IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH PEER-ASSISTED LEARNING STRATEGY (PALS) AT GRADE XI.C OF MA PONDOK PESANTREN DAARUN NAHDHAH THAWALIB BANGKINANG (PPDN-TB)

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Abstract

Poor Reading comprehension ability of students at grade XI.C of MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang was caused by several factors. One of the main factors was the teaching and learning activities in the class that could not help the students to improve their reading comprehension. In this case, the classroom action research was done to explain to what extent the application of Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) to improve the students' reading comprehension and what factors influence the improvement. The research consisted of two cycles with four meetings for each cycle. All of the students had roles as tutor and tutee. Then, the researcher was helped by a collaborator to observe and give advice about the teaching and learning activities in the class. The research findings showed that the application of PALS improved the students' reading comprehension. The average score of students before the application of PALS was 59.2 of report text and 57.03 of narrative text. Then, it also improved at the end of cycle 1, 65.38 of report text and 65.45 of narrative text, and the cycle 2, 75.8 of report text and 76.9 of narrative text. The improvement was also influenced by some factors, such as: (1) The students' willingness to do all of the procedures in PALS. (2) The tutoring activities in the class. (3) The teacher's roles. In conclusion, the application of PALS better improved the students' reading comprehension in English at grade XI. C of MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, Peer Assisted Learning Strategies,

MENINGKATKAN PEMAHAMAN MEMBACA SISWA MELALUI PEER-ASSISTED LEARNING STRATEGY (PALS) DI KELAS XI.C MA PONDOK PESANTREN DAARUN NAHDHAH THAWALIB BANGKINANG (PPDN-TB)

Abstrak

Kurangnya kemampuan pemahaman Reading siswa dikelas XI.C MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang disebabkan oleh beberapa faktor. Salah satu faktor utama adalah kegiatan belajar mengajar di kelas yang tidak bisa membantu siswa untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca

mereka. Dalam hal ini, penelitian tindakan kelas dilakukan untuk menjelaskan sejauh mana penerapan Strategi Pembelajaran Peer-Assisted (PALS) dapat meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa dan faktor-faktor apa yang mempengaruhi perbaikan. Penelitian ini terdiri dari dua siklus dengan empat pertemuan untuk setiap siklus. Semua siswa memiliki peran sebagai tutor dan tutee. Kemudian, peneliti dibantu oleh kolaborator untuk mengamati dan memberikan saran tentang kegiatan belajar mengajar di kelas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan PALS meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa. Skor rata-rata siswa sebelum penerapan PALS adalah 59,2 laporan teks dan 57,03 teks naratif. Kemudian, ia juga ditingkatkan pada akhir siklus 1, 65,38 laporan teks dan 65,45 teks naratif, dan siklus 2, 75,8 dari teks laporan dan 76,9 teks naratif. Peningkatan ini juga dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor, seperti: (1) kesediaan para siswa untuk melakukan semua prosedur di PALS. (2) Kegiatan bimbingan belajar di kelas. (3) peran guru. Kesimpulannya, penerapan PALS dapat meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa dalam bahasa Inggris di kelas XI. C dari MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang.

Keywords: *Pemahaman membaca siswa, Peer Assisted Learning Strategies,*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is an important skill for English language learners, (Nunan,1998). There are some reasons why it is very necessary; first, it can help the learners to enhance their knowledge because they can learn many things through reading. Second, reading can support the learners to master the other language skills such as speaking, listening, and writing. In addition, reading can entertain the learners because it is not only done for academic purpose, but it can help the learners to refresh their mind. In other words, reading is very crucial for the learners.

In School Based Curriculum for the eleventh grade of Senior high school, there are some materials which had been designed to help the students to have good reading comprehension. The students have to learn about some types of reading texts and understand well what they read. The texts consist of report, narrative, analytical exposition, spoof, and analytical hortatory. In this case, the students are expected to have good comprehension about the texts.

At Madrasah Aliyah (MA) of Islamic Boarding School Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang, the students are also prepared to have good reading comprehension. However, it is not easy to help the students because it needs consistent practice to become a good reader. In MA of Islamic Boarding School Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang, the students also got difficulties in reading, especially in comprehending reading texts. It showed when the teacher gave reading comprehension test to the forty students, there were only half them who could achieve the minimum standard of achievement, four students who could get 80, six students who could get 72, eight students who could get 68, two students who could achieve 66, and the rest of them could not reach the minimum standard of achievement

J-SHMIC, Vol 4, No 1, February 2017

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) at Grade XI.C of MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang (PPDN-TB)

(60). So, it was clear that the students had problem in comprehending reading texts.

Then, there were also some factors that made the students got difficulties in comprehending reading texts. The factors were found by the teacher when she interviewed the students. The first factor that influenced the students' ability in comprehending reading texts because reading was not students' interesting activity. The students said that they did not like reading because it was boring that could make them getting sleepy when they were reading. They liked better listening to their teachers' explanation than reading. So, it influenced the students' reading comprehension.

