IMPROVING STUDENTS’ READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT OF THE EIGHT GRADE OF SMPN 25 MAKASSAR BY USING MASTERY LEARNING APPROACH

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**ABSTRACT**

The research was conducted to know whether students’ reading comprehension improved and how students’ interest toward learning reading by using mastery learning approach. The research method employed was quasi experimental. The sample was chosen by applying cluster sampling. The data obtained through test and questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis and through SPSS 22.0 version. The result of the data analysis showed that there was a significant increased of mean score in experimental group. And there was a significant relationship between interest and achievement.

Keywords: *reading comprehension, mastery learning approach, interest*.

**INTRODUCTION**

Reading English ability is very crucial competence for junior students because from the reading activity the students get information and knowledge. Reading requires decoding, vocabularies, comprehension, background knowledge, active reading skill, critical thinking, and fluency. All of these components are necessary for successful reading. However, learning reading process in school less provides learning condition for attainment the reading components. That’s why students have low interest to follow the learning activities which displayed by low engagement and duration of attention in learning process. Therefore, they still perceive reading is difficult for them. The students do not recognize the words so they are difficult to understand what has been read. During reading, student only guess the meaning without strong vocabulary base. It is not amazed if they often fail in reading test even though the test material has been taught on the previous level.

When the students face the difficulties, the teaching process only gives little contribution to assist them what should better to do to overcome their problems. Thus, the learning process should apply an appropriate learning approach which provide learning condition make them gain learning experience, enhances their creativities, improves their independent in learning and increase their activeness to find a solution to solve their difficulties. The approach is Mastery Learning Approach (MLA). MLA was initiated by Carroll (1963) and modified by Bloom (1971), establishes a level of performance that all students must master before moving on to the next material or unit.

Many other researchers and educators have proved that MLA is very effective in helping students improve their mastery of the subject matter. They argued that using MLA can all or almost students master what they were taught because teacher apply the most powerful aspects of tutoring and individualized instruction to improve student learning. Bloom (1984) supports this argument he believes that mastery learning offers a powerful approach to learning which can provide all students (more than 90%) with successful and rewarding learning.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

***Reading Comprehension***

Collins et al (1980: 2) also define reading comprehension is as level of understanding of a text/message. They argue this understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text/message.

Reading comprehension levels.

There are four levels in reading comprehension, they are: literal, interpretative, critical, and creative comprehension. Literal comprehension is a skill to recognize main ideas, recognize stated details, guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words and recognize sequence. Interpretative comprehension is a skill to understand inferring unstated details, inferring referents, detecting moods, and drawing conclusion. Critical comprehension is a skill to evaluate and to make judgments as to its application, accuracy, validity, and worth of the passage. Creative comprehension is a skill to produce new ideas which requires imagination.

***Mastery Learning Approach in Teaching Reading Comprehension***

Based on Bloom’s ideas (1974) the steps in teaching reading with mastery learning approach:

1. Define what is to be learned

The teacher define what should be learn and see all students level. The reading material is authentic and familiar for all students.

1. Teach the material

Material is presented through lecture, demonstration, discussion or whatever approach the teacher finds most appropriate.

*Pre reading*

Teachers decide language features or background knowledge is needed. For instances, in teaching recount text, teacher must ensure that the students already have prerequisite knowledge to understand text. To ensure the ability, the teachers elicit students’ exit knowledge discussion, reviewing new vocabulary reading and asking students to perform tasks that are within their competence, such as skimming to get the main idea or scanning for specific information, before they begin intensive reading. Teachers determine whether to enter the text from the top down (attend to the overall meaning) or from the bottom up (focus on the words and phrases).

*Whilst reading* (Monitor comprehension)

* The students verify predictions and check for inaccurate guesses.
* Teachers guide the students to decide what is and is not important to understand.
* The students reread to check comprehension by answer the text questions either in group or individually.
* The teachers assist the students’ difficulties problems.

*Post reading*: Evaluate comprehension

* The teachers evaluate comprehension in a particular task.
* The teachers evaluate overall progress in reading and in particular types of reading tasks.

1. First formative test

After all material for the unit has been presented (which might take one class period), the teacher gives a formative or practice test to see what the students have and have not learned. This test does not count toward a grade; rather, it is a way of letting both the students and the teacher know where more work is needed.

1. Learning alternatives

Based on the assessment results, students are sorted, ranked, and assigned grades. The assessment would be use as learning tools, and then to follow those assessments with identify individual learning difficulties (feedback) and to prescribe remediation procedure (correctives).

