

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATIVE  
APPROACH IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION

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**ABSTRACT**

This Study is talk about “The Implementation Of Communicative Approach In Teaching Reading Comprehension (an experimental study in the second year student of SMP Negeri 18 Banda Aceh). The aim of this study is to Know the improvement of students’ achievement through the application of communicative approach than the grammar-translation method in reading comprehension. The sample of this study was two classes taken from the second year students of Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri 18 Banda Aceh. The total samples from both of second year student from SMPN 18 who took part when the data taken ware 54 students. In collecting data, the writer gave a set of test to the two groups. The test was provided by a passage titled Charity Day taken from English book for Junior High School Student. The test consisted 10 WH questions, five multiple choice and five True-False questions. In analyzing the data the writer used t-test to see the significant different between the two groups in reading comprehension. The mean and standard deviation score for group A (experimental group) was 62,64 and 13,50. While the mean and standard deviation for group B (control group) was 60,96 and13,23. The result of t-test of the two groups was 1,697. It was considered higher than t value on the table of significance at level 0,05 and 52 for the degree of freedom which was stated 1,684. So the research hypothesis (H1) was accepted and null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected. The writer concluded that the application of communicative approach is more effective than grammar translation method in teaching reading comprehension to the second year students of Junior High School (SMP) Negeri 18 Banda Aceh.

Key words: Teaching Reading, Communicative Approach

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## A. INTRODUCTION

English as a foreign language is taught officially in Indonesian school from Junior High School up to tertiary level of education. Teaching English at junior high school consist of teaching four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as the language aspects, structure, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation. For junior and senior high school student, it is taught from the first up to the second year.

Since as the one of four language skills, it has a very important role to everyone who wants to enlarge their knowledge. Boer and Dallmann (1960: 2) said that the ability to read is of great practical value to everyone. Reading is a process in which everyone's minds translate into printed symbols into the deals that the author is trying to tell or communicate to him. We read a printed material because we want to understand whatever the writer wants to say.

Unfortunately many students do not read well. One for of the problem is that they do not master lexical item. Therefore, the most important thing is to master the reading of the language. When the language of the text book is not similar to the mother tongue of the students, they may face a great problem to get information from the reading. Thus, reading seems to be difficult and boring for them. If they do not like reading, they will not able to increase their knowledge. Those who do not have sufficient vocabulary will not understand what they read. Besides, they will not be able to write effectively. The nonnative speakers of

English cannot read the columns of newspaper, magazine, or even understand broadcast on the radio and television if they are considerably lack of vocabulary.

The English teacher should develop the well-prepared material to be presented to the student. They should also consider the method and techniques which should be applied in the effort of developing the student's reading acquisition. The teacher has to observe development of their students in order to enable them to make a suitable selection of the materials for presentation, one of them is communicative approach. Larsen-Freeman (1990:22) stated that communicative approach is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning.

According to some experts, Indonesian students have low speed in reading. So, it impacted to their mastery of technique in reading, grammar and vocabulary. The writer believed that this was many happen because the English teaching of SMP often focus their teaching on grammar. In other words, they did not teach their student the proper technique or the way to read well. This was a preliminary study at SMP Negeri 18 Banda Aceh. This writing is designed to find out the effectiveness of using communicative approach has a positive contribution to the students in learning reading text.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **a. Definition of Reading**

Reading is the act of constructing meaning while transacting with text, according to Deschant (1973:19). There are two kinds of reading definition. First, is the meaning of reading with interpretation of experience generally, for instance: reading for picture, reading face and reading the weather. The second one is the definition of reading with interpretation of graphic symbol. This kind of definition is the one that were given in professional text book which relate to printed material.

Derived from the two definitions given by Deschant above, the writer would like to discuss further about the definition of reading which is mentioned in second definition.

Reading is a language process that the people could communicate and get information from another person through the printed pages. Team of Five (2006:51) in their book titled *Improving reading skills in English* said “reading is a way of getting the meaning or knowledge from the printed page such as text books, newspapers, magazines, and novels”. Also this statement related to what was said by Hittleman and Harris adopted by Shepherd (1982:2). Hittleman said “reading is the process of reconstructing an author ideas” while Harris said that reading is deriving meaning from a printed page through the ability to recognized printed words, knowledge of language and previous reading and life experiences. Thus, reading required recognition of printed symbols, knowledge of

language and it structure. Also, in reading we must have background of information of what we are reading about. In this case reading is not only merely pronouncing the words fluently or learn to call out words from the written materials by using various methods like what is done by students at primary grade level, but also they need to understand the idea that are presented in that sources.

