found that the average score of students was relatively low, with an average score of 61.5. After the researchers found the reading comprehension score of students who were below the minimum score criteria from school, the minimum score was 75. Researchers need to improve the reading comprehension of students using picture books.

Before conducting the action, the researcher made planning. The activities were focus on the following: 1) Designing the lesson plan, 2) Preparing the material, 3) Preparing the media, 4) Preparing the strategy, 5) Determining the criteria of success.

The purpose of this action is to improve students' reading skills through reading media using picture books. This research should be conducted at MTs Ma'arif NU. In this activity, the researcher asked the teacher to help this process as a collaborator. In one cycle there are four meetings; three meetings were for researching teaching English learning through silent reading media continuously using picture books and one meeting for examinations.

The actions of the learning process are explained in the following points.

1. First meeting

For the first meeting, the researchers made lesson plans and introduced the use of picture book why it could improve students' reading comprehension and how it suited the material in second grade.

2. Second meeting

In this meeting, the researcher explained the material about Narrative texts accompanied by pictures. After that, the researcher applied a picture book and gave students some narrative texts.

3. Third meeting

At the third meeting, researchers asked the previous material. Then, the researchers continued the material about narrative text accompanied by pictures.

4. The fourth meeting

For the last meeting, the researcher gave a reading test to collect data. The researcher gave a reading test to students and asked them to answer questions.

The term reflection is related to evaluating whether the strategy implementation in this study is successful or not based on observation. If not, it will proceed to the next cycle. The results of the analysis were consulted with the success criteria. Meanwhile, weaknesses in the first cycle should be increased to the next cycle. This cycle will stop when the success criteria are reached. The success criterion is if student scores increase in value from 65 to 75 or even greater. Therefore, researchers stopped and reported their studies.

The preliminary result and final test result could know the level of students' difficulties and how to overcome them. Therefore, the researcher needs all kinds of devices needed in research that are listed in the next chapter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first meeting held on Monday, April 15th, 2018. The researcher taught this class for about 90 minutes. The teacher taught reading narrative texts using picture books. In pre-reading activities, the researcher started the class by greeting and opening the student meeting list. Then, the researcher tells the research explained to the students what activities they will do in the classroom during the observation. Also, the researcher made brainstorming by giving students the main questions related to narrative text. After explaining the picture book, the researcher provided material to students about narrative texts. The researcher explained the meaning, purpose, type, generic structure, and language features of the narrative text while students asked several questions if they did not understand the explanation of the researcher. After the researcher explained, the researcher gave several narrative texts accompanied by images for each student. After students got the paper, researchers ask students to read. At the end of the class, the researchers asked students to have difficulty in understanding the text and difficulties in carrying out activities. Researchers also asked the students about their learning outcomes.

The second meeting was conducted on Friday, April 19th, 2019. This meeting was almost the same as the first meeting. The researcher began the class by greeting and checking the students' attendance list. Then the researcher gave brainstorming to the students by asking the previous explanation from the previous meeting. Next, the researcher continued the previous material about the narrative text. After giving a deeper explanation of the narrative text, the researcher gave some narrative texts for each student. After the students got the paper, the researcher asked the students to read it. While the students read the text, the

researcher allowed the students to ask some questions if they found some difficulties in the text. At the end of the class, the researcher asked the students' learning difficulties in comprehending the text as well as the difficulties in doing the activities. The researcher also asked about the students' opinions about the learning outcome that they reached. In the second meeting, the researcher found that there was an improvement from the first meeting. The students paid more attention to responding to the researcher's instruction and explanation. This result could be more improved in the next meeting. The students also showed a good attitude during the lesson.

The third meeting was conducted on Monday, April 22nd, 2019. The researcher did like the previous meeting; in the opening, the researcher greeted the students and checked the students' attendance list. Then, the researcher gave them warmed-up activity just like giving some questions related to the previous topic. After giving the students some activity, the researcher shared some texts to the students. Also, the researcher gave leading questions to measure the students' knowledge, such as "What do you know about the text?" Mostly, the students were an enthusiast in answering and giving their opinion about the text they got. After that, the researcher gave them the passage and asked the students to do the activity like the previous meeting. Before closing the class, the researcher asked the students whether they still had some questions related to the text or not. The researcher ended the teaching and learning activity by greeting the students and reminding them that they were going to have a test in the last meeting. Overall, the condition of the class in the third meeting was better than in the previous meeting. The students were shown a good response to the researcher. The atmosphere of the class was better than in the previous meeting.

This is the last meeting held on Friday, April 26, 2019. In this meeting, the researcher gave a test to find out the progress of students in understanding the text after applying reading using a picture book. The test consists of 20 multiple choice questions related to narrative text. The time allowed was 90 minutes. The criterion for the success of this test was that 50% of students pass the minimum learning mastery standard which was 75. From the data obtained there were 28 students from 34 students who passed the exam. This means that student tests had achieved success criteria. It was assumed that students in the second year have improved their reading comprehension skills.

