



USING UNINTERRUPTED SUSTAINED SILENT READING (USSR) STRATEGY IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Reading is an important skill that is needed in order to get information from written text. In reading, the students not only must be able to read the text, but they also must be able to comprehend the text in order to get the meaning from the text. However, many students have difficulties in comprehending the text and lacking motivation in reading. It is because there is a tendency that the teachers do not use an interesting strategy that can attract students' interest. That is why this paper is conducted in order to explain how to use Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR) strategy in teaching reading comprehension to senior high school students. USSR strategy is conducted by providing the students to select their own reading material based on their interest and read it silently about twenty minutes without any interruption. This strategy can make the students relaxed and enjoyed the reading process. It is believed that this strategy can help many students in improving their reading comprehension ability.

Key words: Reading, Reading Comprehension, USSR strategy

A. INTRODUCTION

In learning and teaching English, there are four basic skills that are taught and learned at school. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing which are important and related each other in order to master English. However, Lindsay and Knight (2006: 70) says that reading becomes an important skill in students' daily life because it can give plenty opportunities for students. Through reading, students can obtain plenty of information which can expand their knowledge more and more. The knowledge that students get through reading will help them to produce their speaking and writing ability well. It is also supported by Coyne at all (2011: 50) that says "reading opens up the world for children and is the doorway to learning". Students need to read a lot of books to get information that

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they need in learning process. Moreover, they are also expected to read many different types of texts in their school life or academic purposes.

Reading has been defined in various ways. Cook (2008: 121), for example, defines reading as a skill that can be used to understand and find the meaning of the text. Moreover, Alderson (2000: 3-4) says that reading is the ability of readers to process the relation between the text and the way to read the text. It is a process of the readers to combine the information that they get from the text with their own background knowledge to get the meaning from the text. It is also supported by Ibrahim (1999) who defines reading as a communicative and constructive process. In this process, readers are required to comprehend, interpret, and respond to the text in accordance with what they already know before.

In reading, being able to comprehend the text is important. Grabe (2009: 15) says that the main goal of reading is comprehension. This opinion is in the line with Fitrawati (2009). The students should be able to comprehend what the text is about. If students cannot comprehend the text, they will not get the meaning of the text. It means that students do not get the knowledge from the text.

There have been to be many definitions of reading comprehension. According to Alexander (1977:159), comprehension is a skill to understand the printed words by decoding and translating those words in order to get the meaning from the text. In similar way, Harvey and Anne (2007: 13) define reading comprehension as a method to understand the meaning from the text. The teachers not only teach their students how to decode the words, spell the words, or learn vocabulary but also teach how discover the meaning of information given by the whole text. In comprehend a text, students not only think about what they are reading but think about what they are learning so that they can get the meaning from the written text.

However, many students still have difficulties and lack of motivation in reading comprehension. Fitrawati (2009) says that the ways how the teachers teach or the teachers' strategy influences students' interest in reading comprehension. Because of that, Cook (2008: 8) says that the teacher is supposed to know their students need well and think carefully the best technique and strategy that give opportunities to students especially in improving students reading comprehension ability. The teachers need to find a good strategy that can motivate them to read a lot. This strategy should be easy to use for students and make them become interested in reading. Strategy that does not make them feel forced in reading but make them feel pleasure in reading. So that students can enjoy and be stimulated in reading comprehension.

In order to overcome this problem, the teachers can use Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR) strategy in teaching reading comprehension for students. USSR strategy gives students some opportunities in reading comprehension. According to Tierney at all (1980: 119), by using USSR strategy, students can be a good reader because in this strategy students actively involved in the reading and make reading is not boring.

USSR strategy is introduced by Lyman Hunt at the University of Vermont in the 1960's and was implemented in public school in the 1970's. This strategy is also known as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), High Intensity Practice (HIP),

Motivation in Middle School (MIMS), Free Voluntary Reading (FVR), Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), and Daily Independent Reading Time (DIRT) (Meyer, 1998: 3).

