

## ***Improving Students' Reading Skills by Using The Mind Mapping Technique at SMP N 5 Panyabungan in The Academic YearOf 2019/2020***

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### **Abstract**

The nature of this study is action research. This study aimed at improving the Students "reading skills by using the mind map technique in the process of reading teaching and learning. This research consisted of two cycles. It was conducted collaboratively with the English teacher. The subjects of this research were 25 students of class IX 1 in SMP N 5 Panyabungan, Mandailing Natal. The data in this research were collected through observations, interviews, and documentations. The data were in the form of fieldnotes, interview transcripts, photographs, and students" portofolios. The researcher used qualitative method in analysing the data. The researcher also enhanced the trustworthiness of the data and the subjectivity by using the two forms of triangulation: timeand researcher triangulation. The result of the two cycles showed that the use of the mind map technique could improve the students" reading skills. The students got improvements in the paraphrasing sentence, finding topic sentence, and vocabulary mastery. Moreover, through the mind map technique, the students were motivated to be active in the classroom activities. They were actively involved in the process of teaching and learning. This condition stimulated the students to work based on their own actual capability. Thus, the students got more experiences and improved their achievement.

Keywords: reading skills, mind map technique

### **1. Introduction**

English is one of some international languages which is used by most people around the world. In a global era, people are expected to master English so that they can communicate with other people who live in other countries. As a tool of an international communication, it should be learned by people who live in a country which uses English as a foreign language, including Indonesia. To support Indonesian people in order to be able to communicate with other people around the globe, Indonesian government incorporates English into its educational curriculum as one of its compulsory subjects starting from junior high school. Hence, it is hoped that there will be a great chance for Indonesian learners to improve their English communication competence.

Learning language covers some aspects. One of the important aspects is linguistic aspect which covers grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, structure, and so on. Beside those aspects, the learners also need to master the skills of the language such as listening, writing, reading, and speaking. However, it should be kept in mind that those skills cannot be learned discretely. Students who are learning English should master those skills integratedly.

It has been known that the students tend to face written texts every day. The written texts could be found in magazines, newspaper, books, articles on paper and internet, and other kinds of the written texts. Those written texts give so much information for the learners. In school setting, texts are widely presented in the learners" textbooks.

In some school setting, the students get some English textbooks which are written in English. These textbooks contain a lot of information related to the subjects the learners

learned. In order to access this information, therefore they need sufficient knowledge of English. Especially, they should have the skills of reading because it is written in the textbooks so that they could comprehend it well. That is why the reading skills are important to be mastered.

However, in some schools, the researcher found that there were many learners who still had low reading skills. It was proven when the researcher observed a learning process in a school named SMP N 5 Panyabungan. They faced some reading problems which caused the learners had difficulties in comprehending the information presented in the textbooks.

Reading is a complex process, complex to learn and complex to teach (Carnine, Silbert, and Kameenui: 1990:3), so there must be a technique which can help them to read effectively and interestingly. Teaching comprehension strategies explicitly was seen as a possible approach to tackle the problems faced by the students. In this case, the writer tried to find interesting and effective way for the students and the teachers so that they can do their reading activity well. One of techniques which are available is the mind map technique. By using this technique, the students were able to communicate information because it can clarify complex concepts into simple, meaningful displays so that the students can develop a holistic understanding of the content to be learned (Siriphanichand Laohawiriyano: 2010)

Considering the problems discussed above, the reading has an important role to help the learners to comprehend a text they read. From the preliminary observation done by the researcher, it could be known that in the school, the learners had some problems in reading. Consequently, it is necessary to conduct a research on improving the students' reading skills by using the mind map technique. It allows the students to imagine and explore associations between the concepts in a passage they read (Davies, 2010). When the students can represent or manipulate a complex set of concepts of the passage in a diagram, they are more likely to understand those relationships, remember them, and be able to analyse the component parts of the text. The researcher focused on reading skills in class IX-1 of SMP N 5 Panyabungan because the students' reading skills were still low.

### **Review of Literature**

It presents review of theories concerning the research topics and conceptual framework underlying the study. The details of the theoretical review and conceptual framework are presented as follows.

