USING PARTNER READING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION OF GRADE EIGHT STUDENTS AT SMPN 2 TANANTOVEA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the research is to determine if using Partner Reading Strategy can improve reading comprehension of grade eight students of SMPN 2 Tanantovea. This research was conducted through a quasi experimental research design in which the sample of the research was selected using a simple random sampling technique. This research used a reading comprehension test as the instrument. The data collection of this research were analyzed statistically in order to find out the significant difference between two groups on the posttest after the treatment using Partner Reading Strategy given to the experimental group. It was found that the mean scores of both the experimental and control groups on the posttest were respectively 70 and 42. Furthermore, referring to the ttable value of df 44 (23+23-2) by applying 0.05 level of significance on one-tailed test, it was found that the tcounted value of this research (16) was higher than the ttable value (1.7). It implies that using Partner Reading Strategy can improve reading comprehension of grade eight students of SMPN 2 Tanantovea

Keywords: Partner Reading Strategy; Improve; Reading

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the main skills in learning a language. It comes in the third of four language skills. It is called a receptive skill because in order to do this skill learners do not need to produce the language but to receive and to understand it. Mikulecky (2011:5) defines reading as "a complex conscious and unconscious mental process in which a reader uses a variety of strategies to reconstruct the meaning that the author is assumed to have intended, based on the data from the text and from the reader's prior knowledge." Thus, reading is a complicated process involving readers' cognitive skills and background knowledge to comprehend a text.

Reading is an activity to get information, or idea from the text what the writer mean at the messages in the printed page. It means that process to understand what we read. Nurhadi (2008) states reading is the complex and complicated process because it involves the internal and the external factors of the readers. The internal factors mean everything that has relationship with the reading materials and the environment where the reading taking place.

Reading is correlated to the process of comprehension building. Klinger, Vaughn and Boardman (2007) state "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." Thus, reading comprehension is a process to understand and comprehend a text in order to get information or the idea from the text.

Clearly, comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading activities. In the basic competence of 2013 curriculum for junior high school, it is stated that students are expected to be able to determine the meaning, the social function, generic structure and language features of various types of text such as descriptive, narrative, recount, report, and procedure. In other words, the learning objectives of reading activities are to read and to extract meaning from a text to get explicit and implicit information and message of the text.

Unfortunately, the learning objectives are not yet achieved by grade eight students of SMPN 6 Tanantovea. Result of prelimenary research showed that the students got difficulty in finding information and ideas stated in the text due to vocabulary matters. As a result, they were not able to answer reading comprehension questions correctly. Besides, teacher's strategy was not interactive causing them uninterested to participate in reading activities.

Partner reading is a peer-assited intervention where student are strategically split into pairs (Sumarsono et al., 2020). The student who is not reading follows along and corretcts the other students with additional coverage of the content material while also receiving feedback and immediate error corection (Budi and Zahro, 2023; Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016). Partner reading is an efficient way to keep all students engaged in what they are doing regardless of their level of achievement, while also providing them while immediate feedback and error correction. It is a time-saving strategy for teacher that can help students with all different level of reading ability.

Haag (2012) describes partner reading has many benefits. Partner reading gives everyone a chance to read at the same time. In the scenario, each student reads about 1-2 minutes in a 30-minute period. With partner reading, each student reads to a friend for 15 minutes. With partner

reading, reading has more choices. The partners choose. Each student reads in front of one trusted friend whose responsibility is to listen and help. Not only do they read more, but because students are more comfortable when they practice, they learn how to read better and comprehend more and teachers are able to use the reading material of their choice; no special materials are required. During the activity teachers are able to move around the room, observe students, and assistas needed.

The Partner Reading Strategy, as described by McLaughlin and Allen (2002), involves students selecting a partner for reading, or the teacher assigning partners and text. Partners then decide on the text segment each will read and choose a reading pattern, such as Read-Pause-Predict, Read-Pause-Discuss, Read-Pause-Make connections, Read-Pause-Sketch, Read-Pause-Bookmark, or Read-Pause-Retell. After reading, students discuss the text in either a whole group or small group setting.

