

## **IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN READING BY USING PRE-QUESTIONING**

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**Abstract:** This study was designed to improve the students' achievement in reading text by using Pre-Questioning. It was conducted in order to find model of teaching and learning that occurs, especially, in reading class. In this application, this study was done in cycles involved planning the action, implementing action, observing, and reflecting which we implemented in two cycles. Thus, this study was directed to solve practical problem in reading ability especially the student's lack of vocabulary and understanding text in the process of teaching and learning. The research was intended to know how Pre-Questioning before reading can be used to improve students achievement in reading text at second year students of MTsN Bandung, Tulungagung in academic year 2011/2012.

**Keywords:** Pre-Questioning, Reading Achievement

Reading has a positive effect on student's vocabulary knowledge, on their spelling and on their writing. Students who like reading will gain new knowledge and insight that will increase their intelligence. Reading texts also provide opportunities to study language: vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way we construct sentences, paragraph and texts. Lastly good reading texts can introduce interesting topics, stimulate discussion excite imaginative responses and be the springboard for well-rounded, fascinating lesson (Harmer, 2001: 68). Taringan and Tarigan (1986: 135) said "Reading is the key to the treasury. Knowledge stored in books should be explored and searched in reading activities". From the statement it means that with reading we can reach knowledge. As pupil become better and better in the foreign language, the printed word become the main source of expanding and strengthening the language (Scott and Yteberg, 1990: 49).

Based on the descriptions above, the researcher used Pre-Questioning to improve the students' achievement in reading text. The researcher assumed that Pre-Questioning would help the students understand the ideas of the text coherently. Hereby, the research was focused on the students' reading text comprehension. Smahillah (2012), said that in reading, to comprehend the text the readers should be able to manage every part of the text, because it is easy to gain the comprehension in reading when the readers are able to organize the text. Sometimes, they may find form of Pre-Questioning and it is important for them to comprehend a text with having knowledge in general view of the text.

Theoretically, Pre-Questioning itself can build the students' interest and motivation before students read the whole text. Moreover, the students can predict what will be discussed on the text.

### **TEACHING READING**

Teaching language is not easy. Not all people can teach. Based on Lomax and Ferguson (2002: 81), at the moment it seems as is almost any body with the status of native speaker of the language can get instant qualification as a English teacher. But if we want a pedagogic profession, when we have to stake out a clear area of expert knowledge that enable us to defined our subject with professional authority.

In *How to Teach English*, Harmer explain about the principle behind the teaching of reading (2001: 70-71). What are the principles?

1. Reading isn't a passive skill. Reading is an incredibly active occupation. To do it successfully, we have to understand what the words mean, understand the arguments and. If we do not do these things – and if the students do not do these things- then we only scratch the surface of the text and we quickly forget it.
2. Students need to be engaged whit what they are reading. As with everything else in lesson, students who are not engaged with the reading text-not actively interested in what they are doing-are less likely to benefit from it.
3. Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of the reading text, not just the language. The important things of reading are the students study the reading texts for the way they use the language, the number of paragraph they contain, to respond to the massage of texts.
4. Prediction is a major factor in reading. When we read texts in our own language, we frequently have a good idea of the content before we actually read. Expectations are set up and the active process of reading is ready to begin, our brain is starts predicting the text.
5. Match the task to the topic. Once of decision has been taken about what reading texts the students are going to read, we need to choose good reading task.
6. Good teacher exploit reading text to the full. A good teachers integrate the reading text into interesting class sequences, using the topic for discussion and further tasks, using the language for study and later activation.

In other book, T. Vacca and L. Vacca (1999: 212) also explain that “Talking to learn helps students explore, clarify and think about ideas and concepts they encounter in reading and writing”.

