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## Using Cloze Strategy to Improve Students' Reading Comprehension

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to improve students' reading comprehension and their learning activities by using the Cloze Strategy. In this research, the writer used Classroom Action Research as the design of the research. This research was implemented in two cycles. The sample of this research was 30 students. To get the data, the writers used observation sheet and a reading test. The test used in this research was a closed-end question, which consisted of 25 questions. The test was aimed at getting the score of the students' reading comprehension; meanwhile, an observation sheet was used to find out the students' learning activities. The result of the test showed that there was an improvement of the students' reading abilities and learning activities. It was found that the students' reading ability in cycle 1 was 57.07 while in cycle 2 was 80.53, and it was found that the score of the students' learning activities in cycle 1 was 6.19 while in the cycle 2 was 7.85. Therefore, the implementation of the Cloze Strategy was successful to be used in improving the students' reading comprehension and the students' learning activities.



## INTRODUCTION

Reading is the process of identification, interpretation and perception of written or printed material. Zulianti and Hastomo (2022: 177) said that when people read, people use their eyes to acquire written symbols (letters, punctuation marks, and spaces), and they employ their minds to transform them into words, sentences, and paragraphs that speak something to us. Reading is one of the ways to communicate between writer and reader through written forms. Reading is the practice of using text to create meaning. As stated by Klingner et.al (2007: 2) reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include word reading, word and world knowledge, and fluency. Moreover, Sheng (2000: 13) states that reading comprehension is a process of negotiating understanding between the reader and the writer. In this case, there are some factors involved, such as cognitive and emotional factors and linguistic factors (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantic, and pragmatic element). Clearly, reading needs the ability to comprehend the meaning what is read. In this case, to comprehend a reading text, a reader must have a wide range of capacities and abilities. These include cognitive, capacities, motivation, and various types of knowledge.

Reading is the ability to draw meaning from their printed page and interpret this information appropriately (Stoler 2002: 9). Specifically, Moreilon, (2007: 10) He says that reading making meaning from print and visual information. But reading not simple. Reading is an active process that requires a great deal of practice and skill. In this case, reading can be defined as the instantaneous recognition of various written symbol with existing knowledge. Through reading activity, the readers especially students can improve their abilities in understanding written text by identifying part of a text. Being able to understand the meaning of a text helps them developing their intellect and their ability especially in English.

In teaching and learning activity, the role of teacher is very important to develop students' reading comprehension. In this case, the teacher must be aware of the students' progress and their ability in learning process especially in teaching reading. Teaching reading is not about teaching students basic reading skill as it is about teaching students how to use reading as a tool for thinking and learning. According to Brown (2007: 7), teaching reading is an activity in which the teacher guides and facilitates learning; give a chance for the learners to learn, and sets the students to do learning. In this case, to make the teaching and learning reading process run well, the teacher needs to set a good classroom situation for the students to learn. In setting a good condition, the teacher must consider a classroom strategy used as this can affect the way of teacher manages the class. According to Fitriani et.al (2021: 139) teachers can present interesting reading based on students' interests and language skills so as to prepare students to read and develop their thinking by showing interesting visual aids related to the topic, making predictive models, asking questions, and encouraging their discussion.

Cloze strategy was originally developed to assess students' use of strategies and it is a very effective way to teach reading comprehension (Duke and Pearson, 2001: 1). Cloze passages are written texts from which words or letters have been deleted. Wahyuni (2014: 18) said that cloze procedure is filling out a partial text reading of words the text is missing and then filled the missing word void in the text by the reader. In addition, Allen (2007: 39) cloze is a strategy that using the omitting word in sentence in order to fill the blank words based on context of sentence so the students will encounter and content information. In addition, a word blank is provided for students so they can choose from among the listed words to complete the passage. The purpose of cloze strategy is to help the students determining how much they know the content of the text before reading it and how much they have learned after reading that text. According to Mather (2002: 1), there are several procedures for the implementation of cloze strategy in teaching and

