

**THE EFFECT OF WORDS SEARCH STRATEGY ON STUDENT'S
ABILITY IN READING COMPREHENSION AT THE SECOND GRADE
STUDENTS OF MTS JUNJUNGAN SAYYID HAMIM TANJUNG JAYA
KEC. SEMENDAWAI BARAT KAB. OKU TIMUR
PROVINCE SUMATERA SELATAN**

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Abstract

SKI lessons are part of religious lessons which are very important. This research aims to determine the effect of the Words Search Strategy on students' ability in reading comprehension at the second grade of MTs Junjungan Sayyid Hamim Tanjung Jaya, Semendawai Barat District, OKU Timur Regency, South Sumatra Province. Reading comprehension is an essential skill in learning English, as it enables students to understand, interpret, and analyze texts effectively. However, many students still experience difficulties in comprehending English texts due to limited vocabulary and ineffective reading strategies. To address this issue, the researcher applied the Words Search Strategy as a method to enhance students' reading comprehension skills. This study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design. The sample consisted of second-grade students divided into an experimental class and a control class. The data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests and analyzed using statistical methods. The results showed that students who were taught using the Words Search Strategy performed better in reading comprehension compared to those who were taught using conventional methods. It is concluded that the Words Search Strategy has a significant positive effect on improving students' reading comprehension ability.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh Strategi Pencarian Kata terhadap kemampuan siswa dalam pemahaman bacaan di kelas II MTs Junjungan Sayyid Hamim Tanjung Jaya, Kecamatan Semendawai Barat, Kabupaten OKU Timur, Provinsi Sumatera Selatan. Pemahaman bacaan merupakan keterampilan penting dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, karena memungkinkan siswa untuk memahami, menafsirkan, dan menganalisis teks secara efektif. Akan tetapi, masih banyak siswa yang mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami teks

Bahasa Inggris karena keterbatasan kosakata dan strategi membaca yang kurang efektif. Untuk mengatasi masalah tersebut, peneliti menerapkan Strategi Pencarian Kata sebagai metode untuk meningkatkan keterampilan pemahaman bacaan siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain quasi eksperimen. Sampel penelitian terdiri dari siswa kelas II yang dibagi menjadi kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes awal dan tes akhir serta dianalisis menggunakan metode statistik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang diajar menggunakan Strategi Pencarian Kata memiliki kinerja yang lebih baik dalam pemahaman bacaan dibandingkan dengan siswa yang diajar menggunakan metode konvensional. Disimpulkan bahwa Strategi Pencarian Kata memiliki pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap peningkatan kemampuan pemahaman bacaan siswa.

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PENDAHULUAN

Reading is one of the most important skills in learning English, as it provides access to a wide range of knowledge and information. In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), reading comprehension is crucial for students to understand and interpret written texts.(Bachtiar, 2024) However, many students at the junior high school level, particularly at MTs Junjungan Sayyid Hamim Tanjung Jaya, still face difficulties in reading comprehension. These difficulties often stem from limited vocabulary mastery, lack of motivation, and ineffective reading strategies.

To improve students' reading comprehension, it is important to implement effective teaching strategies. One such strategy is the Words Search Strategy. This strategy encourages students to actively engage with the text by identifying key vocabulary and understanding their meanings in context.(Streams, 2024) Through this interactive and enjoyable activity, students can expand their vocabulary and develop better comprehension skills.

The researcher observed that many students at MTs Junjungan Sayyid Hamim struggled to grasp the meaning of texts and often relied on guessing rather than understanding the content. Therefore, this study investigates the effectiveness of the Words Search Strategy in improving the reading comprehension abilities of second-grade students.

KERANGKA TEORITIK

A. The Concept of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and integrate it with what the reader already knows. reading comprehension is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language." It involves decoding words, recognizing vocabulary, making inferences, and understanding the overall meaning of the text.(Fitria, 2023)

Key components of reading comprehension include: Decoding: Translating written words into sounds, Vocabulary Knowledge: Understanding the meaning of words, Fluency: Reading with speed, accuracy, and proper expression, Text Structure Awareness: Understanding how texts are organized and Inference and Interpretation: Making logical conclusions from the text.(Oclarit & Casinillo, 2021)

For junior high school students, especially in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts, reading comprehension is often hindered by a lack of vocabulary and ineffective reading strategies.

