

# TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH PQRST TECHNIQUE BASED ON WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH

**Elisabet, Rahayu Apriliawati, Luwandi Suhartono**

English Education Study Program, Languages and Arts Education  
Department, Teacher Training Education Faculty of  
Tanjungpura University in Pontianak  
Email: [Elisabetzhong@gmail.com](mailto:Elisabetzhong@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Teaching reading is challenging for teacher because not all students can comprehend what they have read. This research is intended to answer the problem about how does PQRST technique based on Whole Language Approach improve students' reading comprehension on descriptive text about animal. This research is classroom action research. Whole Language approach is a philosophy which focused on making meaning in reading. Then, the technique used to improve the students reading comprehension on finding out the detail information and understanding language feature on descriptive text was PQRST technique. This technique guided the students to comprehend the information of descriptive text about animal. The result of this research showed that the students reading comprehension on descriptive text improved after applied the PQRST technique. With this activity, students had more practice in reading. Besides, during the reading process students were active in asked and answered questions, this technique also guide students to summarize the information of the passage. Consequently, the technique successfully improved the students' achievement in reading comprehension of descriptive text.

**Key words:** *Reading Comprehension, PQRST Technique, Whole Language Approach.*

**Abstrak:** Mengajar membaca adalah sesuatu yang menantang untuk guru karena tidak semua siswa dapat memahami apa yang mereka baca. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab permasalahan bagaimana teknik PQRST berdasarkan pendekatan whole language meningkatkan pemahaman siswa dalam membaca teks deskripsi tentang hewan. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas. Pendekatan Whole Language adalah sebuah pandangan yang menekankan pada pemahaman makna bacaan. Kemudian, teknik yang digunakan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman membaca dalam menemukan informasi terperinci dan memahami tata bahasa dalam bacaan deskripsi adalah teknik PQRST. Dengan teknik ini siswa dilatih untuk memahami isi bacaan deskripsi tentang hewan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan pemahaman membaca bacaan deskripsi siswa setelah penerapan teknik PQRST. Melalui aktivitas ini siswa berlatih memahami bacaan, mengajukan dan menjawab pertanyaan, siswa juga dituntun untuk meringkas informasi dari bacaan. Hasilnya, kemampuan siswa memahami bacaan deskripsi juga meningkat.

**Kata Kunci:** *Pemahaman Membaca, Pendekatan Whole Language, Teknik PQRST.*

Reading as a learning skill has been taught from elementary school to university because it is an important educational goal. There are two main reasons of reading according to Grellet (2010, p.4) namely reading for information and reading for pleasure. In the classroom practice, the reason of reading is reading for information. In order to get the information, students need to comprehend what they have read. Comprehension means an understanding of the information that words and sentences are communicating in a reading text. Furthermore, a reading text has different types, for example narrative, recount, report, hortatory and many more.

Based on the English syllabus of eighth grade in the first semester of curriculum 2013, students are expected to be able to comprehend descriptive text. Descriptive text is a text which describes what a person, place, animal or a thing is like. The generic structures of descriptive text are identification and description. In comprehending this kind of text, the students are expected to be able to reach the literal comprehension, inferential comprehension and to understand the text structure. In literal comprehension, students get the specific information or the answer of the question in the text that they read. Whereas, inferential comprehension lets students find out the main idea or define vocabulary in context. In other words, inferential comprehension allows students to make inference by themselves according to the text. Besides, the students also have to identify the text organization.

Nevertheless, regarding to the researcher observation during the teaching learning activity in SMP Negeri 24 Pontianak and regarding to the researcher interview to the English teacher, the eighth grade students got difficulties to comprehend a descriptive text, especially a descriptive text about animal. The difficulties were about a comprehension to describe the animal's characteristics. The students got difficulties to get the information of identification and description of descriptive text. Besides, when teacher taught about grammar features of descriptive text such as simple present tense, action verbs and noun phrases most of the students got difficulties in noun phrases. Most of them got difficulty to decide the translation that appropriate to be used in order to interpret the word. In other sides, students were uninterested in reading descriptive text because they did not understand the meaning. The way of teacher's teaching, in fact, could not attract the students' interest to focus on reading descriptive, as the result they did not like to recognize, even to comprehend the text.