learning process. Phase 1: presentation and preparation, in pre reading activities, the teacher motivates the students and build their students' background knowledge. The teacher must provide short practice sessions. Then, the teacher must work with the students and model how the exercises are completed to construct a reading passage; phase 2: preview and completion, in this stage, the teacher ask the students to read the passage three times. During the first reading, the students can gain an overview of the material and they are required to fill in the blank in the reading passage. In the second reading, the students are expected to fill all of the blanks. For the third reading, the students are asked to check if the responses make sense. During the second and third process of reading, the students may work in pairs or small group and phase 3: follow up, the most important step is the follow-up conference. The teacher must discuss with the students about their choices, review other acceptable alternatives, and ask the students to explain why they choose particular response. If needed, the teacher should discuss specific context clues that are found around the blank and assist the students in word selection. As a final step, the teacher must ask the students to compare their responses with the original text.

Based on the preliminary research at SMK N 8 Bandar Lampung, the writers found that the students faced difficulties in learning reading. Those difficulties lied on their understanding of the meaning of English words in text because of their low proficiency of vocabulary used. As stated by Silva and Chain; LervAag et.al; Lawrence et.al. in Dong at.al (2020) vocabulary knowledge contributes to reading comprehension through semantic meaning identification and played collaborator role with inference on sentence meaning comprehension. Another problem, they could not find the main idea or supporting idea of a text and make inference from the text. In this case, the writers are interested to improve the students' reading comprehension by using cloze strategy which have been discussed in previous part that it help the students to determine how much they understand about the content of a text before they fill the blank text and after they fill the text. From the statement

above, the writers assumed that cloze strategy can help the students in improving their reading comprehension. In this research, the writer decided to conduct Classroom Action Research entitled Using Cloze Strategy to Improve Students' Reading Comprehension.

This study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. Does implementing Cloze Strategy improve students' reading comprehension?
2. Does implementing Cloze Strategy improve students' learning activity?

## **METHODS**

In conducting the research, the writer used Classroom Action Research (CAR). Action research is an approach to collecting and interpreting data that involves clear, repeated cycle of procedures (Murcia, 2001: 490). The researcher begins by planning an action to address a problem, issue, or question in his or her own context.

Classroom Action Research (CAR) method will carry out as a device to solve problem in learning activity in the class. It is an appropriate way for improving the quality of educational process, including teachers' administrators, students, educational social atmosphere and teaching learning process. The design of classroom action research based on the consideration that the writers attempt to solve the problem of the particular classroom.

Kemmis and Mc Taggart in Burns (1999: 32) explained that action research occurs through a dynamic and complementary process, which consists of four essential moments: of planning, action, observation and reflection. The dependent variable in this research is students' reading comprehension and independent variable is cloze strategy.

The subject of this research is the students at the eleventh grade of SMK N 8 Bandar Lampung. In taking the sample, the writers used cluster random sampling because the sample of the research is more than two classes. It is supported by Frey (2018) Cluster Random sampling is probability sampling technique where all population elements are categorized into mutually exclusive and exhaustive

groups called clusters. Cluster sampling is used when it is more feasible to select groups of individuals rather than individuals from a defined population. Furthermore, the writer employed the 11B students which consist of 30 students as the sample of the research. For applying cluster random sampling, the writers provided lottery.

In collecting the data, the writers used test which consist of formative test and summative test. Formative test is used to measure the students' achievement in each meeting of learning process and summative test is used to access students' learning at the end of each cycle. Besides that, the writers also used non test to collect the data. The non-test consists of observation sheet and field notes. Both observation sheet and field note are used to know the situation and the progress in learning and teaching process.

In this research, the writers used formative and summative test to measure the students' reading comprehension. The writers used close ended questions or multiple-choice tests to measure the students' reading comprehension in each meeting and each cycle. The test consists of 25 questions with 4 options (a, b, c, d). The score for each correct item is 4.0 and 0 for incorrect answer. Besides that, the writers also use observation sheet and field note.

The observation sheet is used to observe the students' learning independence during the learning process in each cycle. Observation sheet is concerned to the students as the subject in implementing the strategy. Observation sheet is given to know the students' performance in every meeting. The writers will provide four students' activities relates to the students' activity during the learning process. Field notes are the form to get the information about classroom activities which the writers get during the research. It is divided into two parts, the first is notes the students' side and the second is teachers' side.

