

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION OF THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH CONTEXT CLUES STRATEGY

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah penggunaan strategi petunjuk konteks efektif untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas delapan SMPN 20 Sigi. Sampel dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Ada dua kelompok yang dipilih, yaitu Kelas VIII B adalah kelompok eksperimen, dan kelas VIII C adalah kelompok kontrol. Data diperoleh dengan menggunakan tes pemahaman membaca. Kedua kelompok diminta untuk melakukan tes dua kali yaitu pre-test dan post-test. Kelompok eksperimental mendapatkan nilai yang lebih tinggi dari kelompok kontrol setelah treatment. Untuk mendapatkan skor deviasi, para peneliti menghitung setiap skor pre-test dan post-test siswa. Dari hasil deviasi skor, para peneliti menghitung deviasi rata-rata kedua kelas untuk mendapatkan jumlah deviasi kuadrat. Lalu, para peneliti melanjutkan menggunakan hasil untuk mencari $t_{counted}$ menggunakan rumus t_{test} . Setelah menganalisis data, hasilnya menunjukkan $t_{counted}$ (4.3) lebih tinggi dari t_{table} (1.686). Ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi petunjuk konteks efektif digunakan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa kelas delapan SMPN 20 SIGI.

Kata Kunci: meningkatkan, pemahaman membaca, petunjuk konteks

ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to find out whether the use of Context Clues strategy is effective to improve students' reading comprehension. The population of this research was the eighth-grade students of SMPN 20 Sigi. The sample was selected by using a purposive sampling technique. There were two groups selected, i.e. class VIII B was the experimental group, and class VIII C was the control group. The data were obtained by using a test of reading comprehension. Both groups were asked to do the test twice as pre-test and post-test. The experimental group got the higher score than the control group after the treatment. To get the deviation score, the researchers calculated each student's pre-test and post-test scores. From the result of the score deviation, the researchers calculated the mean deviation of both classes to get sum-square deviation score. Then, the researchers continued using the result to find out the $t_{counted}$ using the t_{test} formula. After analyzing the data, the result showed that the $t_{counted}$ (4.3) is higher than the t_{table} (1.686). It indicates that Context Clues strategy is effective to improve reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMPN 20 Sigi.

Keywords: improving, reading comprehension, context clues

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an important skill that enables students to expand their knowledge of English. Through reading the students are able to know what they do not know before. Besides, students can improve their own language and experience by reading. Undoubtedly, the more the students read, the more they will get ideas in the learning process.

Mastering reading skill is important in the success of students' study. It can help the students crack standardized tests, such as the national examination or university entrance test. Therefore, it is very important to improve students' reading skill in schools. Not only skill in reading, comprehension is also needed when reading a text. By having comprehension, students can claim that they have done the process of reading, and, thus, obtain information stated in the text.

In National Curriculum 2013, the basic competence of reading at junior high school is to comprehend and understand the meaning of texts. There are five genres of texts in junior high school should be learned by the students namely, recount, descriptive, narrative, procedure, and report. In this research, the researchers focused on the descriptive text.

The importance of reading was not realized by a lot of students. According to Mutmainnah (2020), many students got difficulty in understanding the meaning of the words, finding the general and specific information from the text, and students found it difficult to understand the reading text. While, Anggriani (2018) stated that students' found difficult to understand the reading passage due to lack of vocabulary. It was because the students were rare to read any book and lazy to look up the dictionary when they got unfamiliar word. Consequently, the students were not able to get good scores in their reading test. To overcome the students' problems, the researchers tried to use an appropriate strategy to maintain students' reading comprehension. The researchers chose to apply Context Clues Strategy to help students find the meaning of an unfamiliar word based on the context in reading text.

Some researchers had been conducted the research by using Context Clues Strategy. A previous research by Herinovita (2016) investigated the effectiveness of using context clues strategy on reading comprehension of the first year students. Then, Harahap (2018) researched about the effect of context clues mastery on students'

reading comprehension of procedure text. Another previous research conducted by Utama (2019) researched about context clues mastery in students' reading comprehension of descriptive text at the eighth grade students. The result showed that the students' comprehension improved well by using Context Clues.

A context clue is a fact or an idea that suggests the meaning of the unknown words. The clues are sometimes placed in the same sentence as an unfamiliar word, or in nearby sentences. It proposes to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and clues which are related to the content of the text. So that the students can answer the questions after they have known the clues in the text.