The ability to read is an important part of language mastery. Reading is the ability to the readers to draw the essential meaning of each word which is read. While we are calling out words from a book or a text, unconsciously we are communicating with the writer. Let us look at the statement by Axelrod and Cooper (1996:7) “writing that tries to convince reader that something has or does not have value in evaluation. Writing that tries to convince reader that writer opinion and a controversial issue ought to be adopted or at least taken previously is called a position paper”. It is clear that in every form of writing, the writer tries to convince the readers to what he writes. The reader himself tries to get information to what he reads. So, there is any relationship between the writer and the reader. Of course, to keep this relationship, as reader, we should be able to perform our ability in catching the meaning of the text by understanding the message that the writer conveys.

A team of experts, under the sponsorship of the United States Office Education as adopted by Deschant (1973:19) defined reading as a term used to refer to an interaction by which meaning encoded in visual stimuli by an author becomes meaning

in the mind of the reader. We can conclude that reading is an activity to search new information to be our new knowledge through our understanding to be our new experience. Also, reading is an effort to find out the information through the written material and add up our knowledge to know much.

### **B. Reading Comprehension**

Reading is not only spell words by words of a written material, but it is also understanding to what we read, we have to get the meaning, information and construct new experience of this activity. Wise (2007:1) said “reading comprehension is the process of understanding and constructing meaning from a piece of text. This activity is called reading comprehension. Because the main aim of reading is comprehended to what we read. Sonka (1992:15) said “in general good comprehension means recognizing and understanding general ideas and specific fact and seeing these ideas and facts are organized and developed”.

Basically, comprehension is a process of learning, through comprehend a text; we know something new that we do not know before. Gillet and Temple (1994:35) defined “comprehension is understands new information in light of what we already know”. Surely, comprehension is understanding what we read and understanding the whole points of reading. It is involves prior knowledge, knowledge of text structure and search for information.

Hancock (1995:61) stated that there are three level of comprehension. The first is literal comprehension, than the second one is

inferential comprehension and, the last is critical comprehension.

#### **➤ Literal Comprehension**

Literal comprehension refers to the ideas and facts that are directly stated on the printed page. According to Richard (2004:32) stated that literal comprehension is refers to understanding of the straightforward meaning of text, such as facts, vocabularies, dates, times, and locations. In fact, literal idea or fact usually so clearly stated that the reader could go back in passage and underline the information if he need. The literal level of comprehension is fundamental to all reading skills at any level because the reader can draw an inference or make an evaluation. This level is the easiest level in reading comprehension because the reader does not required to go beyond what the author actually wrote.

Richard (2004:34) stated some examples for literal comprehension activities.

- a. Recognition details; the reader able to identify the facts that are stated in the text or passage such as names of the characters, time of the story, setting, and the incidents in the story.
- b. Recognition the topic sentences or main ideas
- c. Recognition of description; able to know the order of incidents or actions explicitly stated in the material.
- d. Recognition or recall of cause and effect relationship; identifying reasons for a certain accident, event, or character’s action that is explicitly stated by the author.

#### **➤ Inferential Comprehension**

In this level of comprehension the reader who wants to get the implied meaning from reading activities must read between the lines. Inferences are ideas that the reader receives when he goes beneath the surface to sense relationships, put facts and ideas together to draw conclusions and make generalizations, and detect the mood and the tone of material. Making inferences requires more thinking to the reader, because he must depend less on the author and more on his personal insights.

Sheng (2001:40) as quoted by Firmansyah (2007:13) added some examples of inferential activities as follows.

- a. Inferring supporting details; the reader hopes to be able to guess about the additional facts the author might have included in the selection which would have made it more informative, interesting or appealing.
- b. Inferring the main idea; providing the main idea, theme, or moral which is not explicitly stated in the selection.
- c. Inferring consequence; predicting what would happen in the cause-effect relationship, or hypothesizing about alternative beginnings to a story if the author had not provided one, or predicting the ending of the story before reading it.
- d. Inferring cause and effect relationship; hypothesizing about the nature of characters on the basis of the explicit clues presented in the selection.
- e. Inferring character traits; guessing what caused a certain event and explaining the rationale.
- f. Inferring figurative language; inferring literal meaning from the author's figurative use of language.

