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## Improving Reading French Based on Text Ability through Linguistic Functional Systemic for Students of State University of Medan

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**Abstract.** This research aims to find out the process as well as the result of improving students' ability in reading French texts through the approach of Linguistic Functional Systemic at Teaching French Study Program at Faculty of Arts and Language, State University of Medan. This study uses a Linguistic Functional Systemic approach with the assumption that the LFS approach examines the text used as a learning material in the course of Text Review / Etude de Texte . This approach proved able to answer various linguistic issues, either micro or macro. The research methodology used is action research developed by Kemmis & Mc Taggart with four steps: (1) planning, (2) action implementation, (3) observation, and (4) reflection. This study lasted for three cycles. In the first cycle, results were obtained as 21 students or 43.75% of 48 students earned grades above the prescribed minimum standards. Furthermore, in the second cycle the number of students who score above the minimum standard increases to 73%, and at the end of the third cycle to 85,42% students. The results of this study show that the LFS approach is very effective in helping students improve the reading ability of French texts. This research recommends to the lecturers of French courses in general understanding and using the LFS approach in the teaching and learning process of reading class in the classroom as in the subject of Text Review / Etude de Texte and Compréhension Ecrite.

**Keywords:** Reading Ability, Linguistic Functional Systemic (LFS), Action Research.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

As one of language skills, reading French based text skill is one of very important skills to be taught in addition to three other language skills like writing, speaking, and listening since reading French based text ability will support the mastery of reference books for other courses.

Reading skill is one of receptive skill besides listening. As a receptive skill, reading is a component of understanding. Understanding the text is a process that has a systematic stage in order to understand the

comprehensive information of a source reading, both in terms of linguistic and extra linguistic. In the French learning process, students often have difficulty understanding a French text due to lack of sufficient basic knowledge of the target language (langue cible), the subject of text (sujet du texte), and the background of the text. Knowledge in the cultural context is also needed by the students so that they can explore the knowledge of the text in reading in depth.

Because of the importance of the ability to understand a text must be possessed by a student

studying a foreign language, as French, the course of Text Review / Etude de Texte study is made as one of the courses which must be followed by all students who are studying French. In the a competency-based curriculum of 2008 used in the French Language Education Program Foreign Language School of the Faculty of Languages and Arts of the State University Medan, the scope of the reading course consists of Lire, Compréhension écrite, and Etude de Texte.

According to the syllabus of courses compiled based on the competency-based curriculum in 2008, the course of Text Review/ Etude de Texte Studies including the Group of Expertise Course I (MKK I) given in the 6th semester with 2 credits aims to produce students who have the knowledge and skills in understanding and analyzing a text from various studies on texts. This course contains studies and practices on the types of texts, main ideas, and supporting ideas of a text, as well as the story chronology in a text. The competency standards of this course include: being competent in explaining the study of the theory of the text and in analyzing the form, structure, and content of a text. While basic competence is as follows: after attending this course students are expected to be competent in: (a) describes La Cadre de la Communication (levels of communication), (b) describes La Fonction du Langage (language functions), (c) describes Le Registre de Langue (language level), (d) describes Les Types du Texte (text type) based on the content and function, (e) find Les Idees Pricipales (main idea) and supporting ideas of a text, and (f) explain the plot of the story in a text logically and chronologically.

There are two factors that affect the reading ability of French text. They are factors originating from within the students and the factors that come from outside the students. The factors that are within the student include the ability of linguistic, interest, motivation, and the ability to read the text itself, ie how well students can read the French text .

Factors outside the students are reading elements and reading environment. The elements of reading are made up of the textual and organizational content of the text (chapters, sections, and compositions). The reading environment includes the preparation of the teacher before, during class, or the general atmosphere of task completion (obstacles and impulses). All these factors are not mutually exclusive, but interconnected. All these factors are related to each other. Students' reading ability works well when they master the factors needed in reading.

The LFS approach is used in this study with the assumption that the LFS approach examines the text used as a learning material in the Text Review / Etude de Texte course. This approach proved able to answer various linguistic issues, either micro or macro. This is in line with Eggin's opinion that LFS

is considered useful for studying texts related to: (1) language education, (2) child language development, (3) computational linguistics, (4) media discourse, and (5) casual conversation. Even Halliday recommends at least 21 points of relevance to the LFS application for educational and research purposes for the development of linguistics itself.