#### **1. Reading**

Reading is a process when readers learn something from what they read and involve it in an academic context as a part of education (Grabe, 2009: 5). In the classroom, some teachers often use texts or books as media to deliver material of a subject. Furthermore, the teacher asks the students to read the texts to grab information in order that they could understand the material.

Reading also engages human brain, emotions, and beliefs as Weaver (2009) stated that "Reading is a process which is very much determined by what the reader's brain and emotions and beliefs bring to the reading: the knowledge/information (or misinformation, absence of information), strategies for processing text, moods, fears and joys—all of it." In the engagement, the readers could understand well what the writer meant in her or his writing. The readers dominantly use brain when they read an argumentative or scientific writing. They use emotions when they read a letter, a story and other texts which

dominate feeling. When the readers read a newspaper or a religious book, they should use their beliefs in order that they can understand the meaning.

Other expert defines reading as an activity in which the readers respond to and make sense of a text being read connected to their prior knowledge (Spratt, Pulverness, and William: 2005: 21). The activity is done by the readers as they want to get information and knowledge from the text meanwhile the readers have their own background knowledge. They automatically connect their knowledge with a new knowledge from what they are reading. By doing this, sometimes, the readers will get a new conclusion as a new knowledge for them.

## 2. Reading Skill

Definitional component of reading skill which is stated by Perfetti (2001) is an individual's standing on some reading assessment. From the assessment result, the researcher will indicate and categorize the students into some categories. It will guide the researcher to decide what the researcher should do to them.

The skill of reading is used by the reader to anticipate text information, selecting key information, organize and mentally summarize information, monitor comprehension, repair comprehension breakdowns, and match comprehension output to the reader goals. Every reader has their own way of reading to do that which is appropriate with them. The teacher should give some skills to the students to make them comprehend text easily. Using the skills, the students may increase the pleasure and effectiveness of reading activity.

## 3. Reading Technique

Anthony in Brown (2001: 14) defines technique as specific activities manifested in the classroom that were consistent with a method and therefore were in harmony with an approach as well. These activities can be doing tasks or exercises to realize lesson objectives. The activities can help teacher and students in many subjects in the classroom such as English. In the English subject, the teacher is also able to use the activities in teaching and learning process to improve four skills in English subject; listening, writing, speaking, and reading.

In the reading activity, the teacher has to understand that reading is not a simple activity because students have to grab a new knowledge in a passage by using their eyes, brain, and emotion. To harmonize those things, the students apply a force well so that they learn something from the knowledge they grab in the passage they read.

## **Teaching Reading**

Teaching is an activity in which the teacher guides and facilitates learning, gives a chance for the learners to learn, and sets the condition for learning (Brown, 2000: 7). The teacher cannot do those activities without any guidance. The teacher needs it to lead the students in gaining any knowledge. Also, to make the students learn, the teacher should make innovative ways, such as, unnatural orientation and unusual treatment to what is being learned. Types of Classroom Reading Performance

The variety of reading performance in classroom can be determined by the variety of texts. It means that the teacher should consider about the types of the text used in the teaching reading in order to support the process. It is stated in Brown (2001: 312) that there are two types of classroom reading performance.

First is oral reading. In the process of teaching and learning teaching in the classroom, the teacher may ask the students to read orally. There are some advantages in the oral reading done at beginning and intermediate levels. The advantages of the oral reading are as an evaluative check on bottom-up processing skills, a pronunciation check, and an extra activity for students to help the teacher to highlight a certain short segment of a reading passage. At advanced levels, the teacher also can apply this type to reach those three advantages above. Unfortunately, this type has several disadvantages according to Brown (2001: 20312). The oral reading is not authentic language activity. While a student is reading a text, others can easily lose attention. It also has the outward appearance of student participation when in reality it is mere recitation.

Second is silent reading. It is subcategorized into intensive and extensive reading. The intensive reading focuses on linguistic or semantic detail of a passage. It is usually classroom-oriented activity. The students are demanded to pay attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface details. To achieve general understanding especially when the students are asked to read longer text, such as books, magazines, novels, essays, and the like, extensive reading is more compatible than intensive reading. It belongs to outside of classroom activity.