Data analysis is the point where statement or assertions about what the research shows are produced. In this research there are two types of data that will be collected, namely quantitative data and qualitative data (Burns, 1999: 153). Quantitative data will be analyzed by using mean statistical formula, while qualitative data will be

analyzed by using descriptive qualitative method. In quantitative data analysis, the writers calculated individual and classical completeness while in qualitative data analysis. The data is obtained through direct observation towards the students' activities during learning process. It is noted using observation sheet provided.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After getting the score from reading test of cycle I, the writer calculated the mean of the students' score, the percentage of the students who passed the minimum mastery criterion, and the improvement of students' score in reading from the reading test of cycle I to Cycle II.

### Result of First Cycle

#### *Result of Reading Test*

Teaching reading through cloze strategy was solution to solve problems that exist at SMKN 8 Bandar Lampung. Cloze Strategy provided pre-reading activity that makes the students can be motivated before learning.

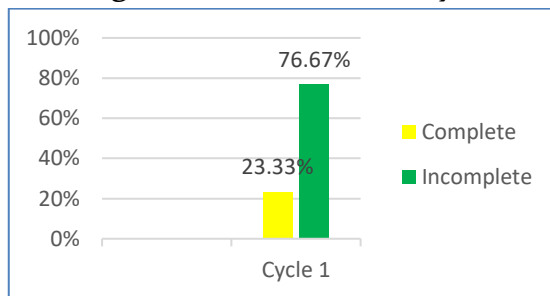
Data from the cycle 1 of the students learning reading outcomes can be seen in the figure below:

**Table 1.** The Percentage of Students' Reading Score in Cycle 1

No	MCC	Cycle 1		Criteria
		The number of Students	Percentage	
1	$\geq 70$	7	23.3%	Passed
2	$< 70$	23	76.7%	Failed

Based on the calculation of the data, there are 7 out of 30 students or 23.33% who passed the minimum completeness criteria and 23 out of 30 students or 76.67% who failed the minimum completeness criteria. For more details, the results of cycle 1 can be seen in the diagram bellow:

**Diagram 1.** The Result of Cycle 1



### *Result of Observation Sheet*

The data in the observation sheet of students' activities was analyzed by finding the result of total score and mean then categorized students' activities by using criteria in the table bellow (Aqib, et al., 2011: 269)

**Table 2.** Criteria of Students' Learning Activities

No	Range of Score	Category
1.	>8.00	Very good
2.	7.50 – 7.99	Good
3.	7.00 – 7.49	Fair
4.	6.00 – 6.99	Poor

Based on the date of the observation sheet in cycle 1, the writers found 12 students out of 30 got an average score of 6.0, 8 students out of 30 got an average score 6.2, and 10 students out of 30 got an average score 6.4. The average score from all the data above is 6.19. According the criteria of students' learning activities the students' learning activity in eleventh grade is categorized in poor category.

### **Result of Cycle 2**

#### *Result of Reading Test*

The teaching and learning process by using cloze strategy in cycle 2 was done to improve the students' reading ability in cycle 1. The writers modified the previous lesson plan based on the result of



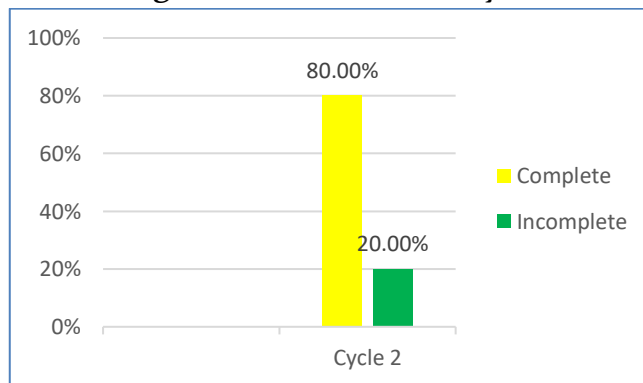
reflecting phase in cycle 1. The writers improved the students' reading comprehension by giving more explanation about how to identify main idea, supporting idea, reference, inference, and vocabulary through cloze strategy. The writer also motivated the students to be more active and enthusiastic in asking or answer question, and also in doing the assignment given in the learning process.