#### **A. Reading**

Goodman states that reading is a dynamic process to reconstruct a message that is graphically encoded by the author. In this process, the writer performs a linguistic coding which is then deciphered by the reader to gain understanding or meaning. The author encodes the mind into the language; the reader interprets the code into thought and meaning. Thus in reading, it occurs the interaction between language and mind.

Reading is an activity of constructing meaning. Through reading, readers reconstruct the message conveyed by the author in the text. In regards to that, Rosenblatt argues that reading is a transactional process. The reading process includes a number of steps as long as the reader constructs meaning through their interaction with text or reading material. Meanings are generated through this transactional process.

Reading activity is the second receptive language activity after listening. The relationship between the speaker (author) and the recipient (reader) is indirect. Various information whether news, stories, or science very effectively is announced through the means of writing, whether in the form of newspapers, magazines, letters, leaflets, story books, textbooks, and literature. Thus, the activity of reading the various sources of information will greatly open and expand one's world.

Reading is a process done and used by the reader to obtain messages to be conveyed by the author through the media in words or in written language. A process that requires that the group of words which constitute a unity will be seen in a glance and that the meaning of individual words will be known. If this is not met, the implicit and implicit messages will not be captured or understood, and the reading process does not work out well.

In terms of linguistics, reading is a process of recoding and decoding process, in contrast to speech and writing that involves encoding. An aspect of decoding is to connect written words that include oral language meaning which involves the conversion of writing to a meaningful sound.

The main purpose of reading is to seek and obtain information, cover the content, and understand the meaning of reading. Meaning is closely related to the purpose, or our intensive reading.

Reading is a complex skill that involves a range of other smaller skills. Broadly speaking there are two important aspects in reading, namely:

- 1) Mechanical skills that can be considered to be in the lower order. This aspect includes: (a) the introduction of the letters, (b) the introduction of linguistic elements (phoneme / grapheme, words, phrases, clause patterns, sentences), (c) recognition of spelling and sound correspondence / written or " to bark at print ", (d) slow reading speed.
- 2) Understanding skills (comprehension skills) that can be considered to be in a higher order (higher order). This aspect includes: (a) understanding simple notions (lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical), (b) understanding of significance or meaning (author's intent and purpose, cultural relevance, and reader reaction), (c) evaluation or judgement (content), (d) flexible reading speed, which is easily adapted to the circumstances.

To be able to achieve the goals contained in these mechanical skills, the most appropriate activity is reading aloud; (oral reading). For comprehension skills, the most appropriate is to read in silent reading, which can also be divided into:

- 1) Extensive reading, which includes; a. survey reading, b. skimming c. superficial reading.
- 2) Intensive reading that includes; a content / study reading, which includes also: 1. reading thoroughly (close reading), 2. reading comprehension (comprehension reading), 3 critical reading, 4. reading for ideas); b. read the language study (language study reading) which includes also: 1. reading foreign language (foreign language reading), 2. reading literature (literary reading).

In learning Text Review / Etude de Texte, students' reading activities have arrived at the skills of understanding and intensive reading level.

## **B. Text**

Brown and Yule stated that the text is the realization of discourse. The text is a verbal recording of a communication act while Halliday defines text dynamically. Text is a language that is performing a specific task in the context of the situation. Text is an example of lingual interaction where the community actually uses the language orally and in writing in certain contexts. The text relates to what is actually done, interpreted, and said by the community in real situations.

In another formula, Halliday argues that the text is a semantic choice in a social context, a way of expressing meaning through spoken or written language. All living languages that take a particular part in the context of a situation can be called text. According to Halliday, the text is a semantic unit. A text is not composed of sentences or clauses, but is realized in sentences. Text can project meaning to a higher level. A text, in addition to being realized in lower lingual system levels such as lexicogrammatical and phonological systems, is also the realization of a higher level of interpretation, literary, sociological, psychoanalytical, etc held by that text. The lower levels have the power to project meaning at a higher level, which Halliday foregrounded.

Based on the way and the purpose of his presentation, in general the text is classified into five kinds, namely narrative text, argumentative, descriptive, exposition, and persuasion.

### 1) Narrative Text

Narrative text is often referred to as the text of narrative and the text of the text, which is the text of the order of time, is spoken by the first or third person in a certain time. The text of this narrative is oriented towards the perpetrator and all its parts are tied in chronological order. Types of narrative text are common to fiction.

### 2) Argumentative Text

Argumentative text is usually used to influence the message recipient (addressee) in order to make changes in attitudes and actions. In this text the most important is the appeal function found in what in the Buhler organon model is referred to as the language signal aspect, in which the message recipient captures something from the message.

