IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH "TELLS" STRATEGY AT THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF SMA MUHAMMADIYAH 9 PERUMNAS MAKASSAR

Meningkatkan Pemahaman Membaca Siswa Melalui Strategy "TELLS" Pada Siswa Tahun Pertama Di SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Perumnas Makassar

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to improve students' reading comprehension by using strategy of tittle, examine, look, look and setting. This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR) by implementing two cycles (cycle 1 and 2). This research tried to find out the students' achievement in literal comprehension through TELLS Strategy and the students' achievement in interpretive comprehension through TELLS Strategy. Then the researcher found the results based on the goals of the research, those were the students' improvement in literal reading comprehension was 67.75% from 51.31%, as well as the students' improvement in interpretative reading comprehension 67.10% from 51.31%. It was reached by the implementation of TELLS Strategy in the classroom.
Keywords: *Reading, TELLS Strategy, CAR, Literal, Interpretative.*

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa dengan menggunakan strategi tittle, examine, look, look and setting (TELLS). Penelitian ini menggunakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) dengan menerapkan dua siklus (siklus 1 dan 2). Penelitian ini mencoba untuk mengetahui prestasi dalam pemahaman literal melalui TELLS Strategi dan prestasi siswa dalam pemahaman interpretatif melalui TELLS Strategi. Kemudian peneliti menemukan hasil berdasarkan tujuan penelitian, mereka adalah peningkatan pemahaman literal membaca siswa adalah 67,75% dari 51,31%, serta peningkatan pemahaman membaca interpretatif siswa 67,10% dari 51,31%. Hal itu dicapai dengan penerapan TELLS Strategi di dalam kelas.
Kata Kunci: *Reading, TELLS Strategi, CAR, Literal, Interpretative.*

Reading is one of the important aspects in learning English, which is applied in elementary levels until university levels of education. Reading is a very important for the learners, when they are undergoing their education. Therefore, reading cannot be considered as isolate subject in our study, both of language and learning other disciplines. Harmer (1998: 68) states that reading is useful for other purposes, any exposure to English (provided students understand it more or less) is a good thing for language students. At the very least, some of the language sticks in their minds as part of these processes of language acquisition, and, if the reading text is especially interesting and engaging, acquisition is likely to be even more successful.

Through reading, people can improve their own knowledge which ensures the continuing personal growths and adapts the change in the word. Harmer (1998: 68) argues that many of students want to be able to read text in English either for their careers, for study purposes or simply for pleasure. Anything we can do to make reading easier for them must be good idea.

When teaching how to read English texts, the main goal is comprehension of reading materials. Yet, the majority of the students do not have any competence in English well. Most students encounter the problem in the comprehending an English text. They are at frustration level although they have been learning English for years. Based on information from an English teacher and observer, result the students achievement especially in reading at SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Perumnas of the First year students in the last semester that the students achievement in reading English are still low, where the students value average still got 40.01 while the standard reading in curriculum is 65. It is happened because the teachers are not using appropiate method to improve students reading comprehension, the students' motivation in reading is lack.

By looking this fact, lecturers or teachers give variations of teaching technique. TELLS aims to engage students in reading text and analyze whole the text. Students are taught to look at the title and then requires student to examine the material, then students look for hard word and important word. The last step students skim passage for clues about the setting. It is a good method to help students activate their prior knowledge related to the material. This possibility motivates the writer to conduct a research under the title. "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through TELLS Strategy (Title, Examine, Look, Look and Setting) at the first year of SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Perumnas".

The result of the research is expected to be useful information and a reference for the English teacher of the first year of SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Perumnas. And also it will be expected to give a new insight in improving English reading comprehension by using TELLS.

The scope of the study is the writer will be focused to improve the students' achievement in literal reading (main idea, detail information and following instruction) and the students' achievement in interpretative comprehension

(drawing conclusion) at the first year of SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Perumnas Makassar.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Idol-Maestas (1985) developes TELLS as pre-reading strategy to enhance comprehension. The advantage of this strategy is for guiding students' probing while reading a story. TELLS is an acronym that prompts students to follow a series of steps:

      a. **T**: Study story titles

      b. **E**: Examine and skim pages for clues

      c. **L**: Look for important words

      d. **L**: Look for difficult words

      e. **S**: Think about the story settings

According to Klinger, Vaughn and Boardman (2007: 85), TELLS Strategy can be posted on a wall in the classroom and/or provided individually to students. Moreover, the teacher helps students learn how to apply each steps one at a time and then use them all when reading a story. Idol-Maestas (1985) suggests that it is important to continue prompting students to use this and other comprehension strategies even after they appear to have become proficient in strategy implementation. Explicit instruction using transfer activities to help students internalize strategies and generalize their usage to the other tasks is important, especially for students with learning disability.

