

Students' Perception of the Use of Readers' Theater Strategy in Improving Reading Comprehension

Nopa Yusnilita¹, Januarius Mujiyanto², Mursid Saleh³, Dwi Anggani Linggar Bharati⁴
 nopald14unbara@gmail.com, yan.mujiyanto@gmail.com, mursid.saleh@gmail.com,
 dwi.anggani.lb@gmail.com

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

Abstract. Readers Theater strategy was one of the strategies presented in this study which help the learner more active and creative. It increased the interaction between students and teacher. In implementing Readers Theater Strategy, teacher facilitated, demonstrated or modeling their students during learning. The teacher helped students relate between the story into script by explaining how they could visualize the plot in their heads while they read and as they practice bringing stories to life. The qualitative study investigated students' experiences during their reading class and how the students' perceptions about the Readers Theater Strategy. Twenty two students were given pre and post questionnaire, it was to analyzed their perception before and after the eight times the teacher teaching reading by using Readers' Theater. The questionnaire result analysis showed that Readers Theater encouraged students of all abilities to read at an appropriate rate, with correct phrasing, smoothness, and expression and volume. The students began to show more self-confidence while reading out loud and getting up in front of the class. Finally, it could sum-up that students' perceptions of Readers Theater was positive and it brought students a big changes in their reading comprehension.

Keywords: Students Perceptions, Readers Theater, Reading Comprehension

1 Introduction

Teacher has a vital role in developing their students knowledge and ability. A good teacher should help their students in learning by giving informations and playing many roles [1]. Teacher should be creative, innovative, and effective to find the strategy in teaching their students especially in reading. Teacher should determined which of the reading strategies that fit with their lesson. A new ways or methods in teaching bring out students change in mind about reading lesson. Reading has the power to change everyone's ways in thinking and living. It makes readers think critically and creatively [2]. The basic of reading is to comprehend what has been read. As a reading teacher, our goal is students able to read and dig up the message of the text.

A good reader should comprehend the content of the text they have read. The study was conducted for the students who had a problem in comprehending the reading text. Most of them were come from different background, where they just asked to read and answered the questions when reading lesson. As a reading teacher, the goal of our teaching was guide the students become successful reader and find the suitable strategy in helping them to comprehend the text [3]. Teacher should placed them as a learners and planned their learning from the students' perspective, it helped the teacher easy to make preparation in teaching [4]. It was the teacher's responsibility to help and guide their students to solve the reading problems. Beside, teacher motivation in teaching brough influence students effective in comprehend reading text directly. This study focussed to investigated students' perspective about reading comprehension after the teacher implemented Readers' Theater strategy.

Some researcher believed that the choice of strategies helped students comprehending and enjoying Reading lesson. Readers' Theater was one of the strategy they've suggested. Readers Theater used as a strategy which brought great effect for students in improving their ability not only reading, but also writing, speaking and motivation [5][6][7]. Previous studied [8] showed that Readers' Theater could brought effect students' reading comprehension. Readers Theater based insruction also gave an effect to students comprehension scores [9]. It was considered by many researchers to implement in reading classroom. Their research result showed students' improvement and their confidence in reading. Readers' theater is one of strategy provide students more active and creative in reading. Readers Theater is a kind of theatrical presentation which required students to express the meaning of the text with performance and without memorize the script. Readers Theater as an entertaining means to improving reading fluency and enhancing comprehension [5].

Readers' Theater was used in this study, because it has been proven to increase reading comprehension, but also it is a fun and engaging activity. It also provided students to participate with multiple activities in reading. Readers Theater required students to practice a script in a period of time before they performed it. It was a simple strategy in reading, where no costumes or prop needed to perform. The goal of RT is to make students substitute for the voices of the characters and enliven them [10]. In addition, it was found that the students' fluency in reading related to the comprehension [11][12]. The key to the effective use of Readers' Theater lies in a judicious selection of materials as well as in effective planning by the teacher [13]. Yet, it was suggested teacher should made an instructions before they taught Readers' Theater. It made a teacher easy in implemented it [14].

The objective of the study was to look how students' own perceptions of their reading comprehension improve after they complete eight meeting of Readers' Theater. Usually, the teacher often moves to the next topic quickly after they present the material without having the students to assess their own learning. It interested when the students assess and reflect their own learning. It could help the teacher to create better learning environment. Students self assess help them to become self directed learners [15]. It supported the students reflect about their changed in learning reading before and after Readers' Theater strategy implemented. Beside that we could reflect about our teaching and how our students perceive their own learning.

2 Method

The descriptive qualitative study was used to explore about the students' perception of their own reading comprehension before and after teacher implement Readers Theater. The subjects in this study were 22 students in the second semester of an English department of University of Baturaja. Twenty-two students participated in RT training for almost eight time meetings to perform in an RT show. The pre- and post-study questionnaires were designed to evaluate students' responses to English learning, English reading and cooperative learning before and after the RT implemented.