Students, then, are provided with learning alternatives. Those who had trouble with the formative test will be re-taught in new ways to correct the errors of the group instruction. Those who have already mastered the material will participate in enrichment activities, or help their classmates.

1. Second formative test or retest

When students complete their corrective activities, they take a second, parallel formative assessment that addresses the same learning goals of the unit but includes somewhat different problems, questions, or prompts. The second formative assessment verifies whether the correctives were successful in helping students remedy their individual learning difficulties. It also serves as a powerful motivational tool by offering students a second chance to succeed. Assuming that most of the students master, the class is then ready to move on to new material. But the teacher still gives additional steps for dealing with students who still have not mastered by using extra time such as give them additional tasks.

For more detail about the process of mastery learning can be seen in the figure below:

Mastery achieved

Formative Assessment 1b

Correctives

Formative Assessment 1a

Student A

Mastery achieved time difference

Formative Assessment 1a

Student B

Adapted from Bloom’s (1984) Mastery Learning Process

***The role of interest in mastery learning classroom***

As stated previously that one of influential factors that made the students are poor in English reading test is low interest in following learning activities, so the teacher must create an interesting classroom circumstances that make the students have high interest to learn much more.

Interest has a strong influence on learning. Ainley, Hidi & Berndorff (2002) state individuals display more persistence, engagement, and positive affect toward tasks that they are interested in. Moreover interest influences the use of learning strategies and choices for the direction and duration of attention. Capacities important to learner autonomy, such as the ability to attend and find meaning, set goals, and use effective learning strategies, are enhanced by interest.

The application of mastery learning approach had proven attract the students’ interest because mastery learning is well aware that students may have different learning styles, different skills and great differences in achievement. The differences are due to internal and external factors. Thus, an effective learning process is use multimedia and multi-method in accordance with individual difference.

Furthermore, mastery learning breaks the subject matter into smallest units. The mastery learning method divides subject matter into units that have predetermined objectives or unit expectations. Students, alone or in group, work through each unit in an organized fashion. Students must demonstrate mastery on unit exams before moving on to new material.

Besides that mastery learning applies regular assessment. Regular assessment means that the evaluation conducted at the beginning, during, and at the end of the learning process. This assessment based on criteria standard not on norm criteria.

Based on the concepts, the researcher formulated hypothesis as follows:

Ho : There is no improvement on students’ reading comprehension achievement

in experimental group by using mastery learning approach.

Ha : There is an improvement on students’ reading comprehension achievement

in experimental group by using mastery learning approach.

**METHOD**

***Design and Samples***

Design of this research used quantitative approach and quasi-experimental design. The design used nonequivalent control group design (Gay et al, 2006: 258). The researcher used two groups they were experimental group and control group. The experimental group was given a treatment of mastery learning approach and the control group was given a treatment of conventional method. Both groups were taught in five meetings.

The selected samples were based on cluster random sampling. The researcher took two classes randomly. The experimental group was grade VIII4 consist of 35 students and the control group was grade VIII2 also consist of 35 students.

***Instruments and Procedures***

The researcher employed test and questionnaire as instrument. The tests were 23 validated items and the questionnaire were 22 statements which used Likert scale.

Procedure of collecting data was conducted by pre test, treatment and posttest. Pre test was given before doing treatment. The result of the test was analyzed to know the students’ prior knowledge of reading skill. The treatment was conducted into five meetings. Posttest was given after doing the treatment. The posttest was used to know the improvement of students’ reading achievement. After giving posttest, the experimental group was given a questionnaire.

***Data Analysis***

The data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics measures of central tendency, variability, relative position and relationship while inferential statistics measures relationship of the difference score before and after treatment. The researcher used *t* test of significance, *paired samples test* while to know the relationship between interest and posttest used regression analysis. All the data analyzed used SPSS program 22.0 version.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

