



Improving the Students' Reading Skill through Translation Method

AUTHORS INFO

Hijril Ismail

Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram
hijrilismail@ummat.ac.id
+6282340228542

Juang Kurniawan Syahrurah

Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta
juang@upy.ac.id
+6283129995878

Basuki

Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo
master_basuki@yahoo.com
+6285726122253

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Abstract

The aims of this research are to find out how the implementation of translation can improve the students' reading skill and how the students' responses to the use of translation method in the teaching and learning process. This research is a classroom action research. The participant is 39 students. The research instrument used is in the form of observation checklist, test, and questioners. The finding of the research shows that the implementation of translation improves the students' reading skill in the teaching process and the test result. The result of evaluation which carried out in end of the cycle I obtained that the lowest score is 40 and the highest score is 82 then the average score is 58.1, cycle II gets the lowest score is 50 and the highest score is 85 then the average score is 60,9, and cycle III get the lowest score is 60 and the highest score is 85 and the average score is 65.8. Therefore, it can be concluded that the translation method can improve the students' reading skill of grade VII D of MTs. Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta and the students' responses are positive when the teacher applied translation method in teaching and learning process.

Keywords: reading skill, translation method, teaching and learning, cultural diversity

A. Introduction

English is one of the international languages becomes the major language of printed information. It can be in technology, economics, commerce and science. The most important way which is vital in processing information is reading. By having the reading skills to comprehend passages, textbooks and references written in English, the students are able to absorb information and knowledge. Based on the school-based curriculum in the junior high schools that language skills are categorized as receptive skills and productive skills. Speaking and writing are productive skill while listening and reading are receptive skills.

Reading is a tool of communication in written language through the texts form. It is the most efficient way to gain information about many aspects of life, including science and technology. By reading, people can absorb a number of information. Reading has a very important role and becomes a daily necessity for every person who wants to acquire whatever information which is required. Reading is an essential skill for learners of English as a foreign language. For most of learners it is the most important skill to master in order to ensure success not only in learning English, but also in learning in any content class where reading in English is required. With strengthened reading skills, learners will make greater progress and development in all other areas of learning

Reading is a vital skill for everyone, including students. Mickulecky & Jeffries (2004) say that reading is very important since it can enhance students' general language skills in English; assisting students to think in English, enlarging students' English vocabulary, improving their writing, and it can be a good way to obtain about new ideas, facts and experiences. Therefore, on the basis of this opinion, the reading skill has been viewed as something that can help students to enrich their insight in English language.

According to Harmer (2003) reading is one of the receptive skills of English. Yet, the four language skills are closely related to each other. The ability to read texts in English is important as a bridge to understand the textbook. If students continue their studies to the senior high school and university, they are required to understand many books written in English.

In teaching and learning reading skill there are a number of particular problems which will need to be addressed. The first problem is reading comprehension. The problems are related to background knowledge, cultural knowledge, and knowledge of text type. Background knowledge is the students' previous knowledge or knowledge of the world. If students lack prior knowledge in reading a text, they cannot understand it because they do not know what the text is about. A reader uses background knowledge to integrate new information from a text into his prior information. In addition, cultural differences affect reading comprehension. An unfamiliar cultural context and content knowledge of culture and knowledge of vocabulary cause problems in reading, because the students do not clearly understand the other culture. In addition, an inadequate knowledge of text type is a problem in reading texts. The text type such as newspaper articles, fairy tales, and business letters, if the students do not know what kind of the text, they cannot understand what the text is about. Students can understand a text if they are familiar with the text type (Alderson, 2002 in Chawang, 2008).

The second problem is limited vocabulary. The problem involves difficulties with words. These difficulties include problems with technical vocabulary, super ordinates, synonyms, antonyms, and words with several meanings. Students will have great difficulty in understanding the text as a whole because lack vocabulary. To be successful, they have to recognize a high proportion of the vocabulary (Paren, 1996 in Harmer, 2003).

The third problem is complex and very long sentences. According to Chawang (2008) complex sentences are sentences that contain many clauses or reduced clauses and abstract concepts. Harmer (2003) says that texts with longer sentences will be more difficult to understand than shorter sentences.