Krashen (1989) furthermore, defines Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR) strategy as a free voluntary reading for five to fifteen minutes to read silently without book reports or tests on the reading process. In the same way, Reiter (2003) also says USSR strategy as a free voluntary reading. In this strategy, students are given amount of time to read silently a text or book that they choose by themselves that makes students doing reading with pleasure. It also supported by Meyer (1998: 6-7) that students are free to choose their own interest topic and read it peacefully without any interruptions during period of times so that he defines USSR strategy as one of kinds of free reading programs.

USSR strategy has some purposes that give advantages for students. Hopkins (2007) mentions that there are some purposes that are given by USSR strategy. First, this strategy provides the students to read their own choosing material. Second, they also will get new vocabulary during reading activity. Next, the students also will be confidence on their reading ability so that it increases their desire to read a lot in their free time. Then, they can know the value of reading and make them to be the lifelong readers and learners.

In the same way, Gardener (2005: 117-126) says that USSR strategy has an essential objective from other strategies that is students' enjoyment in reading. If students feel enjoyed in reading, after several weeks in applying USSR strategy, they will be able to comprehend the text and also being able to be a lifelong reader. It supported by Oliver (in Quinn 2017) that states using USSR strategy in teaching reading comprehension leads students to be better readers. So that students' achievement in reading will also increase.

Moreover, Vaughan (1982: 71) says that USSR Strategy is an appropriate instructional strategy for teachers in teaching reading. This strategy is suitable to increase students' achievement in reading. It is because they have their reading practice time in the classroom and their selecting text to be read. This strategy also helps students to communicate with the text that they read because there is no voicing or whispering during reading process so that they get a quiet time and relax atmosphere.

Furthermore, there are three main characteristics of USSR strategy. The first one is silent reading. Silent reading is the main key to achieve USSR strategy successfully in improving reading comprehension ability because students are given a time to read without any interruption. While doing silent reading, students do not read the words loudly (Brown, 2000: 307-308). It can be said that they just pronounce the words inaudible way. This strategy also helps students to understand the meaning of the text not only by looking at one word but it is also by looking at the context of the text. It is why silent reading becomes an effective way to increase students' comprehension in reading and even their reading speed level.

The second characteristic of USSR strategy is the teacher as a model. During this strategy, Gunderson (2009: 137) states that the teachers are expected to be the model how to read silently and enjoy the reading session. In order to

familiarize this strategy to students, it is essential for the teachers to reveal their pleasure in reading by showing the students how the teachers enjoy their reading time. In this case, teachers are not allowed to inquire questions, give students a paper to be answered or ask students to make books report while practicing USSR strategy. Moreover, he also mentioned that teachers are not allowed to force students to be quiet when teachers apply this strategy in the classroom for the first time. He believed that students will familiarize with this strategy after several times. Overall, not only students but teachers also participate in this strategy as a real example in order to apply USSR strategy successfully.

The last characteristic of USSR strategy is free choosing reading material. According to Yoon (2002), during this strategy students are allowed to select a reading material based on their interest. In the same way, Gunderson (2009: 137) states that students are free to choose what they read and read it silently. Peregoy and Boyle (2005: 294) also say that students enjoy in using USSR strategy because they are free to select and read their own book. However, Hibbard (2014) says that students also can choose and read the text not only through the printed material book but also can chose and read e-books through their desktop computer. It is because most of students are interested in reading online right now.

According to Tierney and Readence (2005) USSR strategy can be applied to kindergarten students until senior high school students. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, this strategy cannot be applied for students at kindergarten to elementary level because they do not study English in the school. Even English is begun to be taught from junior high school students, this strategy is also not suitable for them because they are categorized as the beginner level in learning English. Brown (2000: 307) says that silent reading strategy is not appropriate for beginner level because they still have difficulties in vocabulary and grammatical pattern. So, in Indonesia, this strategy is appropriate for senior high school students in teaching reading comprehension.