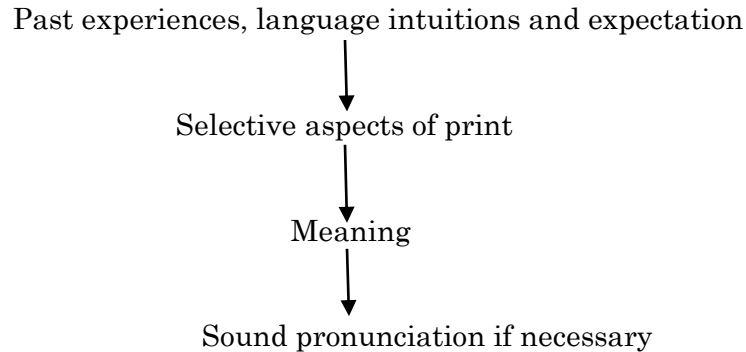
### **Reading Process**

There are some of the key theoretical and empirical perspectives on the nature of reading and learning to reading (Nunan, 1991: 63).

### ***Bottom-Up and Top-Down Views on Reading***

The bottom-up approach dominated both first and second language research and theory. According to Cambourne (1979) in Nunan(1991: 64), it was the basis of the vast majority of reading schemes. Many people will recall with distaste the basic primers with their highly improbable stories which were used to develop early literacy skills. One reason for the survival of this approach in the face of criticism is that it seems a reasonable and logical explanation of what happens when we read.

The top-down approach, Cambourne (1979) in Nunan's book, also provides the following schematization of the approach.



From the diagram, it can be seen that this approach emphasizes the reconstruction of meaning rather than the decoding of the form. The interaction of the reader and the text is central to the process, and readers bring to the interaction their knowledge of the subject matter, knowledge of and expectation about how language works (Nunan, 1991: 66).

### ***Schema Theory and Reading***

This term is chosen by cognitive psychologist (Nunan, 1991: 67). According to Minsky in Nunan said that human memory consists of sets of stereotypical situations (frames) which guide comprehension by providing a framework for making sense of experiences (1991: 67). Schema Theory is the source of some questions like: How do readers construct meaning? How do they decide what to hold on to, and having made that decision, how do they infer a writer's message? The reader brings information, knowledge, emotion, experience, and culture (Brown, 2001: 299).

### **THE TEXTS**

The subject matter of a book or the text is also an important factor. For instance, readers with substantial prior knowledge of a subject will be able to use their knowledge to read more difficult texts. For both children and adults, native and non-native speakers, it is important to use authentic materials. It is also important to use a variety of authentic texts, including both information texts and narrative or story texts. Students often have an easier time reading information texts when they can use their knowledge of the topic (S. Pang et al: 2003: 17).

Broughton *et al* (1978: 94), in *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* concern about, In discussing the complex nature of the reading skill it was pointed out that reading involves correlating elements of language with

meaning. The most familiar of all elements of language are 'words' and it must be quite clear that part of what is involved in understanding a text is understanding the meanings of individual words in that text. So, in reading process text is the most important thing to reach the goal of teaching and learning process.

### **QUESTIONING STRATEGIES**

The most important key to create an interactive learning is the initiation of interaction from the teacher by using question, Brown (2001:169). Appropriate questioning can fulfill a number of different functions, such as:

1. Teacher questions give students the opportunity to produce language comfortably without having to risk initiating language themselves.
2. Teacher question can serve to initiate a chain reaction of students interaction among themselves.
3. Teacher questions giving immediate feedback about students' comprehension.
4. Teacher questions provide students with opportunities to find out what they think. As they are nudged into responding to questions about, say, a reading, they can discover what their own opinions and reactions are. This self-discovery can be especially useful for a pre-reading activity.

Perhaps the simplest way to conceptualize the possibilities is to think of a range of questions, beginning with display questions that attempt to elicit information already known by the teacher and the students. In this study, the writer interested to use pre-questioning in order to make the general frame of the knowledge.

### **Pre-Questioning**

Successful readers ask question and seek answer when they read. Asking questions helps readers monitor their comprehension and stay engaged and interested in their reading. D'Ambrosini (2004) said that "Before reading, good readers speculate about what might happen in the story.