#### Teaching Reading in SMP

In this section, we focus on the discussion of teaching English reading in junior high school. While teaching English reading in a junior high school, the teacher has to know the aims of the process and what he or she should do in the process. Further, the teacher should be able to identify the object of the process, the students.

#### .The Mind Mapping Technique

The mind map which was concluded by Astuti in her thesis (2012: 24) is an important technique that improves the way we take notes, and supports and enhances our creative problem solving. The reader can simplify what they have read so that they can understand what is explained by the writer in the text. The diagram from a text shows detail information, main and minor information. Making the diagram or map makes reader can remember and learn clearly and easily.

The mind mapping is a technique to use the whole brain by using visual and other graphic to create a meaningful impression (DePotter and Hernacki: 2004). Using the whole brain can balance two sides of human brain: left and right brain. It means that human can maximize their brains to create meaningful things because of their brains power.

Jonassen, Beissner, and Yacci (1993) defined concept maps or mind maps as “representation of concept and their interrelationship that are intended to represent the knowledge structures that humans stored in their minds”. This mind map could be more freestyle, visual, and do not necessarily have particular meanings imposed on relationships (Buzan:1995). It is able to be a simple work for the students who learn to understand a written text.

It is also quoted by Sugiarto (2004) that it is a technique to summarize reading resources and then visualize the problems in the form of map to make it easier to comprehend. By using this technique, the readers can quickly identify the information from the text they read and also grab the structure of a subject and the way that pieces of information fit together. It can help the readers to make a note from the text clearly. Every piece of the text can be noted and described in a map which consist of any symbols or pictures that connected each other to be complete information.

## 2. Research Method

The type of this research was classroom action research. The research was chosen because it provides a method that can be done by the researcher and the teacher to improve the practice of education by studying issues of problem they face, especially in reading.

The researcher in this study focused on improving students' reading skill by using the mind mapping. The researcher invited the English and the students of IX-1 in SMP N 5 Panyabungan to work collaboratively.

There are several concepts of a classroom action research. The researcher chose one of them which is from Kemmis and McTaggart. The process is presented below. Figure 4.

Kemmis and McTaggart's concept of action research (1988: 10)

The steps of action research according to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) are planning a change, acting and observing the process and consequences of the change, reflecting on these processes and consequences, replanning, acting and observing again, and then reflecting again. Those steps were done to find out the most appropriate actions to improve the students' reading skill of class IX-1 at SMP N 5 Panyabungan in the academic year of 2019/2020.,

### Research Setting

The research took place at SMP N 5 Panyabungan located at {Panyabungan, Mandailing Natal. Its setting is the English class of third grade at SMP N 5 Panyabungan, class IX-1.

SMP N 5 Panyabungan consists of nineteen classrooms from first grade until third grade. There are about 570 students totally, so there are about 30 students for each class.

### The Participants of the Research

The participant of this research were the researcher herself, the collaborator, and the students of grade IX of SMP N 5 Panyabungan. The students in grade IX in the school were divided into seven classes. However, the research only involved one class of IX-1. It consisted of 27 students.

### D. Data Collection

Hornby (1995: 294) stated that data are facts or information used in deciding or discussing something. The researcher have collected the data to support this research in deciding some actions so that the students' reading skills improved. In collecting the data, the researcher collaborated with the collaborator as an observer and the students. There were three aspects in this collecting data which are presented in the following.

#### 1. Research Instruments of Data Collection

Instrument is the main important tool to collect the data. The instruments used in this research were interview guidelines, narrative observations, and camera. The interview guidelines were used in the beginning of the research process, the end of the cycles, and the

end of the research process. These guidelines were used to guide the researcher to focus on the intended research area as she conducted the interviews.

The guidelines was possibly developed as long as the interviewee were still on the right path. The next instruments were the narrative observations which included recordings of the rundown of the classroom teaching and learning process. The last was camera. The researcher used camera to take some pictures of the process of teaching and learning process. She also used it to record the the process of teaching and learning as videos.

## 2. Data Collection Technique

In this research, the collected data were qualitative data. To get the data, the researcher used data collection techniques as follows:

### 1) Interview

The interview was done to get information from the teacher and the students before and after the actions were implemented. The information included opinion, belief, and experience of the interviewee. The result of the interview would be presented in the transcript.