➤ **Critical Comprehension/Evaluation**

Critical reading comprehension requires a higher degree of skills development and perception. It is understood as passing judgment of the quality, worth, and accuracy of the truth of the passage. Critical reading also requires the reader to read with an inquiring mind, active, and creative participation. To read critically does not mean merely looking for false statements, rather it means questioning, comparing, and evaluating.

One of the most important comprehension skills is finding the main idea. The main idea is the essence of the paragraph of what the author is trying to get across to the reader. Hancock (1987:54) stated the types of evaluation tests as follows:

- a. Objective evaluation, judging the soundness of statements or events in the reading material based on external criteria, such as supporting evidence, reasons, and logic.
- b. Subjective evaluation; making judgment about the statement or event presented based on internal criteria such as biases, beliefs, preferences.
- c. Judgment of adequacy or validity; judging whether the author's treatment of a subject is accurate and complete when compared to other sources on the subject.
- d. Judgment about appropriateness; determining whether certain selections or parts of selections are relevant and

contribute to resulting an issue or a problem.

- e. Judgment of worth, desirability, or acceptability; judging the suitability of a character's action in a particular incident based on the reader personality value.

e. **The Communicative approach**

Communicative approach is a process of teaching learning English which support of motivates the learners to learners to learn a foreign language actively (Littlewood, 1984:18). Based on the above statement, the learners are given certain activities which motivate them to learn the language. Through those activities, it is hoped that the learner can enter-act with each other and practice the language being studied. He further explains that communicative approach also provides the learner for personal relationship to the develop activity among the learners and between learners and teacher. This relationship can help "humanize" the classrooms and create an environment that supports the individual in his effort to learn. Therefore, a good environment is useful to create an active participation of the learners in studying a language.

It is ever known that there are two assumptions that underline the approach, firstly, the students are concerned in the classroom with language use, not language knowledge and secondly is a view that the student learn language most effectively by practicing it in realistic situation. Littlewood (1984:94) also explains that though the approach the teacher is helped by a number of important aspects of the activities such as:

- a. The teacher's role in the learning process is recognized less dominant. More emphasis is placed on the learners' contribution through independent learning.
- b. The emphasis on communicative relationship to emerge, both among learners and between teachers and learners.
- c. Communicative interactions give learners more opportunities to express their own individuality in classroom. It also help them to integrate the foreign language with their own personality and thus more emotionally secure with it.
- d. These points are reinforced by a large number of activities.
- e. The teacher's role as co-communicator places him on an equal basis with the learners. This helps to break down tension and barriers between them.
- f. Learners are not constantly corrected. Errors are regarded with greatly tolerance as a completely normal phenomenon in the development of communicative skills.

In this case the students are given chance freely to practice what he or she has. The teacher should know who, what for they are. As a motivator He or She has to build relationship between She or he and his student and build nice teaching learning process to develop communicative skill. Communication will be only done if all of participant is not boring, happy and have good mood to talk.

When the learners or student communicate each other, it is not constantly corrected caused it could be their motivated to communicate in the target language turn down.

As we noticed that originator of most of the preceding methods take as their primary goal enabling students to communicate using target language, no matter whether they are Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, and Audio-lingual Method, etc. However, preparation for communication will be in adequate if only structures and vocabulary are taught. Students may know the rules of language usage, but will be unable to use the language.

In order to accomplish in communication the function of language such as arguing, persuading, or promising, etc. It is sufficient for students to simply their knowledge of the target language to be directed to communication. This communicative approach has got a serious awareness in Indonesia. It was adopted from the United States (Diane Larsen Freeman, 1986:124). The approach is considered acceptable in objective and theory, but the new

Syllabus does not insert any information about the procedures of techniques to employ it.

➤ **Communicative activities**

The communicative activities of class, the students are told that they will do a role play. The teacher tells them that they are to be divided into group of four, they are to imagine that they are employees of the company, before they begin, they discuss some possibilities together. They decide that they can talk about topics such as whether or not policies will change.

For fifteen minutes the students perform their role-play, the teacher moves from group to group to answer question and offer any advice on what the group can discuss. The students have an opportunity to post any question; in this way, they elicit some relevant to vocabulary words they discuss and language forms are appropriate.