### 3) Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is a text that aims to describe, describe, or describe something as it is. The description text is the result of the observation as well as the writer's impressions of the object of observation. If the description is alive, the reader can imagine something that is described. Of course, the illustration can be either real (real), it can also be fiction.

### 4) Exposition Text

Text exposition is a text that is not concerned with time and the offender. This text is oriented to the subject, and its parts are logically bound. This text is not used to alter people's opinions, but rather to provide knowledge, broaden view, or explain a subject. That is why this text is often used to display scientific descriptions (eg papers) and the language it uses is an objective language, not a subjective language.

### 5) Persuasion Text

The text of persuasion is a text whose content is invitation or advice, usually concise and interesting, and aims to strongly influence the readers or listeners to do the advice or invitation

### **C. The Approach of Linguistics Functional Systemic**

Each language study is always based on an approach. This means that no language studies are free of basic values or assumptions. In perspective Linguistics Functional Systemic, hereinafter abbreviated as LFS, language is a system of meanings and other systems (i.e. systems of form and expression) to realize that meaning. This study is based on two fundamental concepts that differentiate LFS from other linguistic streams, namely (a) language is a social phenomenon that is as semiotic social and (b) language is a text that is in conjunction with the social context. Thus, language studies cannot be separated from the social context.

The first concept has the notion that, as semiotic, the language occurs from two elements: meaning and expression. The relationship is the relationship of realization, that is, the meaning is realized by the expression. But unlike the usual semiotics, social semiotics language has another element, namely form. Thus, language in social interaction consists of three elements: meaning, form, and expression. The relationship of these three elements can be said as: the meaning (semantics or discourse semantics) is realized by the form (lexicogrammar) and this form is further encoded by expression (phonology / graphology). In other words, in the LFS view the language consists of three strata, namely semantics, grammar, and phonology / graphology. Semantics are realized by grammar, and subsequently grammar is expressed by phonology (in spoken language) and graphology (in written language). The nature of the relationship of meaning and form is natural (natural) with the notion that the relationship can be referred to the social context, while the relationship of meaning and expression is arbitrary.

Eggs says that LFS is a functional semantic approach to language that explores how people use language in different contexts and how language is structured for its use as a semiotic system. As a linguistic approach to meaning within the text, LFS has similarities to the grammatical text and discourse analysis from various perspectives. LFS also deals with studies in the fields of sociolinguistics and ethnography of speech. As a semiotic approach, LFS has the same foundation as semiotic theories and is in line with Fairclough's groups working in critical discourse analysis. What distinguishes LFS from others is that LFS develops two things at once: a theory of language as a social process and an

analytical methodology that allows the description of systemic patterns in detail and systematically.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

This research generally aims to collect related data in improving the reading skills of students French Study Program, State University of Medan. This method of research includes the type of action research, which is a research method that emphasizes social practice, aims toward improvement, a cyclical process, followed by systematic discovery, reflective process, participatory, and determined by the implementer. In terms of addressing learning problems, the method offered is through a Linguistic Functional Systemic approach. In addition, this study also aims to collect data on how the process and learning outcomes in an effort to improve the ability to read French texts for French Education Program at State University of Medan through the approach of Linguistic Functional Systemic.

This research was conducted in French Education Program, Foreign Language Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Medan (UNIMED) for two months, from March 16, 2015 to May 15, 2015. The research was conducted in the subject of Text Review / Etude de Texte studies in semester VI. Students who follow this course have passed the Comprehension Ecrite IV course which is a prerequisite for following the course of Text Review / Etude de Texte.

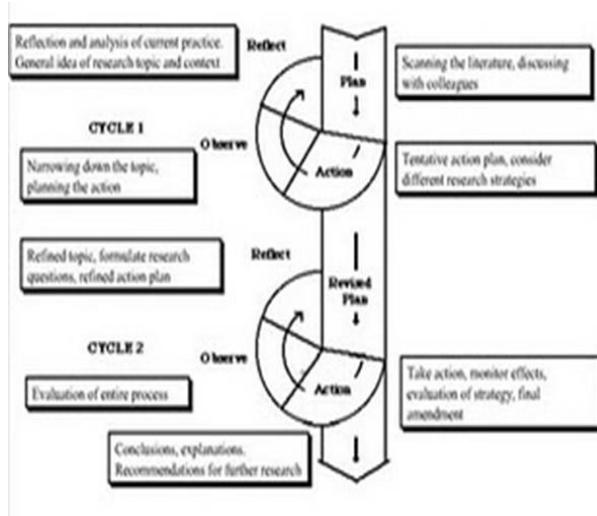
Sources of data in this study are all students of semester VI Academic Year 2014 - 2015 of 48 people. While the data collected were quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data in the form of field notes, interviews, and photos, while the quantitative data in the form of scores obtained by students. The data sources are researchers, lecturers of subjects Text / Etude de Texte, and sixth semester students. Instruments used in this research are RPP, student worksheet, observation sheet, and measurement instrument of reading ability of French text.