Based on Brown's (2001) explanation of display questions, schema theory and students' background knowledge explanation. He also defined pre-questioning implicitly as some questions which are provided before the students read the whole text, in order to build the students' interest and motivation, also their cognitive factors and Pre-Questioning is very useful to activate the schemata, thus the students can predict what will be faced by them in the reading text.

According to Pregory and Boyle in Tingastuti (2011) said that reading needs the students' background knowledge, the students' linguistic knowledge of the target language, and the strategies or techniques the students use to tackle the text. Synthesizing the above definitions, the present study claims that reading causes readers to participate with the writer and comes as close as possible to the writer's point of view by looking at the key words, main ideas, supporting details and details of the written text. Readers might also able to draw conclusion, give evidence, analyze the passage, make prediction, solve problems encountered, give opinion and evaluate the value of the material. Based on the

explanation, by using Pre-Questioning will activated the students background knowledge. When the background knowledge is activated, the students will easy to comprehend the text and answer the question.

According to Harmer in Smahillah (2012), there are some kinds of Pre-Questioning, they are 1) Pre-Questioning before reading to confirm expectations: The use of Pre-Questioning as a tool for placing great emphasis on the lead-in stage (where students are encouraged to become interested in the subject matter of the text), encourages students to predict the content of the text, and gives them an interesting and motivating purpose for reading. 2) Pre-Questioning before reading to extract specific information: Pre-Questioning as a tool to force the students to extract specific information from the text. They are going to answer before reading the text. If they do this it will be possible for them to read in the required way, they should seen the text only to extract the information the questions demand. 3) Pre-Questioning before reading for general comprehension: In this case Pre-Questioning used to build up the students' prior knowledge. 4) Pre-Questioning before reading for detailed comprehension: This kind of Pre-Questioning intends to give the students some detailed information that should be found by them in the whole of the text.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The design of this study is Classroom Action Research. This research was designed to solve practical problems in the process of English teaching and learning, especially in teaching reading. The method be used was pre-questioning before reading to help the students to improve their reading achievement in English.

In this study is aimed to increase the ability in reading. The design of this study is collaborative classroom action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participation in social situations in order to improve the rationally and justice of their own social or educational practice, as well as their understanding of these practice and the situation in which these practices carryout (Kemmer and Taggart in McNiff, 2002: 24). It is called collaborative CAR, because the researcher directly worked together with one of the classroom English teacher in the school.

Classroom Action Research is an effective media in improving the quality of English teachers' performance in instruction as well as students' achievement in learning English in classrooms. In Classroom Action Research, English teachers assess the effectiveness of their own teaching activities and plan the improvement based on the result of the assessment. The results are innovations in English instructions. Classroom Action Research for English Instruction is aimed at developing innovative instructional strategy that can help enhance the success in students' learning English (Latief, 2009: 3).

### **Setting and Subject of the Study**

The study was conducted at MTsN Bandung Tulungagung. The subjects of this study were the VIII grade C class in academic years 2011/2012, there were 48 students as the subject in study. This school was as the setting of the study for the following consideration:

1. The students got difficulties in understanding text and answering questions based on the text.
2. The teaching and learning process tended to use the conventional method only, it meant that the teacher gave the materials, ask the students to do the task.

### **Procedure of Study**

The study was conducted through the following stages: preliminary observation (reconnaissance), planning, implementing, observing and reflecting.

#### ***Reconnaissance***

This activity was done to get information about the real condition of the class including the teacher technique used in process of teaching and learning, the students problems and their performances in learning and also activities in reading class. The students have difficulties to understanding text and answering question based on the text.

#### ***Planning***

Before doing the action, a good preparation was done. The step covered providing a suitable strategy, designing lesson plans, preparing facilities, and preparing the criteria of success.

#### ***Socializing Research Program***

Before conducting the research the researcher met Headmaster of MTsN Bandung on 23<sup>th</sup> March 2012, this meeting done by the researcher to give the researcher later and asked permission to does a research in him school. After meet head master the researcher met the English teacher to help researcher in conducted the research, we are collaborator.