Regarding the problems above, researcher chose PQRST technique based on Whole language approach. Then, to implement whole language approach, researcher proposed PQRST technique to solve the problems, because whole language approach and PQRST technique concern on the comprehension of the reading text.

In teaching descriptive text, the students are expected to understand the generic structure and language features of descriptive text which help them differentiate this kind of text to another. The generic structure of descriptive text consists of identification and description. In this research, the writer focuses on reading descriptive text about animal. For animal descriptive text, in identification, the writer identifies the animal in the description. This part clearly

states about the animal that is described. In description, the words are used to describe the classification, the physical appearances, habitats and behavior of the animal. Besides, there are some language features of descriptive text such as using descriptive adjectives, using detailed noun phrase, and using simple present tense. In this research the research focus on the use of noun phrases in descriptive text. Then, to help students in comprehend descriptive text about animal the researcher used whole language approach.

Whole language is an educational philosophy or perspective which focuses on making meaning in reading. Based on Whole language approach, reading must be taught as a whole. It assumed that learning occurs when information is presented as a whole rather than divided into smaller components. When teaching reading, teacher should emphasize on comprehension of the reading text, after that goes to the component of the text such as kind of text, grammar, or vocabulary (Ling, 2012, p.152). Therefore, when teaching reading descriptive text, teacher has to make sure that students understand the information in the text.

To implement Whole language approach researcher used PQRST technique. PQRST is an abbreviation of Preview, Questioning, Reading, Summary and Test. This technique is a powerful technique to improve reading comprehension and student's ability to recall information. PQRST technique can solve students' problem in identifying information in identification and description because PQRST technique helps students to engage actively and meaningfully in their reading. It also helps student recognize important point of reading text. Westwood (2001, p.62) mentioned four steps of PQRS technique. Instead, Ahuja (2007, p.90) added T in PQRS technique. So, it becomes PQRST. The steps of PQRST techniques are as follow:

**1. Preview (P)**

Previewing is a thinking process of preceding reading. In this stage the students scan the title, picture, diagram or figure of the text to gain a general impression of what the text is likely.

**2. Question (Q)**

During the previewing, the students raise some questions in his or her mind about the content.

**3. Read (R)**

The students read the page carefully for information in order to answer the questions posed in steps Preview and Question.

**4. Summarize (S)**

The students state their own words of the main points from the text or draw conclusions from what has been read. In this stage, a written summary is not always necessary.

**5. Test (T)**

The aim of the test is to check students' reading comprehension.

In short, PQRST technique begins with preview. In this step, Students scans the text, after that Students jot down some questions about the content. Then students read the text carefully to find information to answer the question posed. Next step is summary, and lastly the students are given a test. Based on the explanation above, the real PQRST technique can not be used in SMP N 24

Pontianak, because the students have less awareness in reading. That is why the researcher modifies the PQRS technique to make it suitable for eighth grade students of SMP N 24 Pontianak. The steps are as follows:

1. **Preview (P)**  
Teacher showed some pictures and students guess what the picture is. The purpose is to gain students' general impression of what the text is likely and to guide students in reading descriptive text.
2. **Question (Q)**  
Teacher gave the full text to the students after the preview step. Then, students raised some questions in their mind about the vocabulary that they did not know. After that they discussed the vocabularies with the teacher.
3. **Read (R)**  
Then Students read the text for information. After reading, students could ask the teacher the difficult part that they did not know.
4. **Summary (S)**  
In summary, students stated the information in the text. In this research, teacher did not ask the students to write down the summary of the text. Teacher directly asked the students the main point of the text in class discussion, because written summary is not always necessary in this stage.
5. **Test (T)**  
Teacher gave the students a test. The test was individual test. The teacher gave different texts for test that consisted of ten essay questions.

## **METHOD**

The method used in this research is classroom action research. This method used to find solution for the students problem in reading descriptive text. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2005, p.226) define that classroom action research may be used in any setting where a problem involving people, tasks, and procedure cries out for solution, or where some changes of future result in a more desirable outcome.