The data collection procedures used included observations or observations made prior to the giving of the action and at the time of granting the action. Observation at the time of learning took place based on the observation sheet.

Data analysis was done through three stages, namely data processing, data exposure, and data deduction. Data processing was done by grouping data into two groups, namely qualitative data and quantitative data. Quantitative data was analyzed by means of making percentage result, and then the percentage results were exposed or expressed in quantitative sentences. The qualitative data were analyzed in a way to score against items - items that need to be scored. Then the items were in percentage

result, the percentage of results interpreted in the form of quantitative sentences and concluded into the form of descriptive sentences.

The action research design is referring to The Action Research Cycle proposed by Stephen Kemmis and Taggart ie planning, action, observing, reflecting, as follows:



Picture 1. Research Design of Kemmis and Mc Taggart Models

The Procedures this action research consisted of planning actions (planning), conducting research implementation (acting) , making observations of any research process (observing), reflecting the results of research with appropriate criteria of success (reflecting), and re-planning if the results are not in accordance with the criteria of success (replanning).

**Criteria for Action Success**

Research success criteria can be seen from the comparison value before administration and after administration of treatment. Increased learning results are declared successful if the value obtained by students reaches a minimum standard score of 80. In this research, the success of students' reading ability through short or LFS is guided by the guideline of State University of Medan and CECR standard. The guidance table on the mastery of reading ability can be seen below.

Table 1. Guidelines on the Level of Ability to Read Text

Level of Mastery	Qualification	Letter Value	Score
90 - 100	Very good	A	4
80 - 89	Good	B	3
70 - 79	Enough	C	2
0 - 69	Very less	E	0

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter will present data and research results on improving the ability to read French texts through a Linguistic Functional Systemic approach to French Language Education Program students of the Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Medan. The implementation of this action research was conducted in there cycles so the problems that are the focus of research can be addressed and research objectives achieved. Each cycle consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection (planning, acting, observing and reflecting).

Aspects assessed in the first cycle are aspects of lexicogrammaire consisting of: transitivity, thème and rhème, as well as mood and residue. The work of students is assessed independently and groups to see their ability in reading text.

Furthermore, the aspects considered in the second cycle are aspects of the discourse semantique consisting of: complex clauses, conjunctive relation to text, anaphore and cataphore, and lexical relations. The work of students is assessed independently and groups to see their ability in reading text.

The aspect of the assessment in the third cycle is the list of aspects of the analysis of registre which consists of field analysis, mode, and tenor on the text. The students' work was assessed as a group to to see students' overall ability to read text .

**First Cycle**

Students' ability to read the text in the first cycle increased compared to the results of the pretest as none of students receive the lowest score with a range of values between 0-69, while 27 students obtained a score of 70-79 (56.25%), a score of 80-89 obtained 15 students (31.25%), and the highest score with a range of values of 90-100 as many as 6 students (12.50% ).

In this first cycle, the ability of students to read french text in each aspect can be described as follows:

- 1) Lexical / grammatical / rhetorical with score 0-69 was obtained by 5 students (16,7%), score 70-79 was obtained 14 students (46,7%), score 80-89 was obtained by 8 students (26,7%), and score 90-100 was earned by 1 student (10%) ;
- 2) Meaning with score 0-69 was obtained 5 students (13,3%), score 70-79 was obtained 14 students (50%), score 80-89 was obtained by 8 students (30%), and score 90-100 was obtained by 3 students (6.7%);
- 3) Content / Form with score 0-69 was obtained by 5 students (16, 7%), score 70-79 was obtained by 14 students (46,7%), score 80-89 was obtained by 10 students (33, 3%), and score 90-100 was obtained by 1 student (3.3%) ; and
- 4) Speed with score 0-69 was obtained 1 student (3, 3%), score 70-79 was obtained 18 students (60%), score 80-89 obtained by 8 students (26, 7%), and score 90-100 obtained by 3 students (10%).