Likert formatted test was used in this study. This study used a Likert scale of 1 to 4, with 4 representing the most positive answer choice. The value of 1–I don't like it, 2–It's okay, 3–I like it, and 4–I love it, the item of questionnaire taken from [16]. The researcher observed a reoccurring pattern during the pretest of the greater valued response of the students choice. It would explain potential response biases, such as, a desire to please the assessor, a lack of focus, mimicking peer choice, and realizing a positive response generates a greater score. Research on readers' theatre that included a motivation variable discovered outcomes using observations, student journals, and interviews [16]. Semi structure interview was conducted to support students' questionnaire at pretest and posttest to analyze students' perceptions and attitude on reading. The semi-structure interview consists of five questions about Readers Theater techniques. Besides the researcher wrote a dairy journal during the teacher implement the Readers Theater. It was used to observe the students' expressed about Readers' Theater in their reading class. There was only five students who interviewed in this study.

During eight meetings, Readers' Theater implemented by the teacher. In the first meeting, the researcher introduced and explained Readers Theater to the the teacher, then showed them how to implemented the strategy. Students were given a short story and then spent a week to analyze and explore about the character of the story, phrasing, punctuations to preparing their performance. Then, the students produced drama script about the story they had read before. The teacher reviewed the script before point out the performer. Along three or four weeks of rehearsal, students were prepared to perfomed in front of their class. They presentation during rehearsal were videotaped and then assessed together to improve their performance. The students were given questionnaire before and after the Readers' Theater implemented, to investigated they perception about Readers' Theater. And five students were choosen to interviewed, the data from interviewed will support the questionnaire.

3 Result and Discussion

The result of students' questionnaires from pretest and posttest showed different perceptions. The researcher discussed the top five questions that were answered "I love it!". When students were asked how they felt about reading during time in school, 50% of students responded, "I love it" at pretest and 70% responded "I love it" at posttest. When asked how they felt about the teacher asking you a questions about what you read showed the highest improvement, students answered "I love it" with 25% on the pretest and 72% on the posttest". The question, how do you

feel about reading with partner, students answered “I love it”, with 65% at pretest to 78% at posttest. When asked how they felt about using their reading strategies, students responded “I love it” with 60 % at pretest and 73% at posttests. When asked how they felt about reading one on one with your teacher, they responded “I love it” with 60 % at pretest and 76% at posttests. The question with the least amount of change in percentages from pretest to posttest asked, how do you feel about reading instead of playing. At pretest, 35% of students answered, “I love it” and 40.2% answered “I love it” at posttest. The list of students answered could be seen on Table 1.

Table 1. The Result of Students Questionnaires

Items of Questions	The Percentage of Pre Test answer	Percentage of post test answer
1. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?	65%	55%
2. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?	42.20%	57%
3. How do you feel about starting a new book?	40%	45%
4. How do you feel about reading during free time at school?	32%	60%
5. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?	35%	40.20%
6. How do you feel about reading during reading time in school?	50%	70%
7. How do you feel about the teacher asking you questions about what you read?	25%	72%
8. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?	44%	44%
9. How do you feel about having to write about what you have read?	42%	65%
10. How do you feel about learning from a book?	45%	47%
11. How do you feel reading out loud?	50%	64%
12. How do you feel about small reading group time?	56%	68%
13. How do you feel about taking a reading test?	52%	52%
14. How do you feel about reading with a partner?	65%	78%
15. How do you feel about reading one on one with your teacher?	60%	76%
16. How do you feel about reading your textbooks?	45%	56%
17. How do you feel about someone reading to you?	35%	45%
18. How do you feel about using your reading strategies?	60%	73%
19. How do you feel about going to the library?	55%	55%
20. How do you feel about reading?	65.30%	68%

Source of questionnaire items by [16]

Student interviews. When looking at the student responses, it could be seen that Readers Theater provide them new experience in reading comprehension. When the researcher asked about their feeling about reading, most of them responses included “uninteresting”, “fun”, “too hard”, “don’t like”, and “sometimes”. Students also described about kinds of book they read at home. When the researcher asked the questions what they knew about readers’ theatre, most of the students were not experienced with readers’ theatre.

Readers theater helped students to be a creative reader, could express the story into good character, and by participating in the story they could learn how to cooperate with their partner. Readers Theater was one of technique that allows the students to learn to love reading, comprehend the content of story. As previous study showed that Readers Theater Strategy help student’ ability in reading comprehension [17]. Other project also found that repeated reading in Readers Theater increased students’ reading fluency and reading comprehension [18]. The majority of students felt excitement of reading; they wanted to apply it again with other topic of reading. This suggestion also emphasizes by [19], for better implementation is act on the stage, some of them thought that it can be repeated again.

4 Conclusions

On the basis of the data analysis, the major findings of the present study were summarized as follows. The students responded about learning reading more interesting and fun through Readers Theater, it could be seen from their answer and questionnaire result. Readers’ theater activities and practices along learning brought out great changes not only their ability and opinion about reading, but also built their confidence and positive impact about reading. Some teachers saw students’ interest, confidence, and learnt how to cooperated with their friend during Readers’ Theater implemented, and it brought positive effect in learning [20]. Therefore, during Readers Theater, the students practice more active, they have chance to discuss with their friends in pair or group. They had learnt to cooperate to gained problem-solving skills through RT activities.

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