On 3<sup>th</sup> April 2012, the researcher visited to the school for second time. This meeting has purpose to know problem in teaching and learning English reading, the researcher also observe the teacher and students activities in teaching and learning.

#### ***Providing A Suitable Strategy***

Referring to the purpose of study, the general instruction objective of designed lesson plan was to improve the student's inferential comprehension ability in English reading texts, especially to develop the student's reading skill. To improve the student's achievement in English, the study focused on the method, Pre-Questioning and should be well understood before applying it.

According to Brassell and Rasinski in Nordquist (2011) Pre-Reading strategies allow students to think about what they already know about a given topic and predict what they will read or hear. Before students read any text, teachers can direct their attention to how a text is organized, teach unfamiliar vocabulary or other concepts, search for the main idea, and provide students with a purpose for reading or listening. Most importantly, teachers can use Pre-Reading strategies to increase students' interest in a text.

According to Content-Area Reading Strategies for Language Arts book in Nordquist (2011), the steps of Pre-Questioning are, 1) Previewing: Taking a quick look at a reading before trying to understand the whole thing of the text. 2) Predicting: Look at clues from what you read, see, or already know to figure out what information you are likely to get from the reading. 3) Prior knowledge: Prior knowledge is what you know about the subject before you begin a new reading. 4) Purpose: Figuring out an author's purpose will help you understand what you read. Begin by having students identify their purpose for reading.

Pre-Questioning is the method to brainstorming the student's background knowledge, to make prediction of content or information on the texts or passages.

### *Designing Lesson Plan*

The lesson plan was arranged and develops based on the syllabus in the second semester of second year student of junior high school. The lesson plan consists of course identity, instructional objectives, teaching scenario, instructional material.

### *Preparing The Criteria of Success*

The criteria of succes for teaching and for the students indicated in the form the writing post test given. Accordingly, the criteria of succes used in study 2 aspect: (a) Based on KKM in MTsN Bandung, 80% of the students score in reading test was at least 70. (b) The students were active during the teaching learning process.

### *Implementing*

In this study, the researcher is implementing the strategy by referring to activities in the class. This study in each cycle conducted in the two meetings. First, focused in the introducing reading skill, introduce the technique of Pre-Questioning before reading and the students can identify the purpose for the text and activate their background knowledge to predict the content of the text. Second, by using their prediction of the text, the students try to understand the text and answer the following question based on the text.

### *Observing*

Observing was the activity of recording and collecting the data about any aspect or event. That was happening in the teaching and learning activity in conducting an accurate observation the observing focused on the activity done by researcher and the student during the teaching and learning process. To collect the required data, some various instruments used were as follows, 1) Observations Sheets, the instruments were used to see and to note the real activities proceeded in the classroom. Relating the technique carryout, the observations sheets were used to observe the researcher and the students' activities during the teaching and learning process in each cycle. Observation sheets concerned for the teacher. 2) Field notes were used to collect the data during the teaching and learning process in every cycle, which was not, included in the observation sheets. In the study, the activity of taking note was done by the teacher. 3) The test is needed to know how the improve students

achievement in English when teaching with Pre-Questioning before reading. 4) Questionnaire, the questionnaire was distributed to the students at the beginning and the end of research. It was used to know the students comment on the teaching and learning process in reading by using Pre-Questioning before reading.

### **Reflection**

On the basis of the result of data analysis, the research evaluates the model of paper work assessment, the students scores and students response in the implementation of strategy. The reflection basic is the criteria of success. This phase was final phase of a cycle. The reflecting aims to reflect and to review the result of the observing phase. In this phase, based on the criteria of success the researcher could find out whether the research problem was solved or not, and whether there were new problem appear during the acting phase the researcher could make decision, what was the research stopped or continue with next cycle.