Based on the above data, this shows that the ability to read the French text of students is still in the category of less because the students have not obtained a minimum score of 85 on every aspect of the ability to read the French text

### **Second Cycle**

The result of reading ability of French text in the second cycle has increased compared to the first cycle that is the absence of the students who get the lowest score with the value between 0-69, while the score 70-79 obtained 13 students (27.08%), score 80-89 obtained 28 students (58, 33%), and highest score with value range 90-100 counted 7 students (14,58%). In detail, the ability to read the students' French texts on each aspect can be described as follows:

- 1) The lexical / grammatical / rhetorical score of 70-79 was obtained by 10 students (20.83%), 80-89 score was obtained by 25 students (52.08%), and the score of 90-100 was obtained by 13 students (27.08%) ;
- 2) Meaning with score 70-79 obtained 12 students (25%), score 80-89 obtained 25 students (52,08%), and score 90-100 obtained 11 student (22,91%) ;
- 3) Content / form with score 70-79 obtained 13 students (27,08%), score 80-89 obtained 26 students (54,16%), and score 90-100 obtained by 9 students (18,75%) ; and

- 4) Speed with a score of 70-79 obtained 12 students (25%), score 80-89 obtained 28 students (58.33%), and the score of 90-100 obtained 8 students (16.66%).

Based on the data mentioned above, this shows that the reading ability of French text students has increased although still not maximal because not all students get minimum score 85 on every aspect of reading ability of French text.

### **The Third Cycle**

The result of reading ability of French text in this third cycle has increased when compared with result of second cycle. This can be seen from the absence of students who get the lowest score with a value between 0-69, while the score of 70-79 obtained only 7 students (14.58%), score 80-89 obtained 33 students (68.75%), and the highest score with a range of values of 90-100 as many as eight students (16.67%). In detail, the ability to read the students' French texts on each aspect can be described as follows:

- 1) The lexical / grammatical / rhetorical score of 70-79 was obtained by 4 students (8.33%), 80-89 score was obtained by 30 students (62.5%), and 90-100 scores obtained 14 students (29.16%) ;
- 2) Meaning with score 70-79 obtained by 5 students (10,41%), score 80-89 obtained by 29 students (60,41%), and score 90-100 obtained 14 students (29,16%) ;
- 3) Content / form with score 70-79 obtained by 5 students (10,41%), score 80-89 obtained by 34 students (70,83%), and score 90-100 obtained by 9 students (18,75%) ; and
- 4) Speed with score 70-79 obtained by 5 students (10,41%), score 80-89 obtained by 34 students (70,83%), and score 90-100 obtained by 9 students (18,75%) .

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Based on the explanation and discussion, as well as reflections on the actions described earlier, a conclusion can be drawn as follows.

- 1) Text Review / Etude de Texte Studies through the LFS approach can improve students' reading ability from cycle to cycle. The LFS discussion in this study includes; lexicogrammaire analysis consisting of transitivity analysis, thème and rhème analysis, and mood and residue analysis. Furthermore, discourse semantique analysis consists of complex clause analysis, conjunctive relation, lexical relation, and references (anaphore and cataphore). The last register analysis consists of field, mode, and tenor

- 2) The ability to read French subtitles students after being given the action on the first cycle of the average values obtained a score of 79. Because of the ability to read the French text students have not reached the minimum standard set by the researcher that is the value 85 then the researcher proceeds to give action on the second cycle.
- 3) Implementation of actions undertaken by researcher to improve the learning process in the Text Review / Etude de Texte through the LFS approach by giving explanation about LFS, assigning to students to learn teaching materials that will be discussed before the next meeting begins, the task of reading the text personally and group, group discussion and presentation, and using various learning media and various learning materials hence can be seen ability reading language text French students on the second cycle experience enhancement. Based on the results of the final test cycle known to students obtain an average score of 82,06. Although the results of these tests almost have reached the minimum standard set, but the researchers still continue the study in the third cycle in the hope of getting an increase and students who obtain a minimum standard value even more.
- 4) In the third cycle, the subject matter discusses the fields, modes, and tenors of the text. The researcher take remedial action in the teaching with the text registre comparison to analyze aspects of the text. In this way, the ability to read the French text of students has increased when compared to the second cycle. Based on the results of the test at the end of the cycle, obtained an average score of 84. The test results have reached the minimum standard set by the researcher is 85.

Based on the data of the research above shows that after the researchers take corrective action on each cycle in teaching subjects Text Review / Etude de Texte through LFS approach then the ability to read French text of students has improved.

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