### 2) Observation

The researcher observed the teaching learning in class IX-1 when she did reconnaissance and implemented the action. The researcher also collaborated with the English teacher who was as the collaborator. The collaborator observed the process of teaching and learning when the researcher implemented the action and then they discussed the results of the observation. The results of the observation were presented in the form of field notes which consisted of the students' behavior, the teacher's actions, and everything happened in the process of teaching and learning. The researcher and the collaborator agreed to use narrative observations proposed by Burns (2010: 69-70)

### 3) Documentation

The researcher took pictures during teaching and learning process. These pictures gave the real situation during the process.

**Data Analysis Technique :** After the data have been obtained, the researcher analyzed the data using several steps. The researcher used a series of processes of data analysis proposed by Burns (1999). Those steps are deliberated in the following.

#### 1) Sampling the data

The first stage in analyzing the data was to assemble the data. The data from interview transcript, field notes, and observations were collected. After that, the researcher scanned the data to show up the data so that the data could be compared and constructed.

#### 2) Coding the data

Coding is a process of attempting to reduce the large amount of data which may be collected to more manageable categories of concepts, themes or types (Burns: 1999). The researcher identified the data collected into more specific group of data.

#### 3) Comparing the data

The researcher compared the data before and after the action. Its purpose was to know whether the data were repeated or developed across different data collection techniques. This step was not be interpreted yet but it merely displayed and described the data. d. Building interpretations After three stages above, the researcher tried to think deeply about the data. Burns (1999) states that this step might make a researcher came back to the data several times to ask questions, rethink the connections and develop explanation of the bigger picture underpinning the research. The collaborator was also invited to interpret the data to find new discoveries. e. Reporting the outcomes This was the final step of the data analysis process. After collecting and analyzing the data sistematicaly, it was needed to show in a report.

## Validity and Reliability

### 1. Validity

To maintain the validity of the data, there are five criteria proposed by Anderson in Burns (1999: 161) were followed by the researcher. Those five criteria are democratic validity, catalytic validity, process validity, outcome validity, and dialogic validity. In this research, the researcher used four criteria of validity. Those are democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, and dialogic validity. The followings are the definition of the validity.

#### (1) Democratic validity

It is related to the extent to which the research is truly collaborative. It deals with the perspectives given by those who have stakes in the research which then leads to the inclusion of multiple voices. To establish this validity, the researcher invited the collaborator to give opinions, suggestions, and so on related to the classroom action research study. Those were done to prepare the planning, to do the actions, to evaluate actions, and to do reflections.

#### (b) .Outcome validity

This validity relates to the outcomes led by the notion of actions. The outcomes is called successful based on the research context. In this study, the outcome is the students' changes of behavior in English learning in the classroom, particularly in the reading skills. Therefore, all of things in the research are interrelated to one another. Besides, to support the data validity, the researcher enclosed the photographs and field notes of the teaching and learning process.

#### (c).Process validity

Process validity refers to the criterion to make done in action research. This validity raises questions about the „dependability“ and „competency“ of the research. The researcher considered and analyzed whether the technique applied in the classroom had been appropriate with the condition of the participants or not. This analysis would affect the result. The collaborator observed the classroom activities. The students felt comfort and showed their participation or involvement in the classroom activities and then the researcher was able to observe their different behaviours from different perspectives and data source. The researcher took notes of the activities in the classroom during teaching and learning process.

#### (d) Dialogic validity

It parallels the process of collaborative inquiry or reflective dialogue with „critical friends“ or other practitioners. The researcher have interviewed some parties of this research. The researcher fulfilled the needsof data by interviewing the teacher and the students. They gave information from different perspectives. The information was valuable to measure the success of the research. The dialogues were done during the researcher conducted the research in the classroom. The collaborator and the researcher shared their oppinions which finally made decisions.