According to Tierney at all (1980: 121-123), there are three important elements in using USSR strategy in the classroom. Those important elements are preparation, the reading period and follow-up activity. In preparation, the teachers must explain the rules and opportunities of USSR strategy and what they are going to do in using this strategy. While reading period, the teachers set the time about twenty minutes for the students to read silently the text that they have selected before. After the reading period, the teachers need to make a follow-up activity in order to know and evaluate the success of USSR session.

There are some several advantages of Using USSR Strategy:

1. It serves students to read with enjoyment because the students can choose their own reading material based on their interest in quiet time and relaxed atmosphere. It is because most of the students want to read the reading material that they like (Peregoy and Boyle, 2008; Tierney at all, 1980).
2. It helps the students in improving their reading comprehension ability because they read silently and without interruption so that they can focus and concentrate on their reading material (Peregoy and Boyle, 2008; Reiter, 2003; Riska, 2017, Tierney at all, 1980).

3. It helps students to gain new vocabulary during silent reading time because they can experience to find the meaning by themselves and it gives opportunities for students to learn words from context that are meaningful to them (Krashen, 1989; Meyer, 1998).
4. It makes students to be lifelong readers as a result of reading for enjoyment. In this strategy the students are also actively involved in the reading so that it makes them being better readers (Gardiner, 2005).

It can be concluded that by using USSR strategy, students can be a good readers because in this strategy the students are actively involved in the reading and make reading is not boring. This strategy encourages students to read more and more because they can choose their own choosing text. By choosing their own text, students are expected to read with pleasure. During reading, there is no interruption so that they can read in a quiet, relaxed and easy to get the meaning of the text so that they will be able to comprehend the text well.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Teaching Preparation

a. Choosing Teaching Material

In choosing reading materials, the teachers must consider the grade level and interests of their students. As explained before, there are some characteristics of USSR strategy and one of them is allowing students to select their own reading material. Because of this, the teachers must prepare several reading materials before coming to the classroom. Therefore, the teachers must provide a wide variety of reading materials from which students can choose based on their level and interest. It is aimed to make students pleased and enjoyed in reading process.

Moreover, the writer thinks that the use of USSR strategy In Indonesia should be adapted to the basic competences in the curriculum 2013. In senior high school, there some basic competences of reading skills that have to be mastered by the students which are some kinds of monolog texts. So that, the teachers provide reading materials based on the genre of the text that will be taught which have varying topics of interest and the students can select a topic that is of interest to them. Meanwhile, in this paper the writer only focuses of using USSR strategy in factual report text that is taught at second grade senior high school.

b. Setting Time Allocation

The other principle in USSR strategy is setting the time for students to practice their silent reading. The teachers must be able to manage the time about twenty minutes for students to read their selecting reading material silently and peacefully without any interruptions during reading period. This silent reading can be applied in the middle of the teaching and learning process. Due to curriculum 2013, USSR strategy can be applied in experimenting activity. When reading period begins, it better for the teachers to set a timer as the timing device to remain a definite end to the silent reading period.

Another principle of USSR strategy is the teachers providing a follow-up activity for the students. Because of that, the teachers also must

be able to manage the time for the students to do the follow-up activity. The follow-up activity is needed in order to know the result of USSR in improving students reading comprehension ability. This activity can be applied after the silent reading period end. Due to curriculum 2013, it can be applied in the associating stage.

c. Preparing a Lesson Plan

Then, the teachers should prepare make a lesson plan before coming to the classroom. It is because every single activity that should be done by the teachers in teaching is stated in the lesson plan. Lesson plan consists of core competence, basic competence, indicators, objectives, learning materials, learning models, teaching and learning activity, media and evaluation. These components can be guidance for teachers to conduct the teaching-learning activities. Lesson plan also has an important role in using USSR strategy in order to lead and remain the teachers what they will do in the classroom clearly by using USSR strategy.