In relation to the research question, the researchers are interested to investigate whether or not using Partner Reading Strategy can improve reading comprehension of grade eight students of SMPN 2 Tanantovea.

METHOD

In this research, the researchers used quasi experimental design. The design is called the nonequivalent control group design. There are two groups involved in this study. They are control group and experimental group. Both groups were given pretest and posttest. The control group was taught using common method, while the experimental group was taught using Partner Reading Strategy. The following is the design of this research. The design of this research is proposed by Arikunto (2006:87) as follows:

$$\frac{O_1 \ X \ O_2}{O_3 \quad O_4}$$

Where:

O_1 : pretest of the experimental group

O_3 : pretest of the control group

X : treatment of the experimental group

O_2 : posttest of the experimental group

O_4 : post-test of the control group

The population of this research is grade eight students of SMPN 6 Tanantovea distributed in two classes, class A and B. The class A consists of 23 students, and class B consists of 24 students. Therefore, total number of population is 47 students. Since grade eight students comprise of two classes and the researchers uses quasi experimental with two groups, all classes became the sample, as they had similar characteristic with regard to their English achievement. However, she used a simple random sampling to choose the experimental and control class by using a drawing lottery.

To analyze the data, the researchers used formulas proposed by Arikunto (2006). in order to find out the significance difference between the experimental and control group, the researchers computed the t-counted value by using formula proposed by Arikunto (2006:309).

$$t = \frac{Mx - My}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum x^2 + \sum y^2}{Nx + Ny - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{Nx} + \frac{1}{Ny}\right)}}$$

Where :

t : the value of t counted

Mx : mean deviation of experimental group

My : mean deviation of control group

$\sum x^2$: variance of the experimental group

$\sum y^2$: variance of the control group

Nx : number of experimental group

Ny : number of control group

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

In this research, the researchers used test as the instrument to collect the data. After that, the obtained data were statistically analyzed. Previously, every group was given the pretest and posttest. The pretest was given to find out the preliminary knowledge of the students' reading comprehension achievement. In the final meeting, the students of both groups were given the posttest in order to find out their improvement in reading comprehension after being given the treatment.

The pretest results showed that the highest score in the experimental group was 40, and the lowest was 10, with a total score of 673 and a mean score of 29. None of the students passed the pretest, with the passing grade being ≥75. Similarly, the control group had a highest score of 53 and a lowest score of 20, with a total score of 807 and a mean score of 35, and none of the students passed the pretest.

After the experimental group was treated using the Partner Reading Strategy, posttest results indicated a significant improvement. The highest score in the experimental group was 77, the lowest was 57, with a total score of 1600 and a mean score of 70. Only one student passed the posttest. In contrast, the control group's highest score was 53, the lowest was 30, with a total score of 963 and a mean score of 42, and none of the students passed the posttest.

Table 1 – Experimental group's achievement

Scores	Pretest	Posttest
Total	673	1600
Mean	29	70

Table 2 – Control group's achievement

Scores	Pretest	Posttest
Total	807	963
Mean	35	42

Table 3 – Deviation scores

Scores	Experimental group	Control group
Sum of deviation	927	157
Sum of squared deviation	28578	2411
Sum of mean deviation	40.30	6.83

The statistical analysis using the t-test calculation showed a t-counted value of 16, which is significantly higher than the t-table value of 1.7 (df 44, significance level 0.05, one-tailed test). Therefore, the research hypothesis is accepted. The results conclude that using the Partner Reading Strategy significantly improves the reading comprehension of grade eight students at SMPN 2 Tanantovea. The experimental group's substantial improvement in posttest scores compared to the control group demonstrates the effectiveness of the strategy in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills.

