

**THE DEVELOPING STUDENTS' READING SKILL THROUGH TEXT
ATTACK SKILL OF ENGLISH SOPHOMORE AT UNISKA KEDIRI**

By: Purwantoro

ABSTRACT

Reading as one of language skills will be “primary” goal for second language learners in Indonesia. It reflects that reading is designed to be the first priority at English curriculum for foreign language learners . On reading tests – at TOEP , TEFL, and others - which consist of 50 test items, most of them are reading test items. It is almost 70 percent - at about 35 test items.

On teaching-learning process, in fact, students meet difficulties to master reading on ESL because of complicated causes. One of them is lack of training how to compute the text. In line with this, one of the reading experts is Christine Nuthall (1986) offers a training on how to compute a text. It is called Text- Attack Skill (TAS). It is a kind of training to study a text. The training comprises understanding sentence syntax, cohesive devices, and discourse markers. The writer takes the model of CAR to improve students' reading skill. The subject is sophomore, semester 4 – academic year 2012/2013 at Uniska, Kediri. The reason why this class is chosen is that the class is of medium class.

There are 21 students in this learning group. This research needs 2 cycles, and each cycle consists of 4 steps – planning, action, observation, and reflection/conclusion. *At 1st cycle*, the result is 8 students obtain the minimum score or more, while the rest (13 students) are under minimum score. So *the 2nd cycle* should be held on the same way. The result gains the assumption as 20 students have obtained the minimum score, only 1 student fails. It means that text-attack skill method is effective to improve students' reading achievement.

Key words: reading achievement, text attack skill

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English is one of the most important languages in global era. In globalization era, competitiveness is required in line with the area of science and technology and human resources development, including some competencies need to be every one as a human resource. First, people is able to manage himself /herself. Self management is the basic competence. So far, it means that he/she must be able to control him/ herself, to have high self-belief, to consequence to promise, and flexible. Second, as human resource, he/she should have managerial skills. Third, he/she should have good communication and relationship. More over, competitiveness will be the first

requirement in order to be able to communicate and achieve a better life.

English as a means of communication to interact with other people from other countries in globalization era, moreover, foreign companies in Indonesia, and this motivates students to learn English more so that they can compete with foreigners in getting the employment. They learn not only the oral language but also the written language. Reading skill as a written language will be the primary needs to master in order to achieve the above hopes. It means that mastering reading skill is a must. To meet students having reading achievement, it needs an appropriate strategy or method to teach them.

In fact, although the English sophomore have been taught reading since they were junior high school students until sophomore (semester 3), at most they still lack the ability on reading skill. As the writer experienced while he had gotten his magister teaching practice at one of universities in Kediri, he found out that most English sophomore did not high motivation to follow a reading subject. The reason was because they thought that it was boring. They did the same activities in every reading subject. The activities were (a) the teacher asked the students to read the passage in the book silently or the teacher asked a few students to read paragraphs loudly while the other students listen to them, (b) then the teacher asked the students which part of words they did not understand. If there were any problems the teacher would explain more about the reading passage. And finally (c) the teacher asked the students to do reading comprehension exercises in the book. Those activities were always done in teaching reading. As a result the students would get bored or even they got sleepy at class. Due to the fact, many reading experts find it necessary to make an attempt to improve students' reading ability in English by applying reading techniques. Besides, there are some difficulties the teachers find in teaching reading, among them are the text concept, vocabulary, sentence structure, discourse markers, different background of the readers, and teaching reading skills – such as word-attack skill (WAS), text-attack skill (TAS) A (signification and cohesion), text-attack skill B (discourse) (Nuthall, 1986).

Text-attack skills are a kind of training skills in order to understand text. It contains training with many kinds of exercises. Text-attack skills comprise two parts, namely (1) signification and cohesion, and while the other, discourse. In the first, training TAS is held in order to study a text, such as TAS 1 (understanding sentence syntax), TAS 2

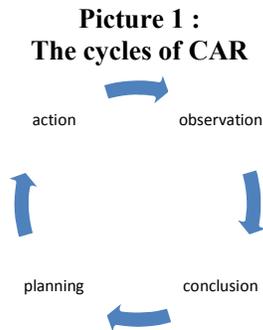
(cohesive devices), and TAS 3 (discourse markers). Every TAS has sub skill should be mastered.

