



BRIGHT VISION

E-ISSN: 2798-8872 P-ISSN: 2797-1716

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<http://jurnaltarbiyah.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/brightvision>

THE EFFECT OF PARTNER READING STRATEGY ON THE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AT MAS PAB 1 SAMPALI

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension requires greater concentration than other English language skills. This is why reading comprehension is difficult to learn or teach. However, there is one learning strategy called partner reading strategy. The purpose of this study was to find out the effect of reading partner strategy on students' reading comprehension. This study used a quantitative research method with a quasi-experimental design. This study was conducted at MAS PAB 1 Sampali, with a population of all tenth grade students from two classes. The research sample consisted of 26 students in class X-1 as the control class and 21 students in class X-2 as the experimental class. This study was carried out through three stages, namely pre-test, treatment, post-test. Each sample went through the same stages, but the control class was given a conventional teaching strategy while the experimental class was given a partner reading strategy. The results showed that the mean scores of the post-test in both classes were far different. In the control class, the mean score was 72.62; while in the experimental class was 84.19. Furthermore, the independent sample t test result showed that the Sig. 2-tailed was 0.000, where it was smaller than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). In conclusion, H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected.

Keywords: *High School Students, Partner Reading Strategy, Reading Comprehension*

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension becomes a 'problem' for non-native English speakers to learn English, such as Indonesian students. In essence, reading comprehension is the most basic stage and skill in acquiring language and education (Grabe, 2009). However, in practice, EFL students still find it difficult when they have to work on questions related to English texts. This is caused by several factors, such as limited vocabulary (Yusuf, 2013), text recognition (Aradi, 2021), background knowledge (Al-Jarah & Ismail, 2012), low motivation (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000), and inappropriate reading strategies (Nurhayati, et al., 2023).

In education, the learning outcome of reading English texts, such as descriptive texts, report texts, narrative texts, and so forth, is that students are capable of identifying and comprehensively understand such texts. However, in reality, many studies have found that this reading learning outcome has not been completely achieved. As experienced by Lisiana et al. (2021) in one of the high schools in Padang, where there were three problems students faced in reading, such as lack of vocabulary, overlong texts, and ineffective reading strategies.

Furthermore, this study also found a similar problem in one school in North Sumatra, MAS PAB 1 Sampali, where the students had no interest, did not know how to understand the text, how to identify it, and find answers to related questions. Most students there tended not to read the text on English questions. Thus, their English scores were low.

According to Shah et al. (2022), there are several factors that lead to the low reading skills of EFL students, including unfamiliarity with English texts, lack of vocabulary, low motivation and unaware of the purpose of reading, and not being given effective reading strategies. This causes students' English scores, especially in reading comprehension, to be low. Hence, the primary objective of this study was to offer a reading strategy as a means of elevating the students' reading comprehension. It is called a partner reading strategy.

The partner reading strategy involves two students with different levels of ability. For instance, a low-ability student is paired with a high-ability student instead of pairing two low-ability or two high-ability students. The learning task requires the students to read a material, comprehend it, identify any challenges, have a discussion about them, and find solutions. The aim is to assist students in developing their mutual reading comprehension (Sinaga et al., 2020).

Several studies have found that partner reading strategies have an impact on school students' English reading comprehension skills. For example, students in Makassar improved on the question of determining the main idea and supporting details (Nurafni, 2019). In addition, Sinaga et al. (2020) also found similar results showing the impact of the partner reading strategy at SMP N7 Pematangsiantar.

In regards to background, this study employs the partner reading strategy to find out whether it has an effect on students' reading comprehension.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative research method. The researchers used a research design named a quasi-experimental design–nonequivalent control group design. Sugiyono (2014) named this type of design as nonequivalent control group design. This type of design includes several observations in two classes, which are given different treatments.

This study was conducted at MAS PAB 1 Sampali. In collecting the data, this study took about two months, from April to May 2024. This study involved all tenth grade students in the 2023/2024 academic year as the population. There were 48 students in two classes: 27 students in class X-1 and 21 students in class X-2. In this study, the researcher involved all population as the research sample. Since the population only consisted of 48 students, the research sample was all of the students. This decision is based on the research sampling technique called total sampling (Arikunto, 2006).

This study was carried out through three procedures, namely pre-test, treatment, and post-test. As the instrument, the researcher used two types of questions, such as multiple choice and short answer questions as research instruments. There were a total of 25 questions from both types of questions. Multiple choice questions consisted of 20 items and short answer questions consisted of 5 items. Moreover, this study used IBM SPSS Statistics 29 to analyze the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Description of the Data

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test Control	26	44	20	64	40.00	10.673
Post-Test Control	26	32	60	92	72.62	8.668
Pre-Test Experimental	21	44	24	68	49.33	10.906
Post-Test Experimental	21	32	68	100	84.19	8.047
Valid N (listwise)	21					

In regards to the above table, it can be identified that the scores consist of two classes and two types of tests. In the control class, the *max* score on the pre-test was 64, the *min* score was 20, the *mean* score was 40, and the *standard deviation* score was 10.673. On the other hand, on the post-test, the *max* score was 92, the *min* score was 60, the *mean* score was 72.62, and the *standard deviation* score was 8.668.