**C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

➤ **Result**

The distributions tables of both groups researched are as follows:

Table I: The Distribution of the Test Result of Experimental class (II/a Students)

N0	X	$\bar{X}$	$(X - \bar{X})$	$(X - \bar{X})^2$
1	32	62.64	-30.64	938.81
2	42	62.64	-20.64	426.01
3	42	62.64	-20.64	426.01
4	46	62.64	-16.64	276.89
5	48	62.64	-14.64	214.33
6	50	62.64	-12.64	159.77
7	56	62.64	-6.64	44.09
8	56	62.64	-6.64	44.09
9	60	62.64	-2.64	6.97
10	60	62.64	-2.64	6.97
11	60	62.64	-2.64	6.97
12	62	62.64	-0.64	0.41
13	64	62.64	1.36	1.85
14	66	62.64	3.36	11.29

15	70	62.64	7.36	54.17
16	70	62.64	7.36	54.17
17	70	62.64	7.36	54.17
18	70	62.64	7.36	54.17
19	70	62.64	7.36	54.17
20	72	62.64	9.36	87.61
21	72	62.64	9.36	87.61
22	76	62.64	13.36	178.49
23	84	62.64	21.36	456.25
24	84	62.64	21.36	456.25
25	84	62.64	21.36	456.25
	1566			4557.76

1. Mean

The mean score of class II/a student is:

$$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{1566}{25}$$

$$= 62,64$$

$$SD_1 = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(X - \bar{X})^2}{N}}$$

$$SD_1 = \sqrt{\frac{4557,76}{25}}$$

$$= \sqrt{182,31}$$

$$= 13,50$$

2. Standard Deviation

The Standard Deviation score of class II/a student is:

Table II: The distribution of the test result of Control class (II/b students)

NO	X	$\bar{X}$	$(X - \bar{X})$	$(X - \bar{X})^2$
1	42	60.96	-18.96	359.48
2	42	60.96	-18.96	359.48
3	42	60.96	-18.96	359.48
4	42	60.96	-18.96	359.48
5	42	60.96	-18.96	359.48
6	42	60.96	-18.96	359.48
7	48	60.96	-12.96	167.96
8	50	60.96	-10.96	120.12
9	54	60.96	-6.96	48.44
10	56	60.96	-4.96	24.60
11	58	60.96	-2.96	8.76
12	60	60.96	-0.96	0.92
13	60	60.96	-0.96	0.92
14	60	60.96	-0.96	0.92
15	62	60.96	1.04	1.08
16	62	60.96	1.04	1.08
17	62	60.96	1.04	1.08
18	66	60.96	5.04	25.40
19	66	60.96	5.04	25.40
20	66	60.96	5.04	25.40
21	70	60.96	9.04	81.72
22	70	60.96	9.04	81.72



23	70	60.96	9.04	81.72
24	74	60.96	13.04	170.04
25	76	60.96	15.04	226.20
26	76	60.96	15.04	226.20
27	76	60.96	15.04	226.20
28	84	60.96	23.04	530.84
29	90	60.96	29.04	843.32
	1768			5076.97

1. Mean

The mean score of class II/b students is:

$$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{X}_2 &= \frac{1768}{29} \\ &= 60,96 \end{aligned}$$

2. Standard deviation

The standard deviation for class II/b students is:

$$SD_2 = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})^2}{N}}$$

$$\begin{aligned} SD_2 &= \sqrt{\frac{5076,97}{29}} \\ &= \sqrt{175,06} \\ &= 13,2 \end{aligned}$$

By finding the mean score of both groups the writer got which group was higher in reading comprehension. But to see more is there any significance difference between them, the writer needed to use t-test formula to prove the hypothesis after getting the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) values of both groups.

Firstly the writer obtained:

$$\bar{X}_1 = (\text{mean value of the first group}) = 62,64$$

$\bar{X}_2$  = (mean value of the second group) = 60,96

$SD_1$  = (standard deviation of the first group) = 13,50

$SD_2$  = (standard deviation of the second group) = 13,23

$N_1$  = (the number of sample of the first group) = 25

$N_2$  = (the number of sample of the second group) = 29

Next the values above are applied into the T- test formula:

$$\begin{aligned} T - score &= \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(N_1 - 1)sd_1 + (N_2 - 1)sd_2}{N_1 + N_2 - 2} \left( \frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2} \right)}} \\ &= \frac{62,64 - 60,96}{\sqrt{\frac{(25 - 1)13,50 + (29 - 1)13,23}{25 + 29 - 2} \left( \frac{1}{25} + \frac{1}{29} \right)}} \\ &= \frac{62,64 - 60,96}{\sqrt{\frac{(24)13,50 + (28)13,23}{52} \left( \frac{1}{25} + \frac{1}{29} \right)}} \\ &= \frac{1,68}{\sqrt{\frac{234 + 370,44}{52} \left( \frac{116}{2900} + \frac{100}{2900} \right)}} \\ &= \frac{1,68}{\sqrt{\frac{694,44}{52} \left( \frac{216}{2900} \right)}} \\ &= \frac{1,68}{\sqrt{13,354(0,074)}} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \frac{1,68}{\sqrt{0,988}} \\
 &= \frac{1,68}{0,99} \\
 &= 1,697
 \end{aligned}$$

After calculating the data to T-score, it is found that T-count is 1,697. The writer used 0,05 in the level of significance in certain degree of freedom. In this study the degree of freedom is 52. It is obtained from  $N1+N2-2 = 25+29-2 = 52$ .

From the table given by Furchan (2004:559) and Brown (1990:168) it was obtained that 52 degree of freedom on the significance level of 0,05 was 1,684, while the T-test value was 1, 697. This T-test is bigger than T-table. It means that there is any significance difference between who are taught by using communicative approach (class II/a) and who are taught by using grammar translation method (II/b) of SMP Negeri 18 Banda Aceh in Reading Comprehension. Therefore, research hypothesis (H1) is accepted and null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. The result proved that class II/a is better than II/b in mastering reading comprehension.

### ➤ Discussion

The writer had been used statistical formulas to analyze the data of this study in the previous sub-title. After analyzing the data of class II/a and II/b of SMP Negeri 18 Banda Aceh by using statistical analysis, it was found that the mean score of both of student were

different. The mean score for class II/a was 62,64, while the mean score for II/b was 60,96. The standard deviation for II/a was 13,50 and the standard deviation for II/b was 13,23. Actually, it was clear that there was different performance between class II/a and II/b of SMP Negeri 18 Banda Aceh in reading comprehension compared from the mean score which was gotten by the two groups. As mentioned previously, the mean score of II/a student was 62,64, while the mean score of II/b students was 60,96. Mean score of II/a was higher than mean score of II/b Student. It indicated that II/a student performed better than II/b student in reading comprehension.

However, the writer needed to prove the hypothesis by using statistical procedure to see if there any significant different between the two groups. In this case the writer used t-test formula and got 1.697 for it score. In this study the writer wanted to see whether T-count is bigger than T- table for 52 degree of freedom on the level of significance 0,05 which is 1,684. So, from the result of calculation above, the writer found that T-count > T-table (1,697>1,684). If the T-count value was bigger than T-table value, it indicated that research hypothesis was accepted and null hypothesis was rejected.

The writer had proved statistically that there was significance difference between II/a who are taught by using communicative approach and and II/b who are taught by using Grammar translation method (GTM) in reading comprehension performance

#### D. CONCLUSION

The writer had been stated that the aim of this research was to see whether there is any significance difference between the student who were taught by communicative approach (class II/a) and the student who were taught by using Grammar translation method (II/b) of Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri 18 Banda Aceh in reading comprehension.

In this case, the writer had been used statistical procedure to see if there is any significance difference between the two groups researched. The statistical procedure in this study was T- test formula. But before the T- test procedure had been calculated, the writer needed to calculate the mean and standard deviation of both groups first. The writer got mean score for II/a student was 62,64 and the standard deviation for this group was 13,50. The mean score for II/b students was 60,96 and standard deviation score was 13,23. The result indicated that mean and

standard deviation of II/a was bigger than mean and standard deviation that II/b students had.

After the value of mean and standard deviation of both groups were found, furthermore the writer applied the scores into t-test formula. T-test formula was used to know if there is any significance different between the two groups mentioned above. After calculating, the writer got the T- test value was 1,697. In fact this T count was bigger than T-table that was 1,684. The value of T- table which was stated on the table by the level of significance 0,05 and the degree of freedom for this study was 52. So, the research hypothesis (H1) was accepted while the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected. It was indicated that the student who are taught by using communicative approach was better in mastering reading comprehension compared to the second year students who are taught by using grammar translation method (GTM).

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