

THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT READING ON READING COMPREHENSION IN THE SECOND YEARS STUDENTS OF MTs AS'ADYAH PUTRA 1 SENGKANG

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of the study is to see if implementing Independent Reading can help students improve their English reading comprehension. The research used a quasi-experimental procedure with two sets of pre-test and post-test designs to achieve the research goal. The participants in this study were As'adiyah Putra 1 Sengkang second-year students. The students in the sample were from VII A, who were treated with Independent Reading, and VII B, who were treated in a traditional manner. The experimental group's post-test mean score was greater than the control group's 78.27, according to the findings of this study. The significance (2-tailed) in the post-test was $0.00 < 0.05$, according to the findings of the data analysis. Based on the findings of the analysis, suggests that there was a significant difference in English reading comprehension between students in the experimental group who were taught using Independent Reading and students in the control group. As a result, it can be inferred that students' English reading comprehension can be improved by the usage of Independent Reading.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a process to gain knowledge by which individuals are taught to derive meaning from text. Reading has an important role in language skill mastery (Jang et al., 2015; Palacios & Kibler, 2016). Reading is decoding and understanding written texts. Decoding requires translating the symbols of a writing system, understanding is determined by the purposes for reading, the context, the nature of the text, and the readers' strategies and knowledge.

Reading is a receptive language process. It is a process of recognition, interpretation, and perception of written or printed materials. Reading proficiency plays a great role in understanding a written statement accurately and efficiently. Reading serves as an important tool in every field of professional service (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000; Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006; Baecker, 2014). In many situations reading is considered to be an indispensable channel of communication in an ever-world. In fact, we are living in a 'reading' world where it is difficult to manage without reading.

Reading comprehension is the result of effective reading (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Through reading, the reader can understand things explained by the

writer, and as a result, the reader can get information by reading the written message. Students need to understand the cognitive skills of reading such as attention, memorizing, processing speed, and visualization to achieve comprehension (Kendeou et al., 2011; Calet et al., 2020). Besides, reading skill also needs learners' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. That's why the teacher is demanded to be more creative in teaching reading skills. One of the strategies that can be used by teachers is independent reading.

Independent reading is a reading activity where students get opportunities to determine the materials that they want to read (Sanden, 2014; Jouhar & Rupley, 2021; Erbeli & Rice, 2022). In independent reading, the students have a responsibility towards the text that they choose so that the role of the teacher change from model and guide to facilitator and responder. Reading comprehension and independent reading studies have focused on some of the major factors regarding the relationship of various strategies to helping students understand the text. Students can learn more than what is developmentally appropriate when it comes to vocabulary and comprehension. Moreover, independent reading is the reading students choose to do on their own. It reflects the reader's personal choice of the material to be read as well as the time and place to read it. Independent reading is done for information or for pleasure (Noortyani, 2018; Cheong et al., 2018; Yi et al., 2019; Harrison et al., 2020). No one assigns it; no one requires a report; no one checks on comprehension.

Based on the observation, the researcher found that the students have low ability in reading comprehension. According to their English teacher, the students get difficulty in answering the questions related to the English text. It is because students feel difficult to understand the idea of the passage. In fact, the process of teaching reading comprehension cannot run well because most students are not interested to learn reading comprehension in the class. They only read and answer the questions without raising some questions to get some information from reading text. As consequence, learning reading comprehension make them bored. Besides, in this teaching reading, the teacher teaches students by asking them only to read text and answer the questions. These activities do not give any opportunities to improve students' knowledge. It also cannot give more contribution to students in understanding reading comprehension. In this case, most students still find difficulties to comprehend a reading text.

Literature Review

1. The concept of reading

a. Definition of reading

Reading, according to Castles et al. (2018); Roe et al. (2018) is an active process that consists of recognition and comprehension skills, an important skill activity in life with which one can update his/her knowledge, and an important tool for academic success.

b. Definition of comprehension

Comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Castles et al., 2018; Brevik et al., 2019). The use of extracting and constructing emphasizes both

the importance and the insufficiency of the text as a determinant of reading comprehension. Comprehension entails three elements:

- 1) The reader who is doing the comprehending
- 2) The text that is to be comprehended
- 3) The activity in which comprehension is a part

According to the researcher, comprehension defines that comprehension is something we get after the reader doing reading process. It means that if the reader understands the information and the idea on text well that's where happen what it's called comprehension.

c. Definition of reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is a process in which the reader has to decide on linguistic symbols and reconstruct them up to a meaningful whole intended by the writer (Delgado et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2021). Reading comprehension is only a term referring to reading skills the important thing is not the pronouncing or load reading, but it is the understanding taken into consideration.

Furthermore, reading comprehension is viewed as a process subject to the same constraints as human memory and problem-solving (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Hjetland et al., 2020). It seems to involve language, motivation, concept development, and the whole experience itself. It seems to be subject to the same constrain as thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving. Moreover, reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include word reading, word and word knowledge, and fluency (Kaushik & Lipton, 2018; Zhang et al., 2021).

2. Independent reading

Independent reading represented an important educational practice in serving as a framework for vocabulary development, comprehension, and fluency (Sanden, 2014). Independent reading referred to a choice made by the students to read during individual spare time; most educators defined it as independent and voluntary reading. In other words, during independent reading, fluency essentially revealed critical improvements in reading comprehension because of the characteristics of reading with speed and accuracy (Jouhar & Rupley, 2021; Erbeli & Rice, 2022). Moreover, Noortyani (2018) reinforced the need for student choice of reading materials and the need for recreational reading the strategies for choosing books include the type of reading experience wanted, various sources used to find new books, elements of the book, clues about the book and the cost of time and money to gain access to the book. After students selected a book of their choice. Reinforcing comprehension strategies helped them understand what they were reading independently (Cheong et al., 2018; Yi et al., 2019; Harrison et al., 2020).