The characteristic of action research is collaborative which means in learning everyone contributes to understand the subject. In the research the teacher focused on the students, the problems they faced in each meeting and came up with solution in the next meeting. In this case, the researcher collaborates with the teacher.

There are four steps in classroom action research. Kemmis and McTaggart in Anne Burn (2010, p.31) mention these four steps. The steps are the plan, the action, the observation, and the reflection. The following is the description of the four steps in each cycle.

### **1. Plan**

The plan was the preparation before the teaching learning activity. The researcher and the teacher prepared the tools which are needed to do the research. The tools are lesson plan, teaching media (picture), students' worksheet, assessment, observation checklist table and field notes.

## 2. Action

The researcher acted as a collaborator and the English teacher of SMP Negeri 24 taught the students in reading descriptive text using PQRST technique. The teacher began with preview stage by showing some pictures. Then continue with question stage and Reading stage. The students read the text carefully and summarized the information of the text. Finally, the teacher gave the student test. Then, as the collaborator, the researcher took note and observed the teacher and the students' activities during the teaching learning process.

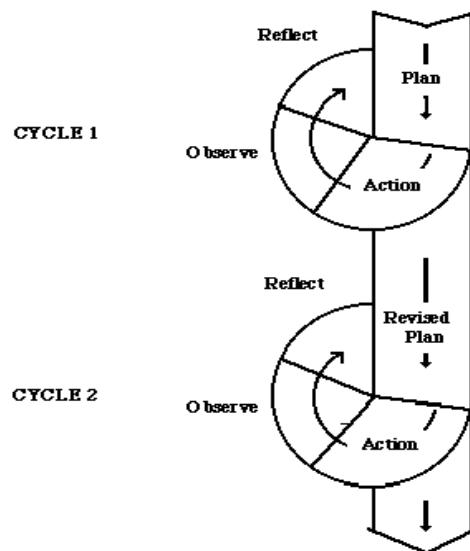
## 3. Observation.

To collect the data, the researcher filled the field note and observation checklist. The researcher observed students' activity and teacher's activity during teaching learning process. Whether the students followed the teacher instruction or not, or whether the teacher done all the steps of the technique well.

## 4. Reflection.

Reflection was the stage in which data collected in observation were analyzed. In order to improve the teaching learning process, the researcher and teacher discussed the performance of the teacher in teaching learning process to find the strength and weakness from each cycle. To overcome the weakness, researcher and teacher discussed the plan and chose appropriate activity for next cycle.

**Figure 1**



Cyclical Action Research model based on Kemmis and McTaggart (adapted from Anne burns: 2010)

The subject of this research was the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 24 Pontianak in the academic year 2013/2014. The research conducted in class VIII A that consisted of 32 students. There were 18 boys and 14 girls in this class. Their age was between 13-14 years old.

In collecting the data, the researcher used Observation checklist and Measurement. Observation was the time when the researcher recorded behaviors, interactions or events that were occurring. The purpose was to observe the process in order to improve the result and repair the mistakes of the process. In measurement, the researcher measured the students reading through worksheet based on the descriptive text given in every meeting.

The tools of data collecting used in this research are Observational checklist, field note and worksheet. Observation checklist was a list of things that was investigated by the observer. This list had been prepared by the observer. There was a table of observation checklist that consisted of quotations which reflected what had been done or not in teaching learning process. The observation checklist was filled by the observer/ collaborator. Then, field note is used to make a note about even that was unpredictable which occurred during the research and took concern of everything that happened in the class. It was filled by observer. Worksheet was used to take students reading score. Student's score was useful in data analysis. Therefore, researcher used essay test that consisted of ten questions. Then for documenting the process of classroom action research the researcher used camera.

## **RESULT**

Before conducting classroom action research, the researcher observed the students of the eighth grade of SMP N 24 Pontianak for about a month. During the pre research time, the research found out that the students had difficulties in reading. They faced many problems when they read descriptive text. Most of them could not comprehend descriptive text about animal. The students got difficulties in identifying the information in the generic structure of descriptive text; namely identification and description. Most of the students could not answer the questions based on descriptive text about animal on their work book (LKS) correctly.

