

USING SEMANTIC MAPPING AS AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE READING ABILITY OF THE FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SDN 005 LENGGADAI HILIR ROKAN HILIR

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Abstract: Reading is one the necessary skills that foreign language learners must achieve. Reading is not as simple as learning to spell and read sentences, but it is more complex than that. Reading involves the process of decoding, predicting, and many others simultaneously so that the reader can comprehend the text well. However, reading has become a ghost upon the students since it requires the students to find some information within the text but the students are lazy to pay attention to it. Therefore, it is quite challenging to teach reading. Good teaching has to apply a good strategy to encourage the students to be involved in the class activities. One of the strategies is using semantic mapping. According to Thomas, H. Estes (1999) Semantic Mapping is a strategy that allows the students to organize their prior knowledge in these formal relations, and thus provide themselves a basis for understanding what they are about to read and study. Semantic mapping provides a graphic structure of the knowledge that can be used to organize new ideas as they are understood.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the necessary skills that foreign language learners must achieve. Reading is not as simple as learning to spell and read sentences, but it is more complex than that, Reading involves the process of decoding, predicting, and many others simultaneously so that the readers can comprehend the text well.

However, most students in Indonesia do not know how to read meaningfully. They only read their textbooks before having test or examination. Students are reluctant to read English texts other than their school textbooks.

Good teaching has to apply a good strategies to encourage the students to be involved in the class activities, one of the strategies is using semantic mapping. According Salam (1999) Semantic Mapping is a strategy that allows the students to organize their prior knowledge in these formal relations, and thus provide themselves a basis for understanding what they are about to read and study. Semantic mapping provides a graphic structure of the knowledge that can be used to organize new ideas as they understood.

This research aims to measure the effect of using semantic mapping strategy on the students' reading comprehension. The teacher uses three types of semantic mapping strategies; word mapping, concept mapping, and story

mapping. The research was conducted to the fourth grade students of SDN 005 Lenggadai Hilir in the second semester of academic year 2010/2011.

METHODOLOGY

This is a classroom action research which is done to improve the quality of learning and teaching practices. It is a kind of research that is designed, implemented and evaluated by the teacher himself/herself in the classroom

The population of this research is the fourth grade students of SDN 005 Lenggadai Hilir. For this research, the sample was taken using cluster sampling technique. It is a technique to find a sample in groups, not individuals, and it is randomly selected.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Presentation of the Pre-Test

Before conducting the treatments, a pre test was conducted to the respondents in order to know the ability of the students in reading comprehension. The result of the pre-test shows that the average score of the pre-test was 48.08. The following table shows the classification of the students' scores.

Table 1: The Result of the Students' Pre-Test

Score Range	Level of Ability	Frequency	Percentage
81-100	Excellent	0	0%
61-80	Good	3	11.54%
41-60	Fair	16	61.54%
21-40	Poor	7	29.62%
0-20	Very Poor	0	0%
Total		26	100%

Based on the diagram above, shows that:

- 3 students (11.54%) are characterized in to good level
- 16 students (61.54%) are characterized in to fair level
- 7 students (29.62%) are characterized in to very level

The Result of Post-Test in the First Cycle

This test was done after the students got treatments by using semantic mapping in three meetings. The students in the post test are the same with the students in the pre -test. The description of the post-test is presented as follows:

Table 2: The Result of the Students' Post-Test after the First Cycle

Score Range	Level of Ability	Frequency	Percentage
81-100	Excellent	6	23.08%
61-80	Good	15	57.69%
41-60	Fair	5	19.23%
21-40	Poor	0	0%
0-20	Very Poor	0	0%
Total		26	100%

The table above shows that:

- 6 students (23.08%) are in excellent level
- 15 students are in good level
- 5 students are in fair level

The average score of the students after the first cycle was 70.90.

The Result of Post-Test in the second cycle

In the second cycle, some additional treatment was done to the students. After three meetings, the post test was conducted after the second cycle post test. The classification of the students' scores is presented below:

Table 3: The Result of the Students' Post Test after the Second Cycle

Score Range	Level of Ability	Frequency	Percentage
81-100	Excellent	9	34.62%
61-80	Good	15	57.69%
41-60	Fair	2	7.69%
21-40	Poor	0	0%
0-20	Very Poor	0	0%

From the table above, it shows that:

- 9 students (34.62%) are in excellent level
- 15 students (57.69%) are in good level
- 2 students (7.69%) are in fair level

None of the students belong to poor and very poor levels anymore. The average score of the students was 74.74 which belongs to good category. This is a research using semantic mapping technique to improve the students' reading achievement. Some treatments were given to help the students in dealing with English reading texts. The treatments were done in 6 meetings with six lesson plans.

Students' responses to the lessons with this technique were not quite satisfying at first, since they were still curious about what they should do when dealing with texts. But as the time passed by, the students were encouraged to

participate and they became more active than before. they began to be brave and not afraid of making mistakes in the work, therefore they became eager to involve the lessons.

CONCLUSION

There are some strengths and weakness in using Semantic Mapping to improve the students' reading achievement. The strength are:

- The students are motivated in attending the lessons.
- The students are happy and are not afraid of making mistakes.
- Semantic Mapping enhances the students' reading achievement and reduces their anxiety in dealing with English reading texts.
- The students work in groups, so they learn to cooperate with each other.

The weaknesses are:

- Some students are confused to deal with the texts
- Some students cannot answer the questions according to the texts in time.
- The class becomes too noisy and uncontrolled due to students' responses in discussing the answers to the test. Few students take chances to disturb the others and make some noises instead of answering the questions.

REFERENCES

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