B. The Words Search Strategy

The Words Search Strategy is a type of vocabulary-based learning technique that involves searching for specific words in a grid or text. This strategy is often applied through a word search puzzle, which helps students become more familiar with vocabulary and their spelling patterns in an engaging and interactive way.(Hutauruk et al., 2022)

word-focused strategies like word searches enhance students' vocabulary acquisition and reinforce word recognition, which is essential in improving reading comprehension. The Words Search Strategy has several advantages: Increases vocabulary retention, Enhances spelling and word recognition, Encourages student engagement through a game-based format and Strengthens memory and concentration. In the classroom, this strategy can be integrated with reading texts by asking students to identify and define key vocabulary before or after reading, enabling them to understand the text more deeply.

C. The Relationship between Words Search Strategy and Reading Comprehension

Vocabulary is a core element in reading comprehension. Students who know more words can understand more of what they read. The Words Search Strategy supports this by reinforcing vocabulary in a meaningful context. When students practice locating and understanding words, they are more likely to recognize and understand those words in a reading passage.(Purnomo & Ayub, 2021) This relationship can be illustrated as follows: Input: Students engage in

word search activities, Process: Students develop familiarity with words through repetition and pattern recognition and Outcome: Improved comprehension of texts due to increased vocabulary and word recognition.

have shown that vocabulary instruction is directly linked to better reading comprehension outcomes, especially when students are actively involved in learning new words.

D. Previous Studies

Previous research has shown that vocabulary-based strategies like Word Search can have a positive effect on reading comprehension:

found that using word search puzzles improved students' ability to understand descriptive texts and reported that students who used word search strategies showed more enthusiasm and had better vocabulary retention.(Mustofa, 2019)

These findings support the use of Words Search Strategy as an effective method for improving students' reading comprehension, particularly in EFL contexts like MTs Junjungan Sayyid Hamim.

METODE PENELITIAN

A. Research Design

This study used a quantitative research method with a quasi-experimental design. The design included a pre-test and post-test administered to two groups: an experimental group taught using the Words Search Strategy and a control group taught using conventional reading methods. This design was used to determine the effect of the Words Search Strategy on students' reading comprehension.

B. Population and Sample

The population of this study was all second-grade students of MTs Junjungan Sayyid Hamim Tanjung Jaya, West Semendawai, East OKU. The sample consisted of two classes: Class A as the experimental group (30 students). and Class B as the control group (30 students).

Sampling was conducted using purposive sampling technique.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

A. Result Of The Research

1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Group Mean Pre-test Mean Post-test Improvement

Experimental 61.3 79.6 +18.3

Control 60.7 68.2 +7.5

The table above shows that both groups improved, but the experimental

group showed greater improvement in reading comprehension after being taught using the Words Search Strategy.

2. T-Test Results

The results of the independent sample t-test for post-test scores showed: Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.001 < 0.05 This means there is a significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of students taught using the Words Search Strategy and those taught with conventional methods.

B. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the Words Search Strategy significantly improves students' reading comprehension skills. Students in the experimental group demonstrated better understanding of the texts, wider vocabulary recognition, and more enthusiasm during the learning process. This finding supports previous studies such as: who stated that Word Search activities increased students' vocabulary mastery and motivation And who concluded that the strategy helped students retain vocabulary longer and improved their comprehension.

The interactive and engaging nature of the Words Search Strategy allows students to actively participate in vocabulary recognition, which is a key factor in reading comprehension. The strategy makes learning more enjoyable and reduces the pressure commonly associated with reading difficult texts in English.

Therefore, this study concludes that the Words Search Strategy is an effective method to enhance students' reading comprehension, especially in EFL settings like MTs Junjungan Sayyid Hamim.

KESIMPULAN

Based on the results of the research and data analysis, it can be concluded that: 1) The implementation of the Words Search Strategy has a positive and significant effect on students' ability in reading comprehension. This strategy helps students become more familiar with vocabulary, which is essential for understanding texts. 2) Students in the experimental group, who were taught using the Words Search Strategy, showed greater improvement in their reading comprehension scores compared to the control group, who were taught using conventional methods.

The Words Search Strategy provides a fun and engaging learning atmosphere, making it easier for students to focus, participate actively, and retain vocabulary, which contributes to better reading performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Words Search Strategy is an effective alternative method to enhance students' reading comprehension, especially for second-

grade students at MTs Junjungan Sayyid Hamim Tanjung Jaya.

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