***Test of Significance***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 1 Paired Samples Statistics | | | | | | |
|  | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Pair 1 | Pre test of EG | 58.4857 | 35 | 13.97134 | 2.36159 |
| Posttest of EG | 79.6857 | 35 | 11.28969 | 1.90831 |
| Pair 2 | Pre test of CG | 59.6273 | 35 | 14.85956 | 2.51172 |
| Posttest of CG | 65.8385 | 35 | 13.04957 | 2.20578 |
| Pair 3 | Literal Pre test of EG | 63.7360 | 35 | 13.26665 | 2.24247 |
| Literal Posttest of EG | 81.5385 | 35 | 11.22500 | 1.89737 |
| Pair 4 | Literal Pre test of CG | 63.9560 | 35 | 15.13035 | 2.55750 |
| Literal Posttest of CG | 69.0114 | 35 | 12.44433 | 2.10348 |
| Pair 5 | Interpretative Pre test of EG | 51.4286 | 35 | 19.27248 | 3.25764 |
| Interpretative Posttest of EG | 77.1429 | 35 | 13.62770 | 2.30350 |
| Pair 6 | Interpretative Pre test of CG | 54.0000 | 35 | 18.18209 | 3.07333 |
| Interpretative Posttest of CG | 61.7143 | 35 | 16.53618 | 2.79513 |
| EG = Experimental Group  CG = Control Group | | | | | | |

The result analysis in the table 1 shows there were increased mean score after treatment for both groups, such as in experimental group was 58.49 increased to 79.69 and in control group was 59.63 increased to 65.84. However, the improvement is higher in experimental group than in control group.

The difference of mean score between before and after treatment can be observed in table 2 below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Paired Samples Test** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| Lower | Upper |
| Pair 1 | Pre test - Posttest of EG | -21.20000 | 6.29098 | 1.06337 | -23.36103 | -19.03897 | 19.937 | 34 | .000 |
| Pair 2 | Pre test -Posttest of CG | -6.21118 | 5.08853 | .86012 | -7.95915 | -4.46321 | 7.221 | 34 | .000 |
| Pair 3 | Lit Pre test - Posttest of EG | -17.80246 | 8.50277 | 1.43723 | -20.72327 | -14.88166 | 12.387 | 34 | .000 |
| Pair 4 | Lit Pre test -Posttest of CG | -5.05543 | 6.44774 | 1.08987 | -7.27030 | -2.84055 | 4.639 | 34 | .000 |
| Pair 5 | Interpretative Pre test –  Posttest of EG | -25.71429 | 10.92372 | 1.84645 | -29.46672 | -21.96186 | 13.926 | 34 | .000 |
| Pair 6 | Interpretative Pre test –  Posttest of CG | -7.71429 | 8.43163 | 1.42521 | -10.61065 | -4.81792 | 5.413 | 34 | .000 |

Table 2 shows that mean of experimental group were -21.20, -17.802, and -25.714, that is, the difference of mean score between pre test-posttest was 21.20 (79.69 – 58.49 = 21.20) in literal level was 17.802, and in interpretative level was 25.714. While in control group, the difference of mean score between pre test-posttest only was 6.21, in literal level was 5.055 and interpretative level was 7.714. It means, the difference of mean scores in experimental is greater than control group.

***Regression analysis***

Then, to know the relationship between interest and posttest can be seen in table 3 below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 3 Model Summary** | | | | | | | | | |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | |
| R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .897a | .805 | .799 | 5.05750 | .805 | 120.755 | 1 | 33 | .000 |
| 2 | .945b | .926 | .883 | 3.86481 | .088 | 156.423 | 2 | 31 | .000 |

The table 3 describes that contribution of predictor Model 1 (pre test) was 80.5% and Model 2 (interest) was 92.6%, so only around 10% was predicted by other predictors which were not observed in this research. It means interest can predict posttest significantly. In other words, students’ interest has strong influence toward the students’ achievement.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

***Conclusion***

Based on the research findings and discussion in the previous description, the researcher draws conclusion in the following statement:

1. The application of mastery learning approach improved the students’ reading comprehension significantly at the eighth grade students of SMPN 25 Makassar.
2. Students are interested in learning reading comprehension activity because the teacher accomplishes their difficulties so nearly all students could reach a high level of learning because the teacher provides more time and more appropriate conditions to guide them.
3. There is a positive relationship between students’ interest and students’ reading comprehension achievement.

***Suggestion***

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher would like to give suggestions as follows:

1. Teachers should pay more attention to students' mastery of competencies rather than pursue the achievement of the target of the curriculum because the fact has been proven that students complete their education but not complete mastery of the material.
2. Because the core of learning English is to understand and use the language in everyday life, the learning activities should more focus on teaching vocabulary thus any type of reading text provided to the students, they will be able to understand it.
3. Mastery learning approach is proven to improve students’ achievement the researcher suggested for use it in the learning process, especially at the secondary level.

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