Meanwhile, the data taken from the result of the students test is analyzed past to know whether the criterion of success has been achieved or not. The formula to know the criteria of success is achieved or not is:

$\%X = \frac{X}{N} \times 100\%$	$\%X$ = the result
	$N$ = total of the students
	$X$ = the number of students pass the test

### **Preliminary Observation**

Before the researcher applying the method, the researcher gives preliminary questionnaire to the students in class VIII C in order to know the problem in English class especially in reading. Besides, the researcher also gave preliminary test to know the students ability in reading skill. The questionnaire and preliminary test were given on Thursday, April, 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Students passed in the test is 12 students. Students failed in the test is 36 students.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Cycle I**

Based on the result of the formula of the criteria of success, from total 48 students, we found 58 % of the students who pass the test. Meanwhile, the criteria of success must 80 % of students must pass in the test.

Based on the analysis some findings needed to improve from joining activity, such as, it was found that the students were not active in teaching learning process. Beside that, more of students confused about the researcher said because researcher using English more. In teaching reading by using Pre-Questioning, the researcher just give question way generate in front of class. However, there are some problems happen in core activities. First, some of the students still confused to knowing the meaning of the word in the text. Second,



the students can't have good understanding in the text, because they are doing understand about the purpose and the meaning of some word.

### ***Reflecting***

Reflecting which the final stage of cycle I, it is consisted of the evaluation on the process and the student result. To determine whether the actuating of the first cycle was successful or not, the researcher made reflection details as follow: it can be concluded that the researcher was had not been successfully in cycle I because score of students was not reach the minimal criteria of score. Then the percentage of the students pass the test only 58%, although the score was increase than preliminary test.

The researcher always gave motivation and feedback to make students of VIII C class enthusiasms, but the students still more were not in good response. There some students look passive in teaching learning process and some students just laughing with their friend in the class. It means that study had not successfully yet, because the researcher determined that the students can active in teaching learning process.

Based on the problem found in actuating of cycle I, the result of study was unsuccessfully and the researcher decided to continue the research to the next cycle. It was needed to be carried out better in cycle II.

### **Cycle II**

This cycle was done during two meeting for teaching and learning process and conducting the test. It was conducted two days, on Tuesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The modification of strategy in cycle II is the researcher using discussion after giving Pre-Questioning, so the students can share their experience in group.

### ***Revised Planning***

Based on the result of the test cycle I and student's problem in reading, it was identify that students still got difficulty in understanding text and to know the vocabulary meaning. Both of the researcher and the collaborator teacher discussed how to solve the problem. The researcher will apply the modification's method of Pre-Questioning, discussion in group.

Moreover, the scenario of teaching reading has been designed before implementing the method. The scenario in the teaching and learning reading English text in the class was divided in three parts in one meeting. In the second meeting, researcher helps the students to memorize the last lesson. In this meeting, the researcher had to decide the test. In addition, the researcher, and the collaborator prepared the field note and observation sheet.

### ***Acting***

In this part of acting, the researcher would like to describe whatever had been done by the researcher in this classroom action research in each meeting. The first meeting was implemented on Tuesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 10.00 am up

to 11.30 am. The first activity, the researcher checked the student's absence to know who was absent. Then the researcher asked about the condition students and students' response greeting from researcher. Before entering to the material, the researcher shows the student's scores in cycle I. Students afraid about their score, many students got low score. After that, the researcher explains what the students must do in reading.

In this meeting, the researcher makes 9 groups in class, each group consist of 5-6 students. Then the researcher gives the students Pre-Questioning. In the end of teaching and learning process, the researcher discuss the answer of the test and give feedback about the students was done in teaching and learning process.

The second meeting was implemented on Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 10.00 am up to 11.30 am. The first activity, the researcher checked the student's absence to know who was absent. Then the researcher asked about the condition students and students' response greeting from researcher.

In this meeting the researcher continued the first meeting. The researcher helps the students to memorize their last lesson. At the last 45 minutes, the researcher gives the students a test, this is the cycle I test. Before the students read the text and answering the question based on the text, the researcher asked to the students about the Pre-Questioning. In the end of teaching and learning process, the researcher collecting the test answers and gives feedback about the students was done in teaching and learning process.

### ***Observing***

The observation was done during the action. In this stage the observer observe the teaching and learning process. In this section, the researcher would analyze the data that obtained in actualizing of study in this first cycle.