2. Implementing The USSR Strategy at Second Grade Senior High School.

In using USSR strategy, it also must be based on the curriculum 2013 which has a scientific approach. There are five activities in scientific approach that should be done by the teachers in the classroom. They are: observing, questioning, collecting information/experimenting, associating and communicating.

a. Observing

In the observing, the teachers show an example of factual report text that taken from a newspaper in order to lead the students about the material that will be learned. Then the teachers ask the students to observe the text. It is aimed to reactive students' background knowledge about factual report text.

b. Questioning

In this stage, the students can ask several questions about what they have seen in observing stage. The students may ask everything's related to the newspaper that is seen before. The teacher has a role to guide the students while asking some questions. Those questions can be the purpose, language features, generic structure and social function of factual report text. The teachers answer students' questions by asking others opinion. Then, based on the students' opinion, the teachers explain the answer to make it clear and avoid students' uncertain about their friends' answers.

c. Collecting information/ Experimenting

It is time for the students to collect the ideas about factual report by using USSR strategy. The teachers can begin USSR strategy and tell the students that they are going to read factual report text by using USSR strategy in order to improve their reading comprehension skill. Before practicing this strategy, the teachers also must explain about USSR strategy to the students, what and how to apply it in the classroom and to

tell them about the rules that students should follow; everyone including the teachers must select and read the material that they are interested about in the classroom silently; and interruptions are not allowed during the reading process. Thus, make sure that students already understand this strategy well before starting the reading period.

After understanding about USSR strategy, the students choose a factual report text based on their interest topic that has been provided by the teachers. Then, they start to read silently about twenty minutes. It means that there is no interruption during reading time. The teachers also do the same thing with the students, read silently the text that has been selected after setting the time about twenty minutes in the timer.

d. Associating

In this stage, the following-up activity will be conducted. The following-up activity that will be applied is group discussion. After having reading period, the students evaluate the information, ideas or meaning that they get from the texts in a group. First, the teachers divide the students into some groups. Each group consists of 4 to 5 students. Then, the teachers ask the students to share and discuss about their selecting factual report text to their group. It can be information, weaknesses, strengths and how they feel about the text. Others should take a note about their friends explaining such as the purpose, generic structure, and language features of the text.

e. Communicating

In this last section, the students tell the class the result of their group sharing and discussion from the note that they write to get feedback from their friends and the teachers. The teachers ask each group to choose one representative member to deliver their discussion results to the whole class. Each group can take turns in doing this activity. After that, each student has a chance to share their thoughts about factual report text and the activities that have been conducted. The students also can tell to the teachers and their friends how they fell toward USSR strategy. Then, they will get strengthening from the teachers about their reading comprehension skill.

C. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Reading is the skill that should be taught in teaching English for Senior High School Students. Moreover, in teaching reading, teachers need to make sure the students are able to understand the text so that they can get the meaning or comprehend the text. Reading and comprehension is like two aspects which cannot be separated. However, teaching reading comprehension is really challenging for the teachers. It is because the students have no interest and motivation in reading so that the teachers should use an appropriate strategy to improve students' reading comprehension ability.

To overcome these problems, the teachers need to find a strategy that is easy to use for students and make them become interested in reading. One of strategy that can be used is Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR)

strategy. This strategy makes students relax and make them feel pleasure in reading. It is because they are free to choose their own reading material based on their interest and read it silently or without interruption about fifteen – twenty minutes. So that students can enjoy and be stimulated in reading comprehension.

Based on the discussion above, the writer has some suggestions dealing improving students' reading comprehension ability by using USSR strategy. The first suggestion is purposed for English teachers. The teachers must concern about students' reading comprehension ability. In applying USSR strategy, the teachers must provide the students the reading material based on students' interest and new material for them in order to increase their knowledge about reading material. The reading materials that are given by the teachers also should be based on Curriculum 2013. Then, the teachers also need to know the role of USSR strategy well before using it in the classroom which is one of them is the teachers as a model in this strategy.

The writer also suggests the next writer to do further study about the advantages of using USSR strategy in teaching reading comprehension or other English subjects.

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