Using a multiple-baseline design, Idol-Maestas (1985) evaluates the procedure of TELLS Strategy in four elementary and two secondary students from special education classes. After training, reading comprehension improved for both the elementary and secondary students; however, comprehension performance gains are not maintained at high levels after the procedure of TELLS Strategy is removed.

The primary purpose of the current study was to extend research on the procedure of TELLS Strategy by evaluating the effects of TELLS on comprehension levels and rates. TELLS Strategy is effective at improving reading comprehension, it could help to prevent a downward spiral of reading skill development caused by poor readers choosing to read less (Skinner, 1998;

Stanovich, 1986).

Williams and Skinner (2004) implements the procedure of TELLS Strategy almost every school day, with an elementary student with learning disabilities in reading, who appeared to be highly motivated. In the current study, the TELLS Strategy intervention was implemented two or three times per week, with secondary students who had stronger reading skills, and who appeared less motivated (e.g., several instances when students appeared to rush through the question answering). Researchers could conduct studies designed to determine if more frequent and consistent administration of TELLS Strategy is needed for students to develop and maintain generalizable comprehension skills. Additional studies should be conducted with less skilled readers, younger readers, and students with disabilities. TELLS Strategy is more likely to cause generalized improvement in reading comprehension in students with disabilities and/or students reading at lower grade levels. Finally, future researchers should consider implementing similar studies and supplementing the procedure of TELLS Strategy with performance feedback or reinforcement contingent on reading comprehension to determine if such procedures enhance the effectiveness of TELLS Strategy (Saecker, et. al).These are the procedure of TELLS Strategy:

a. The first step, students are taught to look at the *Title* and form clues as to what the material is covering.

b. The second step, *Examine*, requires the students to skim the passage for clues about the content of the passage.

c. The third step is to *Look* for important words (e.g., words that are used often). These steps may enhance comprehension because they may activate prior knowledge related to the content (Kueker, 1990).

d. The fourth step is to *Look* for hard words (e.g., unknown words) and find their meaning. Knowing the meaning of words is critical for comprehension (Stahl, 2003).

e. During the final step, *Setting*, readers skim the passage for clues about the setting, including places, areas, descriptions, dates, or references to time periods. This activity may enhance comprehension by activating prior knowledge and causing students to form more complex hypotheses

regarding the content of the material.

Procedure of TELLS Strategy may have activated prior knowledge related to the specific previewed passages, which allowed for more effective information processing (Kueker, 1990). Providing definitions of unknown words may have enhanced comprehension on previewed passages (Stahl, 2003). Unless the same background knowledge or those same unknown words were used across passages, we would expect little impact regarding the unpreviewed passages. Perhaps TELLS Strategy enhanced reading speed on targeted passages, which may have reduced the cognitive resources applied to aloud word reading, making more resources available to apply to comprehension (Reynolds, 2000).

TELLS STRATEGY IN THE CLASSROOM

After escorting the participant to the testing area, the researcher starts the tape recorder. Next, the experimenter presents the student with a copy of the modified TELLS Strategy worksheet (see the figure below). Each step of the TELLS Strategy worksheet is completed orally. During the first two sessions, the TELLS procedures are described to the student in detail. After these sessions, the researcher provides additional prompts and/or instructions, as needed.

The first step in the TELLS procedure (T) is to prompt the students to read the title and form clues as to the subject of the story. The researcher encourages the students to form a hypothesis about the content of the passages by reading the title. The second step (E) is to examine. The students are prompted to skim the passages for clues. This step should cause students to develop new hypotheses about the nature of the passage. In step three, Look (L), the students are instructed to scan the passages for important words (e.g., words used frequently). During the fourth step, Look (L), students are taught to look for hard words (e.g., unfamiliar words that the student may not recognize, know the meaning of, and/or be able to pronounce). During the final step, the students are taught to skim the passages for clues about the setting. Students are instructed to look for clues such as places, areas, descriptions, dates, or references to time periods.