The students improvement of the score

This section is intended to reflect on of the student's improvement on score in the cycle II. The improvement deals with the students reading score.

### ***The Result of the Test***

Based on the result of the formula of the criteria of success, from total 48 students, we found 95,8 % of the students who pass the test. The criteria of success must 80 % of students must pass in the test. In this cycle II, the criteria of success is achieved, so the researcher did not continue the research.

Based on the analysis some findings, it was found that the students were active in teaching learning process, when the researcher gave opportunity to the students to discuss in group. The researcher came to the students group by group to give guiding in discussion process and the students interested in the teaching learning process. In this cycle II, the students can understand the uncommon word, so they can understand the text easily.

### ***Reflecting***

Reflecting which the final stage of cycle II, it is consisted of the evaluation on the process and the student result. To determine whether the actuating of the second cycle was successful or not, from acting and observing stage, the researcher made reflection details as follow:

It can be concluded that the researcher was had been successfully in cycle II. The percentage of students who pass the test in cycle II is 95,8 %. The researcher always gave motivation and feedback to make students of VII C class enthusiasms, the students were in good response. Many students look active to discuss in group, just a few students look passive in teaching learning process. Based on the problem found in actuating of cycle II, the result of study was successfully and the researcher decided end the study in this cycle.

### **DISCUSSION**

In teaching reading to the junior high school especially in second year students VII C class the researcher using Pre-Questioning method. The researcher used this method to make the student's motivation, more active in teaching and learning English and make students interesting in learning English. Pre-Questioning is used to build the students prior knowledge. According to Kintsch (1998) in Taboda and Guthrie (2006), "prior knowledge contributes declarative information (content) to which the text base can be connected".

Based on the result of cycle I, the students were not active in the learning process. In this meeting the researcher used English more so that the students cannot understand what the researcher said. When the researcher gave opportunity to the students to ask to the researcher, they were not students who asked to the researcher. Beside that, more of students confused about the researcher said because researcher using English. In the next meeting in cycle I the researcher try to combine two languages, the researcher used English and Indonesia. The result of cycle I was better than preliminary test, the score students was increase but it was not fulfill criteria of success.

In cycle II, the students were active in learning process. In this cycle the researcher more communicative to the students and make group in the class. After the researcher gives the Pre-Questioning, the students discuss the Pre-Questioning in group. The result in cycle II better than cycle I because there are 95,8% of students pass the test.

### **Students Reading Score in Preliminary Study, Cycle I, and Cycle II**

From the result of cycle II, it was proved that this method can improve the student's achievement in reading especially in junior high school. By using this method, the students more active in teaching and learning process. Based on the

questionnaires after implementing the method, 33 students answering they are more active in teaching and learning reading. Based on the result of study, Pre-Questioning was appropriate technique and could be used for another teacher in teaching reading, especially on VIII C class students of MTsN Bandung.

### **The Students' Response**

By applying Pre-Questioning, the students able to predict the content of the text before read the text. Then, after the students knowing the context of the text, the students can identify uncommon word. The students can understand the text, it's motivated the students to read and answers the test. Its make the students more comfortable to read the text. In cycle I, There some students look passive in teaching learning process and some students just laughing with their friend in the class. The students still more were not in good response. It means that study had not successfully. In cycle II, The researcher always gave motivation and feedback to make students enthusiasms, the students were in good response. Many students look active to discuss in group, just a few students look passive in teaching learning process.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of reading test after two cycles, it could be concluded that the use of Pre-Questioning could improve the students' reading achievement. The improvement could be seen from the students' score and students passed tests are requirement in the second cycle that was better than the first cycle. It can be seen in second cycle, that was 46 of students passed the test or 95,8% students passed the test, compared in first cycle there are 28 students passed the test or 58% students passed the test . The results achieved the standard score requirement that was required in this research. In short, Pre-Questioning could improve the students' achievement in reading text of the VIII C students of MTsN Bandung Tulungagung.

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