The second factor was the teaching and learning process that they had in the class could not help them to comprehend reading text well even the teacher had tried to apply some strategies, the students said that they needed new activity that could improve their reading comprehension.

The last, the students' lack of strategy in reading also was the factor that influenced students' reading comprehension. Due to the limitation of reading strategy, they did not know how to solve some problems that they found during the reading comprehension process. The students liked to stop their reading activity when they got problem. So, it made them get problem in comprehending the reading text.

Based on the problems above, it was important for the researcher to help the students to improve their reading comprehension. The researcher tried to apply a strategy; it was called Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS). It was expected to improve the students' reading comprehension because the students had different activities during their reading class.

Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) is a strategy which could be applied in reading class, (Toping, 2005; Nobel, 2005; Hening et al, 2008; Huges and Mecy, 2008; Lee, Lee, 2010). During the application of PALS, the students developed their reading comprehension through active help and support from their companions. The procedures in PALS consisted of partner reading with retell, paragraph shrinking, and prediction relay. In other word, PALS is a method that was applied by the teacher in the reading class.

The reasons for choosing PALS to improve students' reading comprehension were that it provided more focus on individual student needs rather than a teacher directed activity that might address the needs for a few students. In addition, PALS involved all the students in tasks that they could perform successfully, increased their opportunity to read, practiced basic skill, provided positive and productive peer interaction, created opportunity for lower functioning students to assume integral role in a valued activity, motivated students to do better in reading, helped teachers accommodate academic diversity. So, the application of PALS was expected to give great contribution to the students.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher applied PALS to improve students' reading comprehension. The title of this

J-SHMIC, Vol 4, No 1, February 2017

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) at Grade XI.C of MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang (PPDN-TB)

research is "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) at grade XI.C of MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang".

PALS is a strategy that can be applied by teacher in reading class. The teacher divides the students into two groups (the higher group and the lower group). The students are paired using a ranking system. They are ranked from top to bottom. Then, the top half and the bottom half of the class are determined. Students are paired by taking the first person from the top half and the first person from the bottom half, second person from the top half and second person from the bottom half and so forth. The students are designed to work together with their partner in order to help each other to solve some problems that they face in reading texts. So, it is expected to improve students' reading comprehension, (Toping, 2005; Nobel, 2005; Hening et al, 2008; Huges and Mecy, 2008; Lee, Lee, 2010). The features of Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) are first, all students in a class are paired, and the pairing of higher and lower achieving students is intended so students gain knowledge from each other through practice. Second, students are trained to use specific prompts, corrections, and feedback. Third, PALS incorporates frequent verbal interactions between tutors and tutees, increasing students' opportunities to respond. Fourth, roles are reciprocal so that both students in a pair serve as tutor and tutee during each session. Fifth, PALS consists of a set of structured activities, and students are trained to implement them independently. Sixth, students are taught roles by their teacher and through these roles, systematically instruct other students and the last but not the least, during this process, the teacher monitors and facilitates students' progress. These activities include partner reading with retell, paragraph shrinking, and prediction relay, (Chapman, 1998; Kristen, 2006; McMaster, 2010). There are some procedures of PALS. They consist of Partner Reading with Retell; each student reads text for 5 min. while tutor corrects errors, and then lower-performing student retells story for 5 minutes. Paragraph Shrinking; each reader reads a paragraph and identifies the indicators of types of the text. Prediction Relay; reader makes a prediction about what he/she will learn in next paragraph and then confirms or disconfirm them, (Zubov, 1999; Tariq, 2005; Kristen, 2006; The Access Centre, 2008). The advantages of Peer Assisted Learning Strategies are first, PALS actively involves all students in tasks they can perform successfully. Second, it increases student opportunity to read. Third, it also motivates students to do better in reading. Fourth, it expands instructional resources in the classroom. Fifth, it provides for positive and produce peer interaction. Sixth, it helps teacher's academic diversity. Seventh, it accelerates student achievement in reading. Eight, PALS is affordable and easily implemented and then it is found to be an enjoyable activity by teachers and students, (Fuchs, Fuchs and Burish, 2000; Saenz et all, 2005; Tariq, 2005; Saba, 2008).

J-SHMIC, Vol 4, No 1, February 2017

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) at Grade XI.C of MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang (PPDN-TB)

2. METHOD

This research was a classroom action research. Classroom action research is a cyclic process where there are some steps to do that the researcher should know as Kemmis and Mc.Taggart (1988:□10) state that there are four fundamental steps of the action research; they are plan, action, observation, and reflection. In addition, they said that classroom action research is a form of collective self reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situation in which the practices are carried out.

