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PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING AS A METHOD TO IMPROVE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT'S READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH

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Abstract
In the current curriculum in Indonesia where it aimed to be more student-centered, the implementation of Problem-Based Learning is heavily reinforced. This is because how Problem-Based Learning is not just about being student-centered, but also because it encourages students to be problem solvers and learn through their understanding. This paper aims to see how Problem-Based Learning can affect the students' reading comprehension in class. Classroom Action Research ischosen in this study. The participants were 30 students of the Senior High School English classes in Ambulu. Based on the findings, the Problem-Based Learning method could potentially become an effective method for students as there is a significant change between the first cycle and the second cycle of the use Problem-Based Learning method in the class. The improvement shown is that almost all of the students had their scores improved in the reading comprehension test after the implementation of Problem-Based Learning.

Keywords: classroom action research, problem-based learning method, reading comprehension

Introduction

Learning is an important part of every individual's development and education as it is the main pillar of the nation to achieve development and progress (Alfath et al., 2022). As a developed nation, there is a need for Indonesia to prioritize a relevant education system following the current situation. Thus,to follow the new need in education, one of the efforts to improve the quality of education is through the implementation of the new curriculum called the Merdeka Curriculum (Suhandi & Robi'ah, 2022).

The Merdeka Curriculum is a solution promoted by the Indonesian governmentin responding to educational challenges, such as unequal access to education and the learning gap that happened during the COVID-19 pandemic

(Rizki & Fahkrunisa, 2022). Apart from giving freedom to schools, the Merdeka Curriculum also emphasizes the importance of student character development. The Merdeka Curriculum also places student empowerment as the main focus, where students are encouraged to be active, creative, and independent in the learning process.

In the globalization era where information technology is rapidly developing, teachers must be able to keep up with developments in new technology should be updated regarding new theories that are developing and used at this time to be able to apply creative as well as innovative learning in class (Rosidah et al., 2021). Also, reading comprehension skills are becoming increasingly important as reading is not just about understanding text, but also acquiring knowledge and information. Therefore, understanding and mastering reading comprehension skills are key to an effective learning process.

To improve the quality of learning, effective methods and approaches need to be applied in teaching. One approach that is increasingly gaining attention and also reinforced in Merdeka Curriculum is Problem-Based Learning (PBL). PBL is a relevant learning method to improve students' reading comprehension skills. In this method, students are given real problems or situations that require them to analyze and discover new knowledge. Through the problem, students are actively involved in reading and understanding relevant information to solve the problem. This process allows students to develop deeper reading comprehension skills.

In addition, PBL also encourages students to use effective reading strategies because when dealing with complex problems, students need to understand the text thoroughly, identify the main idea, distinguish between supporting details, and summarize relevant information. PBL provides opportunities for students to practice and improve their reading skills in a meaningful and contextualized way.

From the pre-research observation, the researcher found that class X is a heterogeneous class, where some students are fast learners, but there are also many slow learners. This made the teaching and learning process quite challenging because the teacher could not only focus on the fast learners but also had to accommodate the slow learners. In the classroom, many students experience problems in reading comprehension, where students still have difficulty answering questions based on the text that has been provided. Students struggle to interpret the meaning of what they read and often ask questions to the teacher. This causes most students to be unable to analyze the information contained in a text. This condition shows that students' reading skills still need to be improved.

The next problem is that students have different characteristics, although not the majority, many students have kinesthetic learning styles, so they tend to have more energy than their classmates and prefer to walk around. This makes the learning process less effective because other students become distracted. So, the implementation of Gallery Walk where students are encouraged to walk while learning will be beneficial for the students.

Based on the results of the pre-study, the researcher used the application of the Problem-Based Learning method or more commonly called PBL by using Gallery Walk to overcome students' reading comprehension problems.

Literature Review

Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is a vital skill that should be acquired by students to improve their language understanding and academic achievement. Lambe (2017) defines reading comprehension as the process of extracting information from the context and combining those existing elements to form a new and cohesive understanding. According to Farha and Rohani (2019), reading comprehension is a language-learning necessity as one of the most common inputs in language learning is through reading. As emphasized by Nurjanah (2018), reading comprehension holds a prominent position among the English skills learners needed to develop.