METHOD

This research applied a quasi-experimental research design. It involved two groups, experimental and control groups. In this case, the only group that gets to be taught by the researchers through context strategy was the experimental group. The presentation of this research was designed by Ary, Jacob, Sorenson, and Razavieh (2010:316) as follows.

Group	Pre-test	Independent Variable	Post-test
E	Y_1	X	Y_2
C	Y_1	-	Y_2

The population of this research was the eighth grade students of SMPN 20 Sigi. They were grouped into three classes, i.e. VIII A, VIII B, and VIII C. In order to ease the process of the research, at the beginning, the researchers started with determining the sample of the research. In taking the sample, they used a purposive sampling technique. They chose these classes based on the teacher's recommendation. The researchers involved the students into two groups. VIII B was the experimental group while VIII C was the control group.

To collect the data, the researchers used a test of Reading as an instrument of the research. The test was administered twice as pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was done before the treatment in order to know prior score of students' reading comprehension. Meanwhile, the post-test was given by the researchers after the

treatment in order to measure the students' progress after the treatment. Both pre-test and post-test consisted of 16 items in total. The 10 items were the multiple-choice test and 6 items were the essay test.

The data of the research were analyzed by using statistical analysis. First, the students' individual score was computed by using the formula proposed by Arikunto (2013). Next, the mean score of each group was calculated using the following formula by Arikunto (2013). After getting the mean score of both experimental and control groups, the researchers computed the square deviation using the formula suggested by Arikunto (2013). Last, the researchers analyzed the data to find out the significant difference between groups using t-count formula as proposed by Arikunto (2013) The formula above as follows:

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

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The researchers presented the result of the test which is classified into two different types, i.e. pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was given before the treatment in order to know prior score of students' reading comprehension. Meanwhile, the post-test was given after the treatment. It aimed to measure students' development after the treatment using the Context Clues Strategy.

Table 1 Result of the Pre-test and Post-test of Experimental Class

No.	Individual Score	
	Pre-Test	Post-test
1	27.5	70
2	32.5	70
3	30	45
4	35	70
5	30	60
6	25	40

7	22.5	47.5
8	35	67.5
9	32.5	65
10	22.5	60
11	40	72.5
12	40	65
13	20	32.5
14	27.5	47.5
15	27.5	55
16	22.5	52.5
17	40	72.5
18	32.5	70
19	35	52.5
20	32.5	62.5
Total Score	610	1177.5
Mean Score	30.5	58.9

The highest score of pre-test in the experimental group was 40 and the lowest score was 20. Since SMP 20 Sigi applies curriculum 2013 (K13). It is stated that the students' minimum passing grade is 65. Therefore, there were no students who passed the test. After the researchers applied the treatment, the students in the experimental group were improving. The highest score in the group was 72.5 and 32.5 for the lowest. In a way, 9 of 20 students passed the test and the rest were not. The result of the pre-test and post-test of control class is presented on table 2.

Result of the Pre-test and Post-test of Control Class

No.	Individual Score	
	Pre-Test	Post-test
1	45	57.5
2	27.5	52.5
3	42.5	55
4	25	32.5

5	30	57.5
6	27.5	55
7	27.5	52.5
8	37.5	45
9	27.5	30
10	32.5	55
11	35	50
12	27.5	55
13	45	57.5
14	35	55
15	40	65
16	42.5	50
17	37.5	65
18	32.5	47.5
19	52.5	60
20	45	50
Total Score		715
Mean Score		35.7
		1047.5
		52.4

From the result above, the mean score of the experimental group was 30.5, and the control group was 35.7. Both experimental and control groups had the same problem because all of the students did not pass the pre-test. Though, the control group's mean score was a little higher than the experimental group's mean score on Pre-test. Although the students in the control group showed improvement on Post-test, only two of them achieved the standard score. The highest score in the control group was 65 and the lowest score is 30. In brief, the mean score of the control group on post-test was 52.4. It indicated that both classes were improving based on the rise of scores obtained in the pre-test to the score in the post-test. However, the improvement in the experimental group was higher than the control group after the treatment. The result can be seen in the table 3.