After describing the TELLS procedure, the researcher prompts the student through the TELLS procedures before they read the text aloud. The students provide verbal responses to the TELLS prompts. When the students identify a hard word, the researcher reads the word aloud and provides him or her with the meaning of the word as it is used in the text. After finishing the TELLS procedure, the student is given the same instructions used for the baseline (assessment- only condition). During this assessment, the student read the passage that is just previewed using TELLS and then answered the comprehension questions.

TELLS Worksheet

Title	What is the title of this story? What do you think it is about?
	_____
	_____
	_____
Examine	Scan topic sentences to find clues about this story.
	_____
	_____
	_____
Look	Write down important words, such as ones that are used frequently.
	_____
	_____
	_____
Look	Look again through the story for hard words, words you do not know. Write them down.
	_____
	_____
	_____
Setting	Write down clues about the setting, such as the place, date, and time period. (Hint: These clues are often found in the beginning of the story.)
	_____
	_____
	_____

(Ridge & Skinner: 2010)

READING COMPREHENSION

Reading is one of the most important skills in learning language besides listening, speaking and writing. It has the fundamental goal to know enough the concept and the language. It operational means an activity that the students perform to gain information or massage from the written material the read. Therefore, in reading activity students have intention to obtain knowledge from their listening.

Hornby (1994: 1043) defines reading as an action of a person who reads. Carillo (1976:1) concludes that educators and psychologists differ as to what should be included in the definition of reading in three categories.

a. Reading is purely a mechanical process in reading skill by the following:

   1) A reader's accuracy in recognizing words and attacking words that are known.

   2) The amount of print recognized at each fixation of the eyes.

   3) The rate of recognizing of words and phrases.

   4) Rhythmic progress along the line of print an easy return sweep to the next line.

b. Reading is mechanical process plus the acquisition of meaning advocates of this broader view hold that in addition to acquisition efficiency in the mechanical aspect given above; the reader must fuse the meaning represented by the printed words into a chain of related ideas.

c. Reading is combination of mechanics, understanding, retention, and use. In this broadest of the three views, the reader should be able not to perform the mechanics and comprehend and the meanings meaning of the words, but to critically evaluate the ideas expressed and apply then to his or her situation.

Nuttal (1982: 5) states that reading is to recall, to understand, to interpret, and analyze the printed page. Smith and Robinson (1980: 6) state that reading an active attempt, on the part of the reader, to understand a writer message. The reader interacts with and try to reconstruct what the writer wishes to communicates.

Haris and Sipay (1980: 8) state reading is the meaningful interpretation of printed or written verbal symbols. Nuttal (1982: 4) remarks that reading is process of getting a massage from a text or understanding a written text mean extracting the information from the text as efficiency as possible. According to Clark and Silberstein in Anita (2006: 12) define that reading is an active cognitive process of interacting with print and monitoring comprehension to establish meaning. From this point of view, it can be concluded that reading is an active thinking process where the reader try to gain information given by the author and understanding what actually the purpose of the author. Learning process is the main activity in the school. There is interaction between teacher and students and valuable educative. Teaching and learning process is done and guided to reach the maximal result. To reach the maximal result, the teacher.

Many factors can increase the students' reading comprehension in teach English, the conceptual above shows the process of the research to increase the students' reading comprehension for applying TELLS Strategy. In English learning process as input or as English materials is measured the students' reading comprehension. The wrong strategy in teaching can make the students lazy and raise impression that subject is not important so they consider that learning is the fact of being forced.

TELLS Strategy will be used in Classroom Action Research (CAR) around two cycles. They are first and second cycle and each cycle is the series of activity which has close relation. Whereas, the realization of the second cycle is continuing and repairing from the first cycle. In this case the teacher make planning, action and observation and prepares teaching material, then the teacher should give the topic contains some vocabulary; they are noun and adjective as dependent variable in learning vocabulary and the students should the master the material. The teacher observer the student's response, participation and the last do reflection process for analyzing, understanding and making conclusion activity in the first action cycle. As a result a method can increase students' reading comprehension.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research follows the principal working of Classroom Action Research (CAR) that contains of four stages they are: planning, implementation of action, observation, and reflection. This research was held two cycles, they are first and second cycle and each cycle is the series of activities which have close relation. Whereas, the realization of the second cycle is continued and repaired from the first cycle.

This research was done at SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Perumnas for English subject. As subject in this research was class X Senior High School for 2011-2012 academic years. The class consisted of 19 students, 11 men and 8 women.