Reading serves as a means of acquiring information, ideas, and knowledge, ashighlighted by Mogea (2019). Reading comprehension involves understanding the letters and words, and also the construction of meaning from written texts. It is not just about word recognition as it is also about active engagement with the text, and understanding information from the presented text (Pourhosein & Sabouri, 2016). A solid grasp of reading comprehension greatly facilitates students' understanding of various types of reading texts provided by their teachers.

In learning reading comprehension, there is a process that is commonly used toteach language. According to Aspini (2020), the utilization of learning models can contribute to enhancing students' thinking skills and creating a conducive learning environment. Critical thinking regarded as a crucial competency in the 21st century, plays a vital role in problem-solving. In line with this, Yew & Goh (2016) and Lukitasari et al. (2019) also emphasized the significance of critical thinking competencies, problem-solving skills, and effective communication in the modern era.

Language learning process

Generally, the language learning process is divided into two main types, which are student-centered and teacher-centered type. In teacher-centered learning, the teacher is the sole explainer within the classroom setting, so the learning process mostly revolves around passive learning where students just became the recipient of the knowledge that is imparted by the teacher, they don’t have any involvement in learning (Ahmed, 2013). While this approach will help in mastering a material, it may result in student feeling bored which end up making them not participating in class.

Then, the other type is student-centered learning which takes a completely different approach from teacher-centered learning. Here, students are involved directly and have an active role in the learning process (Ahmed, 2013). Also, students are encouraged to present the conclusion of their problem-solving process. In this approach, teachers are the facilitators not just imparting knowledge to students.

Some learning models are part of student-centered learning, suchas Inquiry-Based Learning, Cooperative Learning, Problem-Based Learning (PBL), and Project-Based Learning (PjBL). These approaches have their unique wayto make students engaged in learning.

Problem-based learning

In this study, the researcher will focus on Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as this is about contextual teaching where students are faced with a problem or scenario, then the teacher encourages and guide them to find the solution. According to Savery (2015), Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a learning approach that is student-centered and aims to encourage students by making them active in their learning process, allowing them to engage in research, integrate theoretical concepts with practical applications, and ultimately apply their knowledge and skills to develop solutions for a problem.

The general concept of PBL itself involves the incorporation of real-world problems into the learning process to enhance students' development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as their acquisition of knowledge (Gangga, 2015). It can be seen that PBL is defined as an instructional approach where students are presented with problems and expected to actively engage in finding solutions to these problems (Amir et al., 2016).

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has some characteristics, such as presenting authentic problems to students, collaborating in a small group to find the solution, and delivering the solution or the result of their discussion to others (Setyo et al., 2020). PBL is also associated with several principles: emphasizing independentand self-directed learning, a group setting where the learning happens with the teacher serving as a facilitator, active participation of all group members, and usingvarious resources (articles, data, photographs) to solve the presented problem (Ali,2019).

Throughout the process of PBL implementation in class, it will foster students' essential skills that are best suited for the 21st century, which are the skill to investigate and solve a problem, the skill to procure the information needed, collaborate effectively with their peers, the proficiency in utilizing technologies, and the skill where they can construct innovative ideas (Dole et al., 2016). Generally, the PBL model offers several advantages, including enhanced understanding, fosteringindependence, developing of higher-level thinking skills, boosting motivation, and improving teamwork abilities (Aksela & Haatainen, 2019; Sofyan, 2016).

Research done by Kaganang (2019) using PBL to improve reading comprehension using classroom action research design showed that the implementation of PBL in learning did enhance students' reading comprehension ability. This was in line with another research by Sidik & Masek (2021), which used anexperimental pre-posttest design instead. It was concluded that there are significant differences between the two groups being observed, where the group using PBLhad an overall higher score than the other one that didn't use PBL.