In overcoming the problems in teaching reading, the researcher utilized translation method. Translation method is the process of rendering written language that was produced in one language (the source language) into another (the target language), or the target language version that results from this process. Translation in which more emphasis is given to overall meaning than to exact wording is known as free translation. A translation that approximates to a word for word representation of the original is known as a literal translation. A translation that has been produced by a computer is known as a machine translation. The terms translation

and interpretation are often used interchangeably. While both activities involve transferring a message between two different languages, translation refers to transfer between written texts and interpretation refers to spoken discourse and the unrehearsed transfer of a spoken message from one language to another (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

Those descriptions above are the reasons to conduct the research entitled Improving the Students' Reading Skill through Translation Method of grade VII D at MTs Mualimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

B. Literature review

1. Reading Skill

Richards & Schmidt (2002) assert that listening, speaking, reading, and writing are generally called language skills. Sometimes speaking and writing are called the active/productive skills and reading and listening are the passive/receptive skills. Richards and Schmidt (2002) define reading skill as abilities required for skillful reading, such as discerning main ideas, understanding sequence, noticing specific details, making inferences, making comparisons, and making predictions in second and foreign language instruction, particularly with adults. These skills are sometimes taught separately. Patel and Jain (2008) state that reading is understanding the meaning of printed words i.e. written symbols. Reading is an active process which consists of recognition and comprehension skill. Reading is an important activity in life with which one can update his/her knowledge. Reading skill is an important tool for academic success.

Gray in Patel & Jain (2008) classifies that reading is form of experience. Reading brings us in contact with the minds of great authors, with the written account of their experiences. Strickland, Galda, & Cullinan (2007) say that reading is a dynamic process in which an active reader engages with a text in order to create meaning. This creation of meaning requires a great deal of work by the reader. Reading is a visual process - vision is a symbolic process of seeing an item or symbol and translating it into an idea or image. Images are processed into concepts and whole dimensions of thought (Bennette, 2001). Brown (2004) says that reading is a process of negotiating meaning. The reader brings to the text a set of schemata for understanding it, and it takes the product of that interaction. In second language teaching and learning, Nunan (1999) defines reading as a process of reconstructing meaning rather than decoding form, and the reader only resorts to decoding if other means fail.

Mareilon (2007) states that reading is making meaning from print and from visual information. But reading is not simple. Reading is an active process that requires a great deal of practice and skill. Reading is a fluent process of reader combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning (Nunan, 2003).

Based on the definition above, the researcher can make sum up that reading is receptive skill to understand printed words likes discerning main ideas, understanding sequence, noticing specific details, making inferences, making comparisons, and making predictions in second and foreign language instruction. And also the researcher can say that reading is an ability to understand written English as it is presented in textbooks, newspaper, magazine, menu, massages and in academic materials.

Harris, Graham & Boardman (2007) point out that skills and strategies that good readers use include: 1) Rapid and accurate word reading; 2) Setting goals for reading; 3) Noting the structure and organization of text; 4) Monitoring their understanding while reading; 5) Creating mental notes and summaries; 6) Making predictions about what will happen, checking them as they go along, and revising and evaluating them as needed; 7) Capitalizing on what they know about the topic and integrating that with new learning; 8) Making inferences; 9) Using mental images such as visualization to assist them in remembering or understanding events or characters

2. *The Goals of Reading*

Reading is an ability which is extremely important for students for enhance their insight particularly in English language. The writer appraises that one of the way for increasing students' reading ability is by knowing the purposes of the reading. There are many aims of reading which put forward by many experts. Rivers and Temperely (1978) in Nunan (1999) address seven main purposes of reading: 1) to obtain information for some purpose or because we are serious about some topic; 2) to obtain instructions on how to perform some tasks for our work or daily life (e.g. knowledge how an appliance works); 3) To act in a play, play a game, do a puzzle; 4) To keep in touch with friends by correspondence or to understand business letters; 5) To know when or where something will take place or what is available; 6) To know what is happening or has happened (as reported in newspaper, magazines, report); and 7) To have enjoyment or excitement. Grellet (1983) mentions two main reasons for reading: 1) Reading for pleasure; and 2) Reading for information (in order to find out something or in order to do something with the information you get).

3. *The Principles for Teaching Reading*

Richard and Schmidt (2002) point out that principles in teaching are beliefs and theories that teachers hold concerning effective approaches to teaching and learning and which serve as the basis for some of their decision-making. Harmer (2001) classifies that there are six principles behind teaching reading as follows:

a. Reading is not a passive skill

Reading is an incredibly active occupation. To do it successfully, one has to understand what the words mean, see the picture the words are painting, understand the arguments, and work out if one agrees with them. If one does not carry out these things – and if students do not perform these things – then one only just scratch the surface of the text and one quickly forgets it.

b. Students need to be engaged with what they are reading.