1. *Variables*

The following are the variables of the research:

a. The independent variable of TELLS Strategy is the important process to which allows the students to share ideas/opinion to improve the reading skills.

b. The dependent variable of the research consist of students' literal comprehension and interpretive comprehension.

2. Indicator

The following are the main indicators of each variables:

a. The indicators of the students 'literal comprehensions are main ideas and content (detail information).

b. The indicators of the students' interpretive comprehension are drawing conclusion and prediction of contents are taken from the explicit and implicit information.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

In this Classroom Action Research (CAR), the observer used the CAR principle to collect the data. The research was divided into two cycles with each cycle consists of four phases.

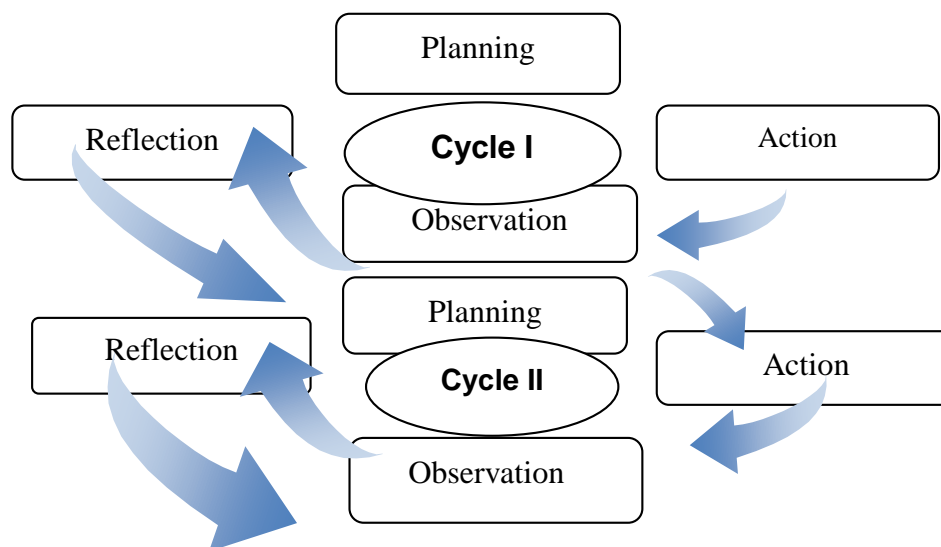The cycle is described through the scheme of action research phases as follow:

Figure 1. The Scheme of Classroom Action Research

Reading test was used at the end of every cycle by using criteria of reading test to measure students' reading comprehension. Observation was used to measure the students' participation during the teaching and learning process by using TELLS Strategy.

Analysis technique such as; note taking: to find out the students' strong, weakness, active, motivation and interest. As well as test: to find out the students' iimprovement reading comprehension by using TELLS Strategy in teaching reading in the classroom.

TECHNIQUE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The data from cycle I and cycle II was analyzed the following steps:

1. To Score the students' answer of test, the researcher will used formula.

Table 1. Score of the Students' Answer of Test

No	Criteria	Score
1	The meaning and grammar are correct	4
2	The meaning is correct and some errors of grammar	3
3	Some errors of meaning and grammar	2
4	The meaning and grammar are incorrect	1
5	No answer	0

Maximum score = 4

$$Scoring = \frac{Correct\ answer\ score}{Maximum\ score} x 10$$

The Classification of the Students' Score:

a.   Score 9.6-10   is classified as Excellent

b.   Score 8.6-9.5   is classified as Very Good

c.   Score 7.6-8.5   is classified as Good

d.   Score 6.6-7.5   is classified as Fairly good

e.   Score 5.6-6.5   is classified as Fair

f.   Score 3.6-5.5   is classified as Poor

g.   Score 0.0-3.5   is classified as Very Poor

(Sudijono in Rahma, 2005: 43)

2.   To analyze the students' participation in research toward the material and activities in teaching and learning process by checklist. The students' active participation described followed.

Table 2. Students' Active Participation

No	The Students' Active Participation	Score	Indicator
1	Very Active	4	Students' respond to the material very active
2	Active	3	Students' respond to the material actively
3	Fairly active	2	Students' respond to the material just once or twice.
4	Not active	1	Students just sit down during the activity without doing something.