Meanwhile, in the experimental class, on the pre-test, the *max* score was 68, the *min* score was 24, the *mean* score was 49.33, and the *standard deviation* score was 10.906. On the post-test, the *max* score was 100, the *min* score was 68, the *mean* score was 84.19, and the *standard deviation* score was 8.047.

Data Analysis

Normality Test

Table 1. The Normality Test Results

Tests of Normality			
Class		Shapiro-Wilk	
		df	Sig.
Outcomes	Pre-Test Control	26	.321
	Post-Test Control	26	.257
	Pre-Test Experimental	21	.299
	Post-Test Experimental	21	.334

Based on Table 4.4, in the Shapiro-Wilk column, the significance value of the pre-test results in the control class is 0.321, while the post-test results is 0.257. This showed that the data on both tests in the control class were normally distributed. It is because the significance value is greater than 0.05.

Homogeneity Test

Table 2. The Homogeneity Test Results

Test of Homogeneity of Variance		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Outcomes	Based on Mean	.732	1	45	.397
	Based on Median	.625	1	45	.433
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.625	1	44.618	.433
	Based on trimmed mean	.671	1	45	.417

To decide if the data is homogeneous or not, the significance value has to be greater than 0.05. From Table 4.5, in *Based on Mean* the significance value is 0.397. It means that data are homogeneous due to the significance value indicates $0.397 > 0.05$.

Independent Sample T-Test

Table 3. The Independent Sample T-Test Results

		Independent Samples Test			
		t-test for Equality of Means			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Outcomes	Equal variances assumed	-4.698	45	.000	-11.575
	Equal variances not assumed	-4.736	44.079	.000	-11.575

As the data in the homogeneity test is homogeneous, the result focuses only on the *Equal variances assumed* row. To find out the hypothesis results, this study can refer to the decision making which states that if the Sig. (2-tailed) value is smaller than 0.05, then the alternative hypothesis is accepted. In the Sig. (2-tailed) column, it can be seen that 0.000 is smaller than 0.05. In other words, the H_a is accepted.

DISCUSSION

Based on the above results, this study answered the research question formulated in the Background, where there is an effect of the partner reading strategy on reading comprehension. Moreover, the results are in similar line with previous studies where this strategy has an effect and improves students' reading comprehension skills. Zulianti & Hasmoto (2022) found that in cycle 1 the *mean* score increased from 71.03 to 85.38 in cycle 2. The study concluded that this strategy involved high learning participation and high self-confidence. Purba (2023) also concluded that the *mean* score on the post-test in the experimental class was 76.07 while in the control class it was 57.32. In addition, the Mann-Whitney test results showed an Assymp value: $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, H_a is accepted. This was also experienced by Izzati (2023) that the *mean* score on the post-test in the experimental class was 79.06, while in the control class it was 68.75.

In addition, statistical analysis was performed to find out further data. This study used IBM SPSS Statistics 29. In the normality test, the significance value of the pre-test in the control class was 0.321, the post-test in the control class was 0.257, the pre-test in the experimental class was 0.299, and the post-test in the experimental class was 0.334. Based on these values, all data were normally distributed, because those values were greater than 0.05. Moreover, the homogeneity test showed that the data was homogeneous. The result showed that the value was greater than 0.05, namely $0.397 > 0.05$. Furthermore, this study performed the independent sample t-test. The results showed that the Sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.000. Since the Sig. (2-tailed) value was $0.000 < 0.05$, therefore H_a is accepted.

The results of this study also indicated that the partner reading strategy had a variety of effects on the main idea, vocabulary, reference, and inference sections of reading comprehension questions. As a result, this study has two implications. Since it requires a discussion to understand each other's issues, it assists students improve their reading comprehension skills. Furthermore, it encourages teachers to implement an effective strategy when teaching reading comprehension in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results, this study found that there was a difference in the *mean* scores of the students' test results. In the control class, the *mean* score on the pre-test was 40 and the post-test was 72.62; while in the experimental class, the *mean* score on the pre-test was 49.33 and the post-test was 84.19. In addition, this study analyzed the data statistically. In the normality test, the data is normally distributed, and data is also homogeneous in the homogeneity test. Moreover, in the hypothesis test or independent sample t-test, it was found that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05. In other words, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. It means that there is a significant effect of the partner reading strategy on the students' reading comprehension at MAS PAB 1 Sampali.

In relation to the study's conclusions, the researchers suggest that teachers take into consideration the partner reading strategy as a potential teaching way for reading comprehension as it has shown its effectiveness in several studies, and students can use this strategy in class activities. Since students can collaborate to solve problems related to reading comprehension assignments, it will benefit them.

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