## 2. Reliability

The data of this study were in the form of qualitative data. The researcher got the data from many resources. In enhancing the trustworthiness of the data and the subjectivity in analyzing the data, the researcher used triangulation. It aimed to gather multiple perspectives on the situation being studied. Burns (1999: 164) stated that there are four forms of triangulation, namely time, space, researcher, and theoretical triangulation. In this research, the researcher used the two forms of them, time and researcher triangulation. These are the triangulation forms which were used by the researcher

a. Time triangulation is the data which are collected at different points in time. The researcher interviewed students at the beginning, middle and end of the course.

b. Researcher triangulation is the data which are collected by more than one researcher. The researcher asked the teacher and the students to collect data to compare with her own. F. Research Procedures The researcher used Kemmis and McTaggart“s model in this research as discussed in the beggining point of this chapter. There were three steps in a cycle.

They were planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. These steps were involved in cyclical structure. It meant that these steps were possible to reimplement in the next cycle when it was needed to do. It could be 2, 3, or more cycles in a research but the researcher only did two cycles because of some reasons such as time limitation and school policy of teaching and learning process.

41 Those steps were headed by a process called reconnaissance. This reonnaissance led the researcher to focus of the study.

By doing the reconnaissance, the researcher gained data about obsatacles and weakness in reading a passage. They were collected through observations and interviews. The researcher observed activities in the learning and teaching process related to reading activities. the results of the observations were presented in the fieldnotes.

Meanwhile, the interviews were done to make sure and add the data from the observations. The researcher interviewed the collaborator and the students. The research procedure included the following steps:

### 1. Planning

This step was planned the details of the research, such as the actions that the researcher would do in every cycle. It was the further step from the reconnaissance. What the researcher would plan depends on what the researcher had had from the observation and discussion about the urgent problem should be solved in the research process.

### 2. Actions and Observations

This step was the implementation of the action plans made after the researcher got the data from the previous steps. There would be an observation after doing the action to know the effects of the actions done in the classroom.



### 3.Reflection

After doing activities in the first cycle and then observing the problems, there would be reflection of the implementation. It becomes the reference to implement the actions in the next cycle better than before. Responses and suggestions were accepted by the researcher from the other participants of this research, especially from the collaborator. The results of the identification from the actions were determined as successful or unsuccessful ones.

## Research Findings And Discussion

Before carried out this research, the researcher tried to collect preliminary data. To gain the data, the researcher observed the teaching learning process in the classroom. Then, she interviewed the collaborator and the students. The researcher discussed with the collaborator about the result of the interviews and observation.

### 1. Identification of the field problems

The researcher did observation to identify the problems that were found in the English teaching and learning process of class IX-1 at SMP N 5 Panyabungan.

I interviewed the collaborator to support the information gained through the observation. After observing the teaching learning process and interviewing the collaborator and some students, the researcher and the collaborator identified some field problems that were found in the English teaching and learning process. The problems were presented in the table as follows:

Table 1: The Field Problems in Class IX-1 SMP N 5 Panyabungan

No	Problems	Codes
1	There was no adequate guideline for the students to read a text effectively.	P
2	Students' reading skills was low.	S
3	Students' mastery of vocabulary was low.	S
4	Students found difficulties in understanding the structure of texts.	S
5	Students had difficulties in understanding the main idea.	S
6	Students rarely did their homework.	S
7	Students' motivation to read a text was low.	S
8	Students did not pay attention when the teacher explained the materials.	S
9	The students often made noise during the teaching learning process.	S
10	The students rarely checked the difficult words in the dictionary;	S
11	they waited their teacher explaining the meaning of the words.	S
12	There was no innovation in creating some interesting ways in the teaching and learning process	T
13	The teacher found difficulties in handling the students who made noise.	P
14	The students were not confident to do assignment	P
15	The students were easily getting bored in the lessons	P
16	The learning process lacked the use of learning facilities	P
17	The teaching and learning process focused on several students	P
18	The students often cheated their friends when doing assignments.	S
19	The students' involvement in the classroom were low	S
20	The students could not paraphrase information from the text in their own words.	S

P: Process of teaching and learning (TL); S: Students; T:Technique; F: Facilities

Based on the problems related to the process of learning and teaching reading, the researcher and the collaborator discussed the main causes of the problems. Those were categorized into the problems on students, process of TL, and technique. Since the focus of this study is on the use of the mind map technique to improve the students' reading skill, therefore, the problems which would be solved were the problems that related to the process of reading teaching and learning.