Stringer (2008:13) states that the purpose of classroom action research is to provide educational practitioners with new knowledge and resolve significant problems in classrooms and schools. It means that the participants in classroom action research are expected to get more knowledge and understanding about a certain subject, so that they will be able to solve the problems.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes that classroom action research is a process of changing and solving the teacher's problems. The researcher also has to work with her collaborator to change and to solve the problems that have been faced by the researcher during teaching of reading comprehension. The participants in this research were the Eleventh Grade students at class XI C of Islamic Boarding School Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang in academic year 2011-2012. There are 24 female students and 16 male students so the total is 40 students. In this research, the researcher worked together with a collaborator. The researcher gave reading comprehension test to the students in order to find out of the improvement of students' reading comprehension. The test consisted of some reading texts which had been taught. The reading texts which were used in this study were based on the texts that students had to learn. The texts were report and narrative texts.

Reading texts were taken from English textbook and Internet. To make the items of reading test, they were connected to curriculum of the grade XI C of Islamic Boarding School Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang. The test consisted of 5 report and 5 narrative reading texts. Each reading text consisted of 3 questions of report and 3 questions of narrative texts, so the total was 15 questions of report texts (5 general classification questions, 5 description one questions, and 5 description two questions) and 15 questions of narrative texts (5 orientation questions, 5 complication questions, and 5 resolution questions). The data indicated the level of students' comprehension of reading text. To measure students' ability to comprehend a reading text, the researcher asked the students to determine the indicators of the text types (report and narrative texts). Each student was asked to answer the test items.

In this study, the data also were also collected through the observation that was done by the collaborator. Here, the teacher and students were the subjects of the observation. Field note was also used by the researcher in collecting the data. It was used to record the

J-SHMIC, Vol 4, No 1, February 2017

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) at Grade XI.C of MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang (PPDN-TB)

detailed behavior or action in which was done by the students in teaching and learning activities. In this study, the researcher offered some questions to the students and asked them to answer them orally. The questions were based on the situation and condition in the classroom that they faced.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teaching reading comprehension through Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) could improve the students reading comprehension ability. It was proved by the improvements of the students' average score in comprehending the texts (report and narrative text) that given to them at the end of cycle 1 and 2 of this study. Then, there were also some factors influenced the improvement of students' reading comprehension ability. They are the application of Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) in the class, the tutoring activity, and the teacher's roles.

The first factor influenced the improvement of students' reading comprehension is the students' willingness to do all of the procedures of Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) because it could not run well without the students' intention to do all of the procedures of Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS).

The second factor was the tutoring activities that students had also influenced their reading comprehension ability.
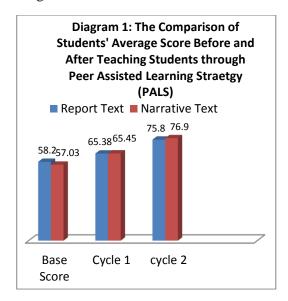
The third factor that influenced the improvement of students' reading comprehension ability was the teacher's roles during

the teaching and learning activities in the class.

Based on the discussion above, Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) could improve the students' reading comprehension ability. The finding was supported by the factors, they are; the students' willingness, the tutoring activity in the class, and the teacher's roles.

The improvement of students' average score before and after teaching students through Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) could be seen in the following diagram:

Diagram 1: The Comparison of Students' Average Score Before and After Teaching Students through Peer Assisted Learning Straetgy (PALS)

The diagram 1 above showed the improvement of students' average score during the teaching and learning activities through Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy. So, before teaching students through Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS), the students' average scores for report and narrative texts were only (58.2) and (57.03). Then, the students' average score had good improvement after the teaching students through Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS), the students' average score

for report (65.38) and narrative (65.45). Finally, the students could achieve 75.8 and 76.9 for report and narrative texts. So, the students' average score had better improved after the teaching and learning through Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS).

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the teaching reading comprehension through Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) improves the students' reading comprehension ability. The students' activities that students had during the application of Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS). It lets the students to work together and help each other. The last is the teacher's roles that help them to improve their teaching and learning activities because the teacher does not only teach the students but she also guides and observes the students' activities in the

average score has better improved after the teaching and learning process through Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) at cycle 1 and cycle 2.

Then, there are three factors that influence the improvement of students' reading comprehension ability. The first factor is the students' willingness to do all of the procedures in Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) because all of procedures of Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) train the students to have good reading comprehension ability. The second factor is the tutoring class. The researcher as an English teacher should continue applying Peer Assisted Learning Strategy in reading class. Other researchers can use the finding of this research as a reference to conduct another study. English teachers can use the finding of this research as a reference to solve some problems that they face in their class.

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J-SHMIC, Vol 4, No 1, February 2017

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) at Grade XI.C of MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang (PPDN-TB)

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J-SHMIC, Vol 4, No 1, February 2017

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J-SHMIC, Vol 4, No 1, February 2017

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) at Grade XI.C of MA Pondok Pesantren Daarun Nahdhah Thawalib Bangkinang (PPDN-TB)