As with everything else in lessons, students who are not engaged with the reading text, not actively interested in what they are doing, are less likely to benefit from it. When they are really fired up by the topic or the task they get much more from what is in front of them.

c. Student should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language

It is important to study reading texts for the way they use language, the number of paragraphs they contain and how many times they use relative clauses. But the meaning, the message of the text, is just as important and teachers must give students a chance to respond to that message in some way. It is especially important that they should be allowed to express their feelings about the topic, thus provoking personal engagement with it and the language.

d. Prediction is a major factor in reading

When one reads texts in his/her own language, one frequently has a good idea of the content before he/she actually reads. Book covers give him/her a hint of what is in the book; photographs and headlines hint at what articles are about and reports look like reports before one reads a single word.

The moment one gets this hint, the book cover, headline, the word processed page, his/her brain starts predicting what he/she is going to read, expectations are set up and the active proves of reading is ready to begin. Teachers should give students 'hits' so that they can predict what is coming too. It will make them better and more engaged readers.

e. Match the task to the topic

Teachers could give students Hamlet's famous soliloquy 'to be or not to be' and ask them to say how many times the infinitive is used. Teachers could give them a restaurant menu and ask them to list the ingredients alphabetically. There might be reasons for both tasks, but, on the

face of it, they look a bit silly. Teachers will probably be more interested in what Hamlet means and what the menu foods actually are (Harmer 2001).

Once a decision has been taken about what reading text the students are going to read, teachers need to choose going reading tasks- the right kind of questions, engaging and useful puzzles etc. The most interesting text can be undermined by asking boring and inappropriate questions; the most commonplace passage can be made really exciting with imaginative and challenging tasks.

f. Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full

Any reading text is full of sentences, words, ideas, descriptions etc. It does not make sense just to get students to read it and then drop it to move on to something else. Good teachers integrate the reading text into interesting class sequences, utilizing the topic for discussion and further tasks, using the language for study and later activation.

4. Translation Method

Translation method is the process of rendering written language that was produced in one language (the source language) into another (the target language), or the target language version that results from this process. Translation in which more emphasis is given to overall meaning than to exact wording is known as free translation. A translation that approximates to a word for word representation of the original is known as a literal translation. A translation that has been produced by a computer is known as a machine translation. The terms translation and interpretation are often used interchangeably. While both activities involve transferring a message between two different languages, translation refers to transfer between written texts and interpretation refers to spoken discourse and the unrehearsed transfer of a spoken message from one language to another (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

C. Methodology

The research was the classroom action research at MTs Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. The subject of the research was the students of grade VII D which number of 39 students as the participant because they have less skill in reading. It can be known from the result of pre-reading comprehension test which undertaken by researcher with the lowest score was 35 and the main score was 55,46 and also based on the result interview of an English teacher. The research instrument utilized by the writer is in the form of observation checklist, test and questioners. The observation checklist is mainly used to write the students' progress from time to time. Test is one important element in the research namely to find out the implementation of translation method can improve the students' reading skill or not. The questioner used to know the students' responses to the use of translation method in teaching.

The research data were collected through: the first, observation was undertaken by other researchers to gather the data of students' activity when the action was taking place; the second, the test was performed in the end of meeting in the each cycle to know that there is an improvisation of each cycle or not, the item test consisted of 30 questions in the five forms of multiple choices and the duration is about 90 minutes, and the third, questioners was employed for gaining students' responses on procedure implemented which is applied when teaching and learning process is taking place. Research Procedure used was a self-reflective spiral of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning as the basic for understanding how to take action to improve an education situation (Kemmis & McTagart, 1992).

D. Findings and Discussion

The research consisted of three cycles. Each cycle had four steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting and every cycle consisting of three meetings. before conducting the acting, on cycle I, the teacher carried out evaluation by giving multiple choice questions to the students. They completed the evaluation in about 80 minutes. The result of the evaluation was the lowest score was 40. There were three students who got 40. The highest score was 82 and there was only one student who got 82. The mean was 58.1. The result of reflection in cycle I; 1) the application of translation method in teaching and learning process can motivate students to learn particularly in reading; 2) Students found that the reading could be easier if it was done

together; and 3) Students' vocabularies were still poor and they found it difficult to answer some questions.

On the second II, The teacher carried out evaluation by giving a multiple choice test to the students. They completed the evaluation in about 80 minutes. Here are the results of the test: The lowest score was 50. There were eight students who got 50. The highest score was 85 and there was only one student who got 85. The mean was 60.9. The result of reflection in cycle II; 1) Answering WH question could assist students to answer many questions about reading; 2) Practicing dialogue in teaching and learning process could enhance students pronunciations; and 3) Find out the synonym and antonym the words could be a bridge to increase the students' vocabularies.