DISCUSSIONS

Based on the results of reading tests, field notes and reading scores of students, researchers reflected the implementation of teaching reading using picture books. Students participate in each activity in each phase with enthusiasm. It was proven that they actively responded to these activities. Furthermore, teaching reading using a picture book can motivate students to read and make it easier to understand the text. They were able to overcome their lack of vocabulary, making it easier for them to understand the text. This can be proven by the results of the student reading test. The average student score was 78 as you can see in the Appendix.

Given the data presented and research findings, research has met the criteria of success. First, the average reading test for students has met school standards. The average

value was 75. Second, students are active in the teaching and learning process. Third, students were motivated in the teaching and learning process. This means that the researcher did not need to revise the plan and stop the research because the success criteria have been met.

Before conducting this research, the reading skills of students in second grade MTs Ma'arif NU were not good. They find difficulty in understanding the text. These factors come from low motivation, mastery of vocabulary, and background knowledge of students. There were no media in teaching reading which also influences students' reading comprehension abilities. Students also did not know the important information needed to understand a word.

This classroom action research applied the media to improve the students' reading comprehension skills by using the Sustained Silent Reading method. The use picture book is part of the daily school activities as children are allowed to pick their reading materials and practice learning quietly without interruption (Moore, Jones, & Miller, 1980; Pilgreen, 2000). According to Booker (2012), What makes a book of drawings so fascinating is that text and pictures never tell the same story. Because stories and materials tell the same story, students will be more interested in reading. In the same line, in many picture books, the text completes the text and follows the same story, giving more detail to character, arrangement or conflict (Booker, 2012). Also, Wolfenbarger and Sipe, (2007), states that true stories of texts and images are told in picture books (as quoted in Booker, 2012).

Using a picture book is a suitable media applied in the classroom in teaching reading in second-grade students of MTs Ma'arif NU. After the teacher explained to the students about the material, the teacher asked the students to take the reading material they were interested in, and the teacher-designed about 15 minutes so that students can read the text silently. When reading activities began, the teachers must be included in this activity as a good example for students in reading. After the reading activity finished, the teacher did not ask students to make assignments that must be done after they have read the reading material. The task that was avoided is to make students enjoy their reading activities and motivate them to read. This reading activity was applied continuously for the next meeting. The results of this study indicate that this media can improve students' understanding and reading skills. This media was designed to give students the skills to overcome problems. So, they became addicted to learning more and increasing their reading level.

The following were a teaching reading procedure using a picture book.

1. The researcher gives several folklore that have interesting pictures and colors.
2. The researcher gives the text to students. The text given to students is narrative text, which contains folklore.
3. The teacher asks students to read and understand the text that has been given.
4. The teacher introduces the steps to understanding the narrative text. There are some things students must understand.
 - The first is orientation, the orientation is the opening step of the story, the introduction of the story that is in the context of the narrative text.

- The second is complication. In this case the teacher explains the problems that exist in the narrative text that has been given.
- After it is stated that there are problems in the narrative text, the teacher explains that there are steps to solve the problem.
- The latter teacher explains reorientation. In this case the teacher explains the closure of the story, so the teacher concludes from the narrative story.

CONCLUSION

The researcher draws conclusions based on studies that have been carried out and presented in the previous chapters. Based on the results of the analysis of data and data in classroom observations, it was concluded that the use of picture books in teaching reading has improved students' reading skills.

In this study, researchers used a picture book to improve students' reading comprehension. And the steps are: 1) the researcher gives several folklore that have interesting pictures and colors. 2) the researcher gives the text to students. The text given to students is narrative text, which contains folklore. 3) the teacher asks students to read and understand the text that has been given. 4) the teacher introduces the steps to understanding the narrative text. There are some things students must understand. a) Orientation, the orientation is the opening step of the story, the introduction of the story that is in the context of the narrative text. b) Complication. In this case the teacher explains the problems that exist in the narrative text that has been given. c) After it is stated that there are problems in the narrative text, the teacher explains that there are steps to solve the problem. d) The latter teacher explains reorientation. In this case the teacher explains the closure of the story, so the teacher concludes from the narrative story.

From the tests conducted in this study, researchers can conclude that students' reading skills are better after implementation. The researcher concluded that using a picture book improved the reading skills of second-grade MTs Ma'arif NU students. That was proven by the enthusiasm of the students during the implementation. Of the 34 students, 28 students passed the exam and 7 students did not pass the exam. This means that students who pass the exam have achieved a 50% success criterion. It is assumed that second-year students of MTs Ma'arif NU have improved their reading comprehension skills.

SUGGESTION

For the teachers, this research has proven that picture books can improve students' reading skills. Therefore, it is recommended that English teachers use this media in teaching reading. It is also recommended that they use known texts in teaching reading so students can understand it.

Researchers suggest that future researchers who should continue to carry out similar studies should emphasize student scores and class atmosphere to create a conducive classroom atmosphere. Also, the researchers hope that the findings of this study can be used as valuable sources for conducting further research related to the use of picture books to improve student reading skills for other types of texts in various education classes.

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