Gallery walk

Gallery Walk is a discussion technique that encourages students to do active collaboration and group work while walking around the classroom (Harton, 2019). In Gallery Walk, students work together in small groups and move around the classroom, engaging with different stations or displays set up by the teacher.

The implementation of Gallery Walk is pictured in its name (Lopez, 2022), where the text, picture, or material is posted on the wall around the class, resembling agallery. Then in the process, students are walking around in groups while navigating between different gallery spots, which is why it is called a walk. This technique is

also flexible in its duration as the teacher can modify it based on the situation.

Method

This study used a Classroom Action Research model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) which consists of 4 components in a cycle: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Aqib, 2006). Classroom Action Research itself is a form of self-reflective practice that allows teachers to investigate classroom practicesand make changes based on the findings of the research. The use of Classroom Action Research can also help in increasing students' understanding becauseteachers are identifying and addressing the needs of their students through this research. The participants of this research were students of the X 11 class of SMA Negeri Ambulu which consist of 30 students. This study was done in 2 cycles, in which a cycle consisted of 4 steps. Here were the steps used in this study:

Planning

At the planning stage, the researcher prepares a plan of action to be taken whichconsists of several planning documents, namely:

1. Developing a learning plan and learner activity sheet
2. Preparing the media for learning that will be used to teach in class
3. Arranging written test questions for students
4. Preparing equipment to document the activities during the learning process.

Acting

In the acting stage, learning activities are carried out as previously planned, namely learning activities with the PBL method. In the effort towards improvement, a plan is flexible and open to changes according to what happens during the implementation process in the classroom.

Observing

Observations were made by researchers during the learning process using the prepared observation guidelines. Things that happen during the learning process are recorded. Documentation was also used in the form of photographs during the learning process.

Reflecting

Reflection activities are an important part of CAR. The implementation of reflection is in the form of self-reflection to evaluate the learning outcomes and formulate the next plan. The evaluation carried out includes the quality of learning, the time used, the achievement of learning indicators, the obstacles faced during the learning process, and the student's response to learning with the PBL method.

The overall results of evaluation and reflection in cycle I were used as a guideline for carrying out cycle II, which is the improvement of actions that caused obstacles to the achievement of goals in cycle I. This procedure is based on the view (Rochiati, 2006) that in action research, the research cycle will be stopped when what is planned has gone as expected. Based on this opinion, this research cycle will be stopped after the success indicators are achieved, which in this research are in the second cycle.

Findings and Discussion

Description of cycle 1

In the planning stage, the teacher prepares actions in the form of teaching modules and the teacher also makes Learner Worksheets (LKPD). Furthermore, the teacher makes a learning outcome test.

The actions taken by the teacher in learning are by starting the learning by attracting students' interest, then explaining the steps or learning process that will be carried out that day, namely Gallery Walk. After that, students are grouped based on the cognitive abilities of students in heterogeneous groups and given LKPD as a problem that needs to be solved by students. Then, students are asked to start the Gallery Walk activity by giving each text about 5 to 10 minutes. After completion, the teacher reviews and reinforces the material that has been learned. At the end of the lesson, students were given a test to determine their reading ability. In the process of implementing this cycle 1, there were several obstacles encountered. The class became less conducive so it needed more class managementbecause some students in the group were walking around by themselves and did notfollow the group assigned. In addition, some students in the groups were chatting with each other instead of working.

These issues will be addressed in the next cycle by providing a more detailed explanation of the implementation of the Gallery Walk process and also changing the groups. The groups are still heterogeneous but also pay attention to the characteristics of the students so that the groups can collaborate actively and effectively.

For the test results themselves, most students already have good scores, about 20 out of 30 students have scores that exceed the minimum score set as a reference for the achievement of students' reading skills.

Description of cycle 2

In this cycle 2, the teacher prepared an action in the form of an action teaching module in the form of a teaching module and the teacher also made a Learner Worksheet (LKPD) by making some revisions according to the results of the reflection in cycle 1. The teacher also continued to make learning outcome tests that were used to determine students' reading ability.

