

**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 objective of reading is related to reading comprehension. Comprehension is related to knowledge gained after reading in order that readers are able to relate new things after reading the problems.(Bachtiar, 2024) This research is aimed at finding out the differences in students' comprehension of English reading text using the PBL and the TBL models. This research recommends the revision of Bloom's Taxonomy a way of determining the

standard of level in comprehension.(Oclarit & Casinillo, 2021) They are remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating which the first three levels refer to low critical thinking and the other three belong to high critical thinking. It means that when we are teaching Reading, it is recommended to have any strategies or models which are appropriate to use in order to gain better or maximum achievement. in their paper found that the language learning model gives positive effects on the students' comprehension.(Agustin & Ayu, 2021)

The activity in the conventional strategy makes students passive and unmotivated to learn. The traditional approach carried out by teachers usually provide reading lessons to students by asking questions about the title and giving them the new meaning of new vocabulary. Then, the teacher asked some questions about the pictures found in the lesson to facilitate students' understanding of the main ideas. Next, the teacher allowed students to read the text silently. While reading, they should answer specific questions the teacher wrote on the board. Lastly, the teacher divided the students into pairs or groups to answer the questions. Then, if necessary, the teacher gave feedback at the lesson's end. The traditional teaching method is applied to reading courses by centerlecturing in a large class.

The teachers use the reading course with text explanation, vocabulary illustration, grammar instruction, and intensive drills on language forms. Such conventional strategies are outdated, making students bored and unmotivated to take lessons. Therefore, teachers can take advantage of developing technology and improve learning quality. The use of technology in learning is growing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many countries, especially EFL countries, use technology for learning and teaching activities. It is stated that the use of technology to teach English as a foreign language (EFL) is very relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic. It makes teachers use technology to ensure the material is still conveyed to students.

This technology provides benefits in teaching English skills, including reading comprehension. tudents. Improving the reader's comprehension makes it possible to comprehend the writer's message entirely. The reader is also given the ability to gather and arrange information. It improves one's capacity for memory, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of text. In this case, the EFL students use all of their intellectual abilities to comprehend the content that has been read. If, after reading a text, the EFL students can understand the contents of the text reading then it is helpful. That is why reading comprehension skills are essential for EFL students.

Therefore, it is necessary to have a new strategy that follows

technological developments and has closeness to students so that students become active and motivated to learn, especially in reading comprehension. However, teaching reading comprehension is a challenge even in today's technological era. Although computer-assisted education is widely regarded as a powerful instrument for teaching and learning foreign languages, its adoption is significantly lower than expected. In addition, even though teachers have applied it in the classroom, it takes work to incorporate elements of fun, entertainment, and tension into learning using this technology. There needs to be an appropriate and exciting strategy for students so that students are motivated to learn reading comprehension.

Critical thinking has a very strong influence on Reading Comprehension. recommended that in reviewing the literature of researches, critical thinking can be best promoted through the process of reading. (Afandi et al., 2023) Then Ardhan, Ummah, Athen stated that learning and understanding the very detailed problem in a text requires reading comprehension. It shows that critical thinking skills like deductive and inductive reasonings, analysis, evaluation, and inference are closely related to skills needed in the reading process. mentioned the 6 characteristics of critical thinking. (Mawaddah et al., 2022) They are interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulated.

In the form of the research concluded in their article that critical thinking skills contributed much in learning outcomes that the teaching was very successful. In this research, however, the researcher tries to search whether or not the two models have any interaction to each other with critical thinking. of English Reading text. (3) In the class of students with high critical thinking, the students' comprehension of English reading text of PBL students is higher than those who were treated using TBL. (4) In the class of students with low critical thinking, the students' comprehension of English reading text of PBL students is lower than those who were treated using TBL. (Subkhi Mahmasani, 2020)

The result was that there was a significant improvement in scores of Reading Comprehension so he concluded that comprehension in reading can be gained through a metacognitive strategy training approach. then recommended in the finding of her research that problem-solving (as one of the characteristics of a problem-based model) was successful in increasing students' skills of identifying important details, writing summaries, analyzing and making interpretation on the text. It indicates that the students' Reading Comprehension was highly developed. that PBL was successfully led the students to critically locate the opinions based on the discussion topic through the group interactions. any way, made research about the teaching of Reading

Comprehension using PBL model. They wanted to increase the students' skill in Reading Comprehension using PBL. Their research fostered the same steps in PBL model with the current researchers but they did not compare it with the other model.(Putra et al., 2020) The single model they used recommended that PBL was effective for teaching Reading Comprehension. Anyway, they did not try to prove if PBL is more suggested to use compared to another model. The researcher of this research tries to prove the more effective model to use in teaching Reading Comprehension between PBL and TBL.(Sintadewi et al., 2020)

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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