Percentage the students' participation through the following formula:

$$P = \frac{Fq}{4xN} \, x100$$

Where: P **:** Percentage

          Fq **:** Sum of all the students' score

          N **:** Total of students

                                        (Sudjana in Najamuddin, 2010: 29)

4. To find out the mean score of students' reading comprehension through TELLS by using the following formula:

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

Where: $\bar{X}$ **:** The mean score

          $\sum X$ **:** The total raw score

          N **:** The number of students

                                            (Gay, 1981: 298)

5. To know the percentage of the students' development in reading comprehension:

$$P = \frac{X2 - X1}{X1} x100$$

Where: P **:** Percentage of the students' improvement score

          $X1$ **:** Mean score of cycle 1 or D-test

          $X2$ **:** Mean score of cycle 2

                                       (Hasan in Rahma 2011: 51)

FINDINGS

The results of the findings indicate that teaching reading comprehension through TELLS Strategy can improve the students' achievement in Literal

comprehension and also can improve the students' achievement in Interpretive comprehension. Further interpretations of the data analysis are given below:

1. The Improvement of the Students' Achievement in Literal Reading Comprehension

The improvement of the students' literal in reading comprehension, which has focused on detail information, main idea and following instruction as indicators of literal reading comprehension in X of SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Perumnas as result of the students' assessment of cycle I and cycle II, is described as follows:

Table 3: The Improvement of the Students' Achievement in Literal Reading Comprehension

Indicators	Scores (%)			Improvement (%)		
	D-test	Cycle I	Cycle II	DT→CI	CI→CII	DT→CII
Detail Information	40.13	50	69.07	24.59	38.14	72.11
Main idea	40.78	53.94	65.78	32.27	21.95	61.30
Following Instruction	40.78	50	68.42	22.60	36.84	67.77
$\sum x$	121.69	153.94	203.27	79.46	96.93	201.18
$\overline{X}$	40.56	51.31	67.75	26.48	32.31	67.06

The table above shows the TELLS Strategy improves the students' reading Literal from D-test to cycle I and cycle II in which cycle II is the greatest of all. About the mean score of Literal in cycle II is 67.75. Then in cycle I is 51.31and D-test where the students get 40.56. It indicates that the improvement of the students' reading literal is 26.48 in D-test to Cycle I, the improvement in Cycle I to Cycle II is 32.31, and the improvement in D-test to Cycle II is 67.06. The data above indicates that the TELLS Strategy improves students' reading Literal significantly.

Table 4: The Improvement of the Students' Achievement in Interpretative Reading Comprehension

Indicators	Scores (%)			Improvement (%)		
	D-test	Cycle I	Cycle II	DT→C I	CI→CII	DT→CII
Drawing Conclusion	39.47	51.31	67.10	29.99	30.77	70.00

The table above shows the TELLS Strategy improves the students' reading Interpretative from D-test to Cycle I and Cycle II in which Cycle II is the greatest of all. About the mean score of Interpretative in Cycle II is 67.10. Then Cycle I

51.31 is greater than D-test, where the students get 39.47. It indicates the improvement of the students' reading Interpretative is 29.99 in D-test to Cycle I, the improvement in Cycle I to Cycle II is 31.77, and the improvement in D-test to Cycle II is 70.00. The data above indicates the TELLS Strategy improves students' reading Interpretative significantly. The improvement of the students' reading comprehension at SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Perumnas in X class through TELLS Strategy as result of table 1 and table 2 will be explained as follows:

Table 5: The Improvement of the Students' Reading Comprehension

Variables	Score (%)			Improvement (%)		
	D-Test	Cycle I	Cycle II	DT➡C I	CI➡CII	DT➡C II
Literal	40.56	51.31	67.75	26.50	32.04	67.03
Interpretative	39.47	51.31	67.10	29.99	30.77	70.00
∑x	80.03	102.62	135.85	56.49	62.81	137.03
$\overline{X}$	40.01	51.31	67.42	28.24	31.40	68.51

The table above shows the students' reading comprehension improves from D-test to Cycle I and Cycle II. In which, Cycle II is the greatest of all. The mean score of students' reading comprehension in Cycle II is 67.42. Then, the mean score of the students in Cycle I is 51.31 and the students get 40.01 in D test. It indicates the improvement of the reading comprehension in D-test to Cycle I is 28.24. The improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II is 31.40, and the improvement from D-test to cycle II is 68.51. It indicates the students' reading comprehension improves significantly by using TELLS Strategy.

2. The Improvement of Students' Activeness in the Process of Teaching and Learning

The result of observation of the students' activeness in teaching and learning process toward of the application of TELLS Startegy in improving the students' reading comprehension at the first year students of SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Perumnas.