DISCUSSION

Based on the pretest results of the experimental group, some students received low scores. These low scores were attributed to factors beyond motivation. Firstly, students may have struggled due to their understanding of the test material, with some facing challenges in grasping the content or concepts being assessed (Huang, Lin, and Villareal, 2014; Ebrahimi, 2022). This difficulty could be linked to their prior knowledge or different learning styles. Secondly, variations in students' preparation levels influenced their performance, with those who did not prepare adequately scoring lower than their peers (Huang, Eslami, and Hu, 2010).

Other than the previous explanation, students had low reading comprehension for several reasons. One main reason is that they did not learn the basic reading skills they need. If they cannot recognize words or understand how sentences are put together, it is hard for them to understand what they are reading.

Another reason is that they did not have had enough practice with different types of books and texts. If students only read a few kinds of stories or topics, they struggle with new or different ones because they're not used to them.

Students from families with less money had fewer books at home and fewer chances to practice reading. They also went to schools that do not have enough resources. It made them harder to get the help they need to improve their reading. For students who are learning English as a foreign language, reading can be especially tough. They are learning the language and trying to understand their schoolwork at the same time which can be very challenging without enough

support. Finally, if students do not find reading interesting or fun, they might not want to do it. If the books they read don't relate to their lives or interests, they might not be motivated to read, which means they don't get the practice they need to get better.

After the pretest done, the researchers gave treatment to the students. The researchers organized the class into pairs to help students improve their understanding of what they read. Each pair received a reading passage to work on together. They took turns reading paragraphs aloud, while their partner listened carefully to understand the main ideas. After reading, the pairs discussed what they had learned from the text. This discussion helped them clarify things they didn't understand and shared their thoughts with each other. Then, each pair shared their findings with the whole class, explaining the main points they had discussed. To finish, each student answered questions about the reading on their own. This step checked how well they understood the text individually. The researchers used these activities to help students practice reading comprehension in a supportive and interactive way.

As the treatment done, the researchers gave posttest to the students. The results of the posttest showed that the students' scores improved. The reason of this improvement is because of the advantages of partner reading strategy. The advantages (Harmer, 2004) are that it dramatically increased the amount of speaking time anyone student gets in the class; it allowed students to work and interact independently without the necessary guidance of the teacher, thus promoting learner independence; it allowed teachers time to work with one or two pairs while the other students continue working; it recognized the old maxim that 'two heads are better than one', and in promoting cooperation, helps the classroom to become a more relaxed and and friendly place; and it was relatively quick and easy to organize.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research affirm that the Partner Reading Strategy can significantly improve the reading comprehension of grade eight students at SMPN 2 Tanantovea. This conclusion is based on the results of pretests and posttests, which included multiple-choice and essay questions, demonstrating a marked improvement in the experimental group's scores. The t-test analysis further substantiated this improvement, with a t-counted value of 16 exceeding the t-table value of 1.7. These results align with previous studies, highlighting the effectiveness of the Partner Reading Strategy in enhancing reading skills.

Beyond the numerical outcomes, this research underscores the importance of interactive and collaborative learning methods in improving student engagement and comprehension. The Partner Reading Strategy not only helped students grasp the content better but also fostered a supportive learning environment where peers could learn from each other. This approach can bridge the gap between traditional reading instruction and the need for more dynamic, student-centered teaching strategies.

The implications of this research extend beyond the immediate context of SMPN 2 Tanantovea. For educators, incorporating partner reading into the curriculum can be a practical and effective way to address diverse reading abilities within a classroom. This strategy can be adapted

to various subjects and educational levels, providing a versatile tool for enhancing student learning outcomes.

Future research could explore the long-term effects of partner reading on different aspects of literacy and academic performance. Additionally, investigating the application of this strategy in different educational settings and with varied student demographics could provide deeper insights into its broader applicability and impact. Overall, the study contributes to the ongoing conversation about innovative teaching strategies and their role in improving educational practices and outcomes.

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