After trying many methods of teaching reading and expecting that 80 percent of the students get sufficient mark. It is the mark that equal or more than minimal score or grade that the students should be reached. The sufficient mark is 70. This means the student should master the materials 70 percent. When the student gets 69, it means the student gets under the intended mark - sufficient mark. In other words, the students who get minimal score mean that they get success in reading skill. The writer, after reads this theory, is interested in trying to apply this TAS in order to develop students' reading ability. So the writer proposes the question : “*Is TAS efficient to improve sophomore's reading ability?*”

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is intended to improve sophomore's reading achievement by applying text-attack skill (TAS) before doing test, namely pretest and post test. Therefore, the research design used is classroom action research (CAR). Suryabrata (1983: 38) states that an classroom action research aims at improving new skills or methods to solve the problem with direct application in the world of work. While Elliot (in Hopkins,1993:69) explains that an classroom action research is the study of a social situation, with a view to improving the quality of action. In addition, Depdiknas (2003) states an action research is the systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change. This classroom action research is conducted in two cycles in which each cycle covered four stages of activities. They are as follows (1) the preparation of the action, (2) the implementation of the action, (3) class observation and evaluation, and (4) reflection of the action. Kurt Lewin as the first person introduces CAR states that there are 4 components of

activities: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.



In the conclusion stage, the writer may not stop the action, but he can do it again. It is considered that CAR can not be once, it is longitudinal method so it may be done twice or more. It depends on the result of observation. If the writer, for example, get enough data twice, the process can be ended.

Population and Sample

The population of this research is English sophomore, at semester 4, academic year 2012-2013, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Islamic University of Kadir (Uniska). The sophomore are chosen under the assumption that they have had reading skill since they were in Junior and Senior High School. Besides, they have passed Reading 3 in the previous semester, although their reading skill is still needed to improve.

There is only one regular class, at semester 4 that consists of 21 students. The learning group is only one treating by the writer himself, both as a teacher and/ or as an observer.

Table 1
Population and Sample

Population	English sophomore at semester 4, acad year 2012-2013
Sample	One regular class from 3 classes available
Group	One learning group

Treatment

The only learning group is treated by giving multiple-choice test type, with 5 options, and the number is 40 items. The distribution of the test includes, general and/or specific and detail information of the text. The text types are varied, such as report, exposition, narrative, exposition, and functional text.

The writer gave three times treatment to the only learning group, namely pretest, cycle 1 (test), and cycle 2 (test). The treatments were given in almost 3 weeks, started from 1st week until 3rd week in February 2013. The topics that were used in the treatments were Sport, Tourism, and Health.

THE RESEARCH FINDING

In this research, the writer conducts 2 cycles in which comprises 4 steps for each step. The steps are planning, action, observation, and reflection/ conclusion.

At the first treatment, the writer gave pretest. And the result was that the reading score gotten by the students were under the minimal score, where 14 students (70%) got under minimum score (< 70) and 7 students (30%) got minimal score (70),. It meant that the test was too difficult. That’s why the test was needed to revise.

The second treatment, the result as mentioned at Table 2. The test given at this stage is still very difficult. It reflects that most of the testee (13 students) failed to get minimum score, while some (8 students) got minimal score. So the intended estimation is not still fulfilled yet. Then it needs to conduct the following treatment, that is third treatment.

Table 2
Cycle No 1

Step	Description			
Planning	A number of test items are very difficult. Revise!			
Action	Only 40 % students get success. It should be 90%			
Observation	VA: 3 (9,50%)	A: 5 (25,20%)	EA: 9 (46%)	LA/IA: 3/1 (28%)
	8 students: min. score		13 students: failed	
Reflection/ conclusion	Only 40% students get minimal score or more. The intended target is not fulfilled yet.			

VA : very active A : active EA : enough active LA : less active
IA : inactive / not active

The third treatment – cycle No. 2 as Table 3 description, we can see the result that (1) the test has been simpler and it is appropriate; (2) the presentation has been running well; (3) the students took apart

more active to have test; hen finally (4) the result is that 20 students (or 95%) get minimal score, and only 1 student (5%) gets under minimal score.

Table 3
Cycle No 2

Step	Description
Planning	Some of test items are simplified, it is okay.
Action	Presentation is also simpler, clearer, and familiar. It makes the treatment runs well.
Observation	More active
Reflection/ conclusion	20 students (= 95%) get minimal score, while 1 student (=5%) gets under minimal score.

CONCLUSION

Based on the statistical calculation of both cycles where the result of t-test is 9.118 for the first cycle, and 11.531 for the second cycle; then table of significance t-value 0.06 is 2.03, and other table of significance 0.01 is 2.73. These description means that both result are higher than the expectation. In other words, text-attack skill (TAS) gives positive effect to develop students' reading achievement.

The average score of post test 2 is sufficient as it is 77.26. this mark is more than minimum score (70). And finally, 20 students gain more than minimum score, while only one student gains under criteria. It proves that text-attack skill (TAS) is efficient to improve students' ability in reading. In addition, TAS is really significance to increase reading skill in this research.

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