The steps taken were almost the same as those taken in cycle 1, but the teacher gave a more detailed explanation about how the Gallery Walk activity was carried out so that the activity continued to run in an orderly manner. In addition, the groupingof students has also adjusted again by considering the characteristics of thestudents.

Overall, the learning process in cycle 2 was more conducive where students were no longer walking around on their own and were more focused on doing the activities carried out, namely Gallery Walk. Students were more active in terms of learning and enthusiasm.

The test results from cycle 2 also improved. If in the previous cycle 10 students did not meet the minimum standards, in this cycle 2 only 4 studentsdid not meet the minimum standards. In addition, the overall score of the students also increased.

Discussion

In this section, a comparison of students' scores in the two cycles that have been carried out is shown. The scores of students' reading skills will be compared with the determined score minimum which is higher than 75. The scores of students' results are shown in the following graph:

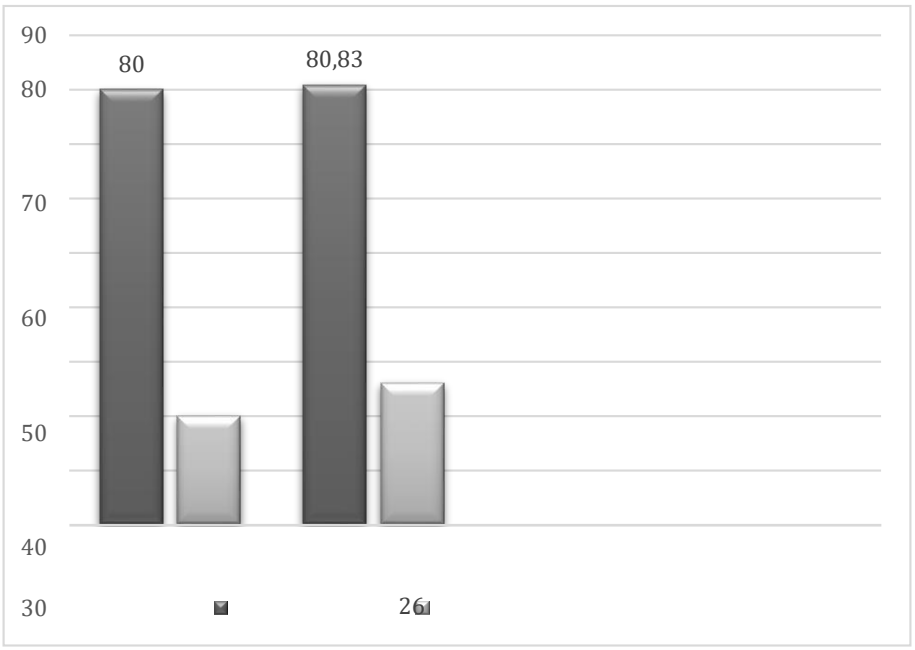

Figure 1. Comparison between cycle 1 and cycle 2

From the graph above, in cycle 1, 10 students, or 33.33% of students did not meet the passing grade. Whereas, around 66.67% or 20 students have passed the minimum score. This is a significant number as almost half of the students had lower than standard scores. Whereas in cycle 2, only 4 students barely met the passing grade by getting the minimum score.

In addition, the table above shows that the average student score increased from cycle 1 to cycle 2. There is around 5 points difference in the class average score. This comparison shows that PBL has a positive impact on students' reading comprehension. Thus, the findings of this study highlight the effectiveness of the PBLmethod in the process of learning reading comprehension.

Conclusion

This research concludes by answering the following research questions “How is the improvement of students' Reading Comprehension Ability through the application of Problem-Based Learning Method in class X students of SMAN Ambulu?”.The findings showed that Problem Based Learning or PBL could improve student’s reading comprehension. It is seen from the improvement of the average score between the first cycle and the second cycle of the use Problem-Based Learning method in the class. Although in the implementation the teacher needed to have a good grasp of students’ characteristics and good class management so that the teaching process can go smoothly and effectively.

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