Table 2: The Problems Related to the Process of Reading Teaching and Learning

No	Problems	Codes
1	There was no adequate guideline to the students to read a text effectively.	P
2	Students' reading skills was low.	S
3	Students' mastery of vocabulary was low.	S
4	Students found difficulties in understanding the structure of texts.	S
5	Students had difficulties in understanding the main idea.	S
6	Students' motivation to read a text was low.	S
7	Students did not pay attention when the teacher explained the materials.	S
8	Students did not pay attention when the teacher explained the materials.	S
9	The students rarely checked the difficult words in the dictionary; they waited their teacher giving them the meaning of the words.	S
10	There was no innovation in creating some interesting way in the teaching	T
11	The students were not confident to do assignments.	S
12	The students' involvement in the classroom was low.	S
13	The students could not paraphrase the information from the text using their own words.	S

P: Process of teaching and learning (TL); S: Students; T:Technique

After determining the problems which were related to the reading process, the teacher and the researcher discussed the main causes of the problems. These main causes of the problems helped the researcher to overcome the problems. The following table presents the correlation between the main causes and the field problems which were classified before.

Table 3: The Correlation between the Main Causes and the Classified Problems

No	Main Causes	Problems
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	There was no adequate guideline for students to read a text effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was no adequate guideline for the students to read a text effectively</li> <li>- Students' reading skills was low.</li> <li>- There was no innovation in creating some interesting ways in the teaching and learning process.</li> </ul>
	The students had difficulty in recognizing the topic sentence and information of the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students found difficulties in understanding the structure of texts</li> <li>- Students had difficulties in understanding the main idea.</li> </ul>
	The students' had low motivation in low the reading activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students "motivation to read a text was</li> <li>- Students were not confident to do assignments.</li> </ul>
	The students had limited vocabulary mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students 'mastery of vocabulary was low</li> <li>- The students rarely checked the difficult words in the dictionary; they waited their teacher giving them the meaning of the words.</li> </ul>
	The students' involvement in the teacher reading teaching learning process was low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students did not pay attention when the explained the materials</li> <li>- Students often made noise during the teaching learning process.</li> <li>- The students' involvement in the classroom was low.</li> </ul>
	The students were not able to information paraphrasing the text	-The students couldn't paraphrase the from the text using their own words.

The collaborator suggested the researcher based on the problems above to propose some actions to solve those problems. The teacher added that the actions should be relevant with the condition of the students and the ability of the researcher herself.

## 2. Determining the actions to solve the field problems

The researcher in collaboration with the collaborator had identified the urgent and feasible problems which occurred in the process of teaching and learning. Those important problems were chosen because they could give bad effects to the students if they were not solved soon. Furthermore, the researcher discussed with the collaborator about what the researcher should do to solve the problems. As suggested by the collaborator, the researcher made some plans to overcome the problems. The researcher planned some actions to be done.

Those actions are presented below.

- a. Using scanning and skimming to support finding out the topic of the text.

- b. Rewriting information in the students own words in each branch of the mind map.
- c. Questioning and answering activity about the text.
- d. Exploring difficult words through map/chart.
- e. Using interesting topics and pictures.

### **3. The Relationship between the Field Problems and the Actions**

The researcher had designed some plans which were related to the field problems. The table below showed the relationship between the actions and the problems.

### **Conclusion**

The research was focused on improving students' reading skills using the mind map technique. This technique was implemented in two cycles. The findings of the research showed that the mind map technique was successful in improving the students' reading skills.

From the observation and interview in the preliminary step in this research, that was reconnaissance, it can be implied that English was one of the difficult subjects according to the students, especially reading. Based on this main problem, the researcher and the English teacher agreed to solve this problem by implementing the mind map technique in combination with some strategies and adaptations considering the students' condition. Those strategies were scanning and skimming, questioning and answering activity, using map/chart of words, and using interesting pictures and topics. The adaptations were done to simplify the strategies and facilitate the students so that they could understand easily. Those actions taken in the classroom aimed at improving the students' reading skills. It was expected to be able to help the students to comprehend a text easier and better than before. The researcher implemented the mind map by asking the students to draw or design a mind map which comprised of information of a text, pictures and

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