Teachers recognize the importance of students participating in independent reading for a certain amount of time each day to improve their reading

comprehension skills (Brannan et al., 2020). In addition, during independent reading, some students increase their levels of reading comprehension by decoding skills, building fluency, activating prior knowledge, reading aloud, acquiring vocabulary words, and structural analysis (Yi et al., 2019).

Based on the description, hence the main goal of the study is to see if implementing Independent Reading can help students improve their English reading comprehension

2. METHOD

This research employed a quasi-experimental method with a pre-test and post-test design that involved two classes. The instrument of this research was a reading test. The reading test was employed in the pre-test and post-test. The second-year students of MTs Putra 1 sengkang were tested by using multiple choice. The pretest is given to find out the student's abilities in reading. The posttest is given to find out the student's improvement in reading comprehension after giving treatment. Pretest and posttest are the same questions. The activity in the treatment session is reading texts. The type of text that was read by the student is narrative text. Students were able to learn more about information details, characters, setting, problem, and resolution by using narrative text. Narrative text is available in the syllabus of second grade high school as the researcher aims to conduct the research.

In the data analysis, the researcher gathered the data through a multiple-choice test. Then, the researcher analyzed the students' answers based on the following scoring rubric:

1 point for each correct answer.

0 points for each incorrect answer.

In the next step, the researcher wrote the total scores on each student's worksheet. Since the test result was raw scores, it was necessary to multiply them by 100 to get the more meaningful numerical data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Statistics Analysis

The descriptive statistics analysis of experimental and control group show that in the experimental group there was no student got very good score in pre-test out of 29, 1 students got good score (3.4%), 11 students got fair score (37.9%), 12 students got poor score (41.4%) and 5 students got very poor score (17.2%). While the experimental group of the students' post-test can be seen from the table that 5 out of 10 students got very good scores (17.2%), 20 students got good scores (69.0%), 3 students got fair scores (10.3%), 1 student got a poor score (3.4%) and none of them got a very poor score.

In the control group students' pretest, 2 out of 30 students got very good scores (6.7%), 1 student got a good score (3.3%), 10 students got fair scores (33.3%), 16 students got poor scores (53.3%), and 1 student got a very poor score (3.3%). While the control group of the students' post-test can be seen from the table, no student got a very good score. 9 students got a good score (30.0%), 20 students got a fair score (66.7%), 1 student got a poor score (3.3%) and none of them got a very poor score.

2. Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test

The mean score and standard deviation of the experimental and control groups described that the mean score of the pre-test for the experimental group was 54.41, with a standard deviation of 13.27. Then the mean score in the post-test improved to good (78.27) with a standard deviation of 9.09. It indicated that the students' reading comprehension improved significantly after the treatment using Independent Reading. In contrast with the control group, the mean score of the control group in the pre-test was good (58.66) with a standard deviation of 12.10, but the control group was also showing an improvement, but not too significant. In the post-test, the mean score was good (69.16) with a standard deviation of 8.61.

a. Inferential Analysis of the Pre-Test

The pre-test scores of the students in the experimental and control groups were compared through an independent sample t-test using SPSS analysis. The probability value was found to be 0.193 as a result of the analysis. Because the probability value was greater than the level of significance 0.05 ($0.193 > 0.05$), there was no significant difference between these scores.

Table 1. Test of Significance

Variables	Probability value	Levels of significance(α)
Pre-test	0.193	0.05

b. Inferential Analysis of the Post-Test

The post-test scores of the students in the experimental and control groups were compared through an independent sample t-test using SPSS analysis. The result of the analysis revealed that the probability value was 0.00. It means that there was a significant difference between these scores because the probability value was smaller than the level of significance 0.05 ($0.00 < 0.05$).

Table 2. Test of Significance

Variables	Probability value	Levels of significance(α)
Post-test	0.00	0.05

Inferential analysis statistics above show that there was no significant difference in the students' pre-test scores in which the treatment had not been given. Meanwhile, there was a significant difference in the students' post-test scores when they received the treatment. It can be concluded that the use of Independent Reading was able to make a significant contribution to the students' reading comprehension.

This describes the gain score of the experimental group, which was given treatment by using independent reading and gained greater reinforcement than the control group. Based on the gain score in Table 2 above, it indicates that using independent reading can improve the students' English reading comprehension in the experimental group significantly.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that using Independent Reading improves students' reading comprehension of the second-year students of Mts. As'adiyah Putra 1 Sengkang significantly. It is proved by the significant improvement that was shown by the students in the pre-test and post-test. The positive effect can also be felt by the students in the experimental class who were taught using Independent Reading. They can be more active and enjoy learning English courses than the students of the control group who were only taught by conventional means. The students who were in the experimental showed a positive attitude towards the technique of learning that they were given by the researcher. They were easier to understand, and it helped them develop critical thinking. It is because Independent Reading gives them the motivation to learn and makes them enjoy learning more. After calculating the mean score and standard deviation of both groups, H0 (null hypothesis) is rejected and H1 is accepted. This means that using Independent Reading in teaching reading can improve the second-year students of Mts As'adiyah Putra 1 Sengkang's reading comprehension.

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