On the cycle III, the teacher carried out an evaluation by giving a multiple choice test to the students. They completed the evaluation in about 80 minutes. The result of the evaluation: There were fourteen students who got 60. The lowest score was 60 and highest score 85 and there was only one student who got 85. The mean was 65.8. The result of reflection in cycle III, the third cycle was completely performed, the researchers concluded that; 1) Translating a text could be became a bridge to enhance the students' vocabulary and it could assist them to comprehend a text. 2) Asking students orally before introducing a topic could help them to understand the next activities easily. 3. The limited time could assist students for really using the time as well as possible.

Table 1 Compression of Results Assessment of Cycle I, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3

No	Students' number	Score			No	Students' number	Score		
		Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III			Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
1	7812	70	75	80	21	7937	57	60	65
2	7815	47	50	60	22	7943	49	55	60
3	7816	40	55	65	23	7944	55	55	65
4	7817	42	50	60	24	7947	58	55	60
5	7822	50	60	60	25	7951	67	70	70
6	7827	52	55	65	26	7960	76	75	75
7	7831	50	50	65	27	7973	56	56	70
8	7840	70	70	70	28	7978	65	65	65
9	7849	63	65	70	29	7981	67	65	65
10	7851	57	57	60	30	7982	40	55	60
11	7856	72	75	75	31	7993	67	65	65
12	7862	53	55	60	32	7997	63	65	65
13	7865	82	85	85	33	8006	66	65	70
14	7870	45	50	60	34	8012	77	80	80
15	7888	65	65	65	35	8013	64	60	65
16	7889	47	50	60	36	8014	65	60	60
17	7892	72	80	85	37	8033	46	55	65
18	7907	54	55	54	38	8035	40	50	60
19	7919	65	65	65	39	8036	50	50	60
20	7936	42	50	60					

At the end of the intervention, the students were asked to fill in questionnaires. The questionnaires asked the students to respond to the use of translation method to improve students' reading skill. The students' responses to the use of translation method can be reflected from the questionnaire responses. Most of the students had never known about the translation method before. Thirty students (76.92%) of thirty nine students were impressed by learning English using translation method. In addition, thirty five students (89.74 %) of thirty nine students answered that there was an advantage of using translation method. Thirty seven

students (94.87 %) of thirty nine students admitted that they made progress in learning English using translation method. Thirty eight students (97.43 %) of thirty nine students answered that translation method enhanced them to improve their reading skill. Twenty two students (56.41 %) of thirty nine students found a difficulty in using translation method while seventeen students (43.58 %) of thirty nine students did not find any difficulty in using translation method. Thirty eight students (97.43 %) of thirty nine students admitted that translation method made English learning interesting. All students agreed that translation method can improve student's motivation in learning English and can enhance students' others ability beside reading, for example speaking and writing.

Table 2 Summary of the Students' Answer in the Questionnaires

No	Statement	Options	Number	(%) Priority
1	Have you ever known about translation method before?	Yes	10	25.64
		No	29	74.35
2	Are you impressed in English learning by using translation method?	Yes	30	76.92
		No	9	23.07
3	Is there any advantage of using translation method?	Yes	35	89.74
		No	4	10.25
4	Is there any progress after learning English using translation method?	Yes	37	94.87
		No	2	5.12
5	Does translation method enhance you or improve your Reading skill?	Yes	38	97.43
		No	1	2.56
6	Is there any difficulty using translation method?	Yes	22	56.41
		No	17	43.58
7	Does translation method make English learning interesting?	Yes	38	97.43
		No	1	2.56
8	Does translation method make the students more active?	Yes	35	89.74
		No	4	10.25
9	Can translation method improve students' motivation in learning English?	Yes	39	100
		No	0	0
10	Can translation method enhance students' other abilities beside Reading, for example speaking and writing?	Yes	39	100
		No	0	0

Shortly, from the result of questioners above, the writer concludes that translation method can be served as one alternative method in teaching English especially to improve the students' reading skill and students' response was positive when translation method was applied in teaching reading.

E. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and discussion, the writer can make conclusion that there is an improvement of students' score in reading skill. It can be seen from the result of evaluation in each cycle; on cycle I is obtained that the lowest is 40. The highest score is 82 and the mean is 58.1. On the cycle II is gotten the lowest score is 50. The highest score is 85 and the mean is 60.9, and on the cycle III gotten the lowest score is 60. The highest score is 85 and. The mean score is 65.8. The students' response was positive when the teacher applied translation method in teaching and learning process especially to improve reading skill.

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