Result of Deviation Score and Square Deviation

Group	Deviation Score	Square Deviation Score
Experimental	567.5	17493.75
Control	332.5	6981.25

Then, the researchers computed the t_{counted} values of both classes in order to find out the significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test by using formula from Arikunto (2013). Based on the computation, the t_{counted} value was 4.3. Afterward, the researchers compared the value of t_{counted} with the value of t_{table} . It was done to determine the effect of Context Clues Strategy on class VIII B of SMPN 20 Sigi. To determine whether the hypothesis was either accepted or rejected, the researchers began by finding out the critical t-table. The researchers counted the t_{table} by applying the degree of freedom (df) = $N_x + N_y - 2 = 20 + 20 - 2 = 38$ with the level of significance 0.05. The researchers found that the t_{table} value was 1.686. The result showed t_{counted} (4.3) was much higher than t_{table} (1.686). In a conclusion, the researchers' hypothesis was accepted. In other words, Context Clues Strategy is effectively applied in improving students' reading comprehension.

DISCUSSION

In this research, both experimental and control groups firstly administered the pre-test. The result of the pre-test showed that both groups had the same problem because all of the students did not pass the pre-test. The researchers found the students' problem from an English teacher of SMPN 20 Sigi. She informed that the students found it difficult to understand the reading passages due to lack of vocabulary. It was difficult for students to get the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from the text. As the result, they spent much time looking up their dictionary to see the meaning of that unfamiliar vocabulary to be able to understand the meaning and answer the questions. This was supported by the previous study by Mutmainnah (2020) in which that the students intended to try to know the meaning of unfamiliar words or comprehend the text by looking it in the dictionary. Consequently, the students were not able to get the higher scores in their pre-test.

After conducting the pre-test, the researchers gave the treatment to the experimental group for six meetings. The researchers were using the Context Clues Strategy to help the students build the vocabulary that they had to learn the meaning of words they do not know. As Reardon (2011:4) argues that context clues are information in the text, which can be used to help deduce the meaning of an unknown vocabulary word within the text. In short, this strategy helps the students to understand words or phrases with different but related senses in different situations or contexts. By writing down any difficult vocabulary and finding the meaning from words or sentences near it, the students do not need to open the dictionary to find the meaning of the words.

In the treatment, the researchers found some difficulties like the students were too loud during the learning process because they were given time to do the task on their own. The students sometimes focused on copying their friends' work even if they already knew the meaning of the words themselves. The most difficult problem was when the students were wrong in guessing the meaning of the words based on the context and, thus, wrote an incorrect meaning of the difficult word. This problem took a lot of time since the researcher needs to correct the word. To minimize this obstacle of this strategy, the researchers were actively involved in the learning process by checking every student's work. It was to prevent the students in copying their friends' difficult words or writing incorrect meanings of the words. By being involved actively in the students' learning process, make them more focused on the task rather than disturbing other students and noisy in the classroom. After conducting the treatment, the experimental group got the higher score than the control group. In the other words, using Context Clues Strategy is effective to improve reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 20 Sigi.

The findings of this research support the findings of the previous studies. It can be seen from the level of education where the research conducted Herinovita (2016) and Anggraini (2018), were done for the tenth grade. Meanwhile, the research conducted by Suri (2015), Harahap (2018), and Mauliza (2019), were done for the eleventh-grade student. On the other hand, in this research, the researchers investigated the eighth-grade students, and the result shows that Context Clues Strategy is effective for any level of education. This research also supported every level of reading. This study focused on the literal level of reading, whereas, the previous studies focused on literal

and interpretative reading. The number of students from this research and previous study was also different where this study had 20 students in the classrooms, while the other studies had more than 30 students. In conclusion, the strategy is still effective in a small or large number of students.

CONCLUSION

Dealing with the research question, the context clues strategy has positive effect to improve the students' reading comprehension in term of literal comprehension. It is proved by looking at the mean score of the experimental group before and after the treatment. It indicates that the students' reading comprehension can be improved by using context clues strategy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Alhamdulillah Robbil'alamiin, all praises be to Allah, the single power, the Lord of the universe, Master of the day of judgment, God all Mighty, for all blessings, mercies, helps and guidance. The deepest thanks are also addressed to the Headmaster of SMPN 20 Sigi, Dahlan, S.Pd that allowed the researchers to carry out the research in the school. The researchers sincere gratitude to the English Teacher, Ulizar., S.Pd who gave permission to conduct the research in her class and guided the researchers during the research. Also for all students who have participated in this research.

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