Besides, the students got difficulty in descriptive text language feature that is noun phrases. The students got difficulty to decide the word translation that appropriate to use in order to translate the word. To solve these problems researcher used PQRST technique. There were 4 cycles in doing this research. The duration of each meeting was 80 minutes.

In general, the PQRST technique based on whole language approach improved students' reading comprehension in descriptive text. The students reading comprehension improved in four cycles. The students' mean score in first cycle was 46.8 and in second cycle 57.8. In the third cycle the students mean score was 65.4 and in the last cycle the students mean score was 72.8. They had shown the improvement in students' comprehension on identification and description and also noun phrase which is discussed specifically below:

1. **PQRST** Technique based on whole language approach could improve students' reading comprehension on identification and description of descriptive text through :
  - a) Previewing improve students' reading comprehension on identification.

Before reading, to help students get background knowledge of the text, the teacher provide some pictures in order to attract students and guide the students to the reading text. In every cycles students were very excited with the pictures which teacher showed to them. The students guessed the animal name based on the picture enthusiastically.

- b) Questioning activities could improve students' ability in identifying information on identification and description.

By asking questions about the words that they did not know the students could easily comprehend the descriptive text. In other side the teacher also asked some questions related to the text that they read. In the first cycles only few students answers the teacher questions. But, in the next cycles there were many students who answered the teacher's questions.

- c) Reading activities improve students generic structure.

In order to improve students ability in identifying information of descriptive paragraph that consists of identification and description. The teacher asked the students to read the reading passage carefully. While they were reading, the teacher asked them to underline the difficult word. After that, the students could ask the teacher to translate the difficult words. Then the students re-read the descriptive text. The aim was to make sure that they comprehend the text.

In first cycle, most of the students seemed confused and was not serious when reading the descriptive text. They also did not comprehend the text. Therefore in the next cycles teacher asked the students to translate the descriptive text together. Some students wrote the translation on their paper.

In second cycle, the researcher found that students were easier to comprehend the text after the teacher and the students translate the descriptive text together. In third and fourth cycle, many students could comprehend the text

- d) Summarising activities improve students reading comprehension on identification and description.

The teacher asked the students to retell the information of the descriptive text that they had read. The teacher did not ask them to write the summary on the paper but directly summarize in class discussion.

In the first cycle none of them had desire to tell the information that they got from the text. In the second cycle only few students rouse up their hand to summarize the text. In the third and fourth cycles many students tried to summarize the information in the descriptive text they had read.

- e) Testing activity could improve students reading comprehension on descriptive text.

Test was given to clarify that the students had comprehend the text. In the first and second cycles students still had difficulties in comprehend the information in descriptive text generic structures; identification and description.

In second cycle, based on researcher interview to the students after they finished their test, some students said that the test was difficult. Then to solve this problem, for the third and fourth cycles, students' worksheet or the

test took from students' workbook (LKS). Later on the third and fourth cycles, the students shown improvement in their score. There were many students who passed KKM.

- f) Class discussion activities could explain about descriptive text generic structure.

Teacher explained the generic structure of descriptive text, namely identification and description. Through this activity students were allowed to raise questions based on the descriptive text which they learnt. The students also answered teacher's questions based on the reading text. For the teacher, conference gave her a chance to respond, clarify the meaning and resolve ambiguities.

2. **PQRST** technique based on whole language approach improve students' students' comprehension in language features of descriptive text, especially noun phrases.

The students were asked to read the reading passage and underline the difficult word. In the first cycle the students seemed not serious when reading the text. Some of them did not follow the teacher's instructions. In the second, third and fourth cycles the students could follow the teacher instruction and asked the difficult word.

After the students read the descriptive text, the teacher, then, explained about noun phrase. The teacher also shown the students noun phrase that used in each paragraph of the reading text. It helped the students to comprehend the used of noun phrase in the text.

In the first cycle students still have difficulties in noun phrases. For the next cycle teacher re-explained about noun phrases and show the example from the descriptive text which they had learn. In the second cycle, some students still confuse about noun phrases. Therefore in the third cycle teacher pointed out the noun phrases that used in the text. then in the third and fourth cycle students improved in noun phrases, some students could give example of noun phrases that used in the text.