Table 6: The Observation Result of the Students' Activeness in Teaching and Learning Process

Cycles	Meetings	Percentages	Averages
I	I	46.05%	
	II	51.38%	59.28%
	III	66.17%	
	IV	73.52%	
II	I	73.68%	
	II	76.31%	78.28%
	III	78.94%	
	IV	84.21%	

The table above shows the average of the students' activeness in teaching and learning process in each cycle through observation sheet by observer. The percentages of the Cycle I from the first meeting to the fourth meeting are 46.05%, 51.38%, 66.17%, and 73.52%. Moreover, the percentage of the Cycle II from the first meeting to the fourth meeting are 73.68%, 76.31%, 78.94%, and 84.21%. In addition, the average score in every cycle, in Cycle I is 59.28% and in Cycle II is 78.28%. As the result, the improvement of the students' activity is 22.35%.

3. The Implementation of TELLS Strategy in Improving the Students' Reading Comprehension

The implementation of TELLS Strategy in improving the students' reading comprehension has been done in X class of SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Perumnas Makassar. It follows the principle working of Classroom Action Research that has been conducted in two cycles; each cycle consists of four meetings. Before implementing this strategy, the researcher observes many aspects, they observed to asses the implementation of TELLS Strategy, such as: students' attitude, students' model and students' understanding and then diagnostic test is given to the students to measure their students' ability to comprehend literal and interpretative that focuses on Detail information, main idea and following instruction as indicators of literal reading comprehension, conclusion as indicator of interpretative reading comprehension. After that, the researcher/teacher explains about the advantages of the method for the students and apply TELLS Strategy in teaching and learning process.

In every meeting, the teacher selects narrative texts, distributes them and asks to read the passages. Before the students read the text, the teacher asks them to look at the title and imagine what the content of the text is. And then, the students

are asked to examine what is the story about. Next, the teacher asks the students to look for important words and form clues what is the story might be, as well as the students are asked to look for hard words and find their meaning. The last, the teacher asks the students to determine the setting of the text, such as: plot, time, place etc. In teaching and learning process with the implementation of TELLS Strategy, the students are interested to join in learning process. It can be seen by the students' activeness during teaching learning process. They are active in asking about the material during learning process and the students' achievement in reading comprehension is improved after implementing TELLS Strategy.

The responds of the students about this strategy considering explanation above, it's concluded that the use of TELLS Strategy in learning especially in reading comprehension is useful. They are not feel bored in learning process through this strategy and excited in answering the questions. They admit this strategy is enjoyable because they can share the opinion with each other.

1. ***The students' improvement in Literal reading comprehension by using TELLS Strategy.***

   The description of data analysis through the test as explained in previous finding section shows that the improvement of students' Literal reading comprehension by using TELLS Strategy was improve significantly. It was supported by result of the test value in Cycle II was greater than test value of Cycle I. In applying TELLS Strategy in learning process in the class, the researcher found that the mean score of test in Cycle II of students' speaking Literal reading comprehension was greater than the test in Cycle I. In table 1 shows that in test of Cycle I, the students got 51.31% and after repairing the action in Cycle II, the students got 67.75%. Therefore, the researcher indicates that there was significant improvement of students' Literal reading comprehension by using TELLS Strategy.

2. ***The students' improvement in Interpretative reading comprehension by using TELLS Strategy.***

   From the data analysis in the previous findings, the researcher found that the mean score of test in Cycle II of students' improvement in Interpretative reading comprehension was greater than test in Cycle I. In table 2 shows that in

test of Cycle I the students got 51.31%, after repairing the action in Cycle II the students got 67.10%. Therefore the researcher indicates that there was significant improvement of students' Interpretative reading comprehension by using TELLS Strategy.

3. ***The observation result of the students' participation in learning reading was improved significantly.***

Based on the data analysis as result of observation sheet of students' participation in learning process in previous findings shows that the participation of students from the first meeting until fourth meetings were 46.05%, 51.38%, 66.17%, and 73.52% with mean score of four meetings in Cycle I was 59.28%. Percentage of the first meeting until fourth meeting in the Cycle II was 73.68%, 76.31%, 78.94% and 84.21% with the mean score 78.28%. Based on all result of data analysis above, the researcher concludes that there are a significant improvement of students' literal reading comprehension, interpretative reading comprehension and participation of students in learning process.

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