Based on the data analysis, there was an improvement on the students' reading comprehension. The writers found there was 24 students out of 30 or 80% passed the minimum completeness criteria and 6 students out of 30 or 20% failed the minimum completeness criteria. The percentage of the students' reading comprehension can be seen in the table and diagram bellow:

**Table 3.** The Percentage of Students' Reading Score in Cycle 2

No	MCC	Cycle 2		Criteria
		The number of Students	Percentage	
1	$\geq 70$	24	80%	Passed
2	$< 70$	6	20%	Failed

**Diagram 2.** The Result of Cycle 2



From the data that has been presented, it can be concluded that the students' reading comprehension has improved from the cycle 1 to cycle 2. The result of reading test in cycle 1 showed the

percentage of the number of students who passed MCC was 7 Students or 23.3% while the number of students who failed to meet MCC was 23 students or 76.7%. In cycle 2, there were 24 students or 80% who passed to meet MCC while the number of students who failed was 6 students or 20%.

### *Result of Observation Sheet*

Based on the data of the observation sheet in cycle 2, the writers found 1 student out of 30 got an average score 6.8, 11 students out of 30 got an average score of 7.0, 6 students out of 30 got 8.0 and 22 students out of 30 got an average score 8.6. the average score from all the data above was 7.85. According to the criteria of students' learning activities, the students' learning activity in eleventh grade in cycle 2 was categorized in good category.

According to the result of observation sheet, it can be seen that in the second cycle the condition of class in teaching learning process was better than the previous cycle. The average score of students' activities in cycle 1 was 6.19 while in cycle 2 was 7.85. It can be seen from the students who were ready to follow the lesson, and most of them were enthusiastic to answer questions from the teacher. In doing the reading task, they seemed enjoyable. Relating to the result of observation sheet in the cycle 2, the data showed that the students have an improvement in their learning activity.

### *Students' Reading Comprehension*

Referring to the result of analysis in cycle 1, it showed that the students who passed the MCC in learning reading was 7 students out of 30 or 23.3% and 23 out of 30 students failed to meet MCC. Meanwhile in cycle 2, the students who passed the MCC in learning reading was 24 out of 30 students or 80% and 6 out of 30 students or 20% failed to meet MCC. In this case, it can be concluded that using cloze strategy can improve students' reading comprehension. The finding is supported by Sari (2018) who said that cloze strategy is an effective technique to teach reading and it can be used for students in comprehending text.

The implementation of cloze strategy can help the students in determining the level of their ability in reading. The statement in line with Helfeldt, Henk and Fotos (in Lu, 2006:20) who said that cloze procedure as “passage completion” technique is an informal instrument to determine students’ instructional reading level. By knowing the students’ level of learning reading, teacher can adjust and guide the students more properly.

### *Students’ Learning Activity*

According to the result of analysis, students’ learning activity in cycle 1 was categorized into poor category with the average score 6.19 meanwhile in cycle 2 there was an improvement towards students’ learning activity with the average score 7.85 and categorized in good category. It can be seen that cloze strategy is an effective technique used in the process of learning activities. This finding is supported by Sari (2018) who stated that the students were active, enthusiastic in teaching learning process through cloze strategy. Besides that, cloze strategy also can be used as an effective technique in improving students’ self-confidence and motivation. As stated by Lombard (in Lu, 2006: 20) cloze test helps to solve students’ reading problems and increase their confidence when they receive immediate and satisfactory feedback.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study discovers that cloze strategy can increase students’ reading comprehension. Besides that, this technique also improves students’ learning activity. Moreover, by implementing cloze strategy, students can determine their level of reading and increase their self-confidence in learning process. By knowing the level of students in reading, teachers can find out what students need during a learning process. In this case, the writers suggested the teachers to use cloze strategy in teaching and learning reading in order to improve the students’ outcome and the writers expect that the finding of this research can be helpful for the academic or researcher who are interested in doing a research in the same field.

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