## **DISCUSSION**

The general research question concerned in the improvement of students' reading comprehension in descriptive text after being applied PQRST technique. Then the specific research question was on how PQRST technique improve students' reading ability in generic structure of descriptive text. The results shown there was improvement on students' reading ability in identification and description of descriptive text.

During applying this technique, based on the observation checklist and field notes, the activities in cycle 1 did not run smoothly. In cycle I, the students got confused about the procedure of technique. The students also still became passive learners; only some of them who took part actively in the activities. Besides, the students' score was also low and the goal of learning did not achieve as expected by the researcher.

In cycle II, The collaborator still found some weaknesses in this cycle related to the students' comprehension on descriptive text. In cycle 2, the students



still became passive learners; only some of them who took part actively in the activities. Many students were still busy with their own business rather than listen to the teacher explanation. The students' score were not satisfactory.

In cycle III, the students showed good improvements in the activities and their comprehension on descriptive text, as well as the researcher's performances. The students also knew what they had to do in the classroom. The students also were more enthusiastic in learning than before. Since many students did not pass KKM and the means score of students were still not satisfactory. Therefore, the researcher needed to conduct cycle IV.

In cycle IV, the students were very enthusiastic in learning. All students got involved actively in class discussion to comprehend the material. Not only comprehending the information in descriptive text but also their comprehension on the generic structure of descriptive text got better. The students were very exciting in learning by using this technique. Then many students pass KKM and the students' score were satisfactory.

This technique was considered successful in this research. It was not only shown from the process of activities, but also their comprehension test. In process of activity, students could followed and understand teacher's instruction, the students more active in asked and answered questions from the teacher, students brought dictionary, and some students applied the PQRST technique when they did the individual test. In comprehension test, the students showed good improvement. The improvements were analyzed from their ability in answering the question of individual test and the number of students who passed KKM in that school on reading comprehension that is 70.

The second question of the specific research question asked on how PQRST technique improve students' reading ability in noun phrases. In this case, noun phrases were mostly used in descriptive text. During the class activity, in first cycle, teacher explained about noun phrases and the students were a little bit hard to understand the text. Then the teacher decided to translate the text and showed them the noun phrases in each paragraph as the example. So that for cycle II and the next cycles, the researcher and the teacher agreed to ask the students to translate all sentences in paragraph. The results showed that there was improvement in noun phrases after applying PQRST technique.

In conclusion, the result of research showed that the action hypothesis was accepted. By using Preview, Question, Read, Summary and Test (PQRST) technique, the ability of students' reading comprehension of eighth grade of SMP Negeri 24 Pontianak in academic year 2013/2014 improved. The students had improved their reading comprehension on descriptive text.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the discussion of the previous chapter, it can be conclude that students' ability in reading descriptive for the eighth grade students of SMPN 24 Pontianak improved after being taught through PQRST technique in four cycles. The research showed that the use of PQRST technique in teaching descriptive text

could improve students' reading comprehension from cycle to cycle. This technique did not only improve students' reading comprehension on descriptive text, but also improved students' participation and motivation in learning. Before applying this technique, only few students participated in teaching learning process actively. But, by using this technique, the students were encouraged to share opinion, rouse up their hand to answer questions.

The students' reading competence improved from the first cycle to the fourth cycle. It was shown by the improvement of the students' score and all of the aspects in the goals of teaching learning process that have been conducted by the teacher and collaborator had been fulfilled. This technique did not only improve the students' comprehension on descriptive text, but also built students' diligence in learning, and also be responsible in learning

Besides, most of the students did not bring the dictionary in the first meeting which made the class noisy. They asked their friend when it came to the word they didn't know. Thus, the teacher remained them to bring the dictionary in order to help them in their reading. It helped a lot. The class was less noisy and the students became more independent.

### **Suggestion**

In reference to the research findings, the researcher puts forward suggestions to improve teaching and learning reading comprehension in SMP Negeri 24 Pontianak. The researcher recommends the teacher to apply PQRSST technique in classroom when teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text. The teacher should pay attention to each student when class discussion and when they did individual test. Then, to motivate the student in reading descriptive text the teacher may give reward to encourage students in learning English. After that, the teacher should motivate students to speak English when discussing.

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