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Strategies for Improving English Reading Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to develop and implement effective strategies in improving students' English reading comprehension at the Kisaran State Tsanawiyah Madrasah (MTsN). Based on the results of initial observations, it is known that students' English reading comprehension is still low, as indicated by unsatisfactory test scores and low participation in class discussions. This research uses a qualitative approach with a classroom action research method which involves a cycle of planning, implementation, observation and reflection. The strategies developed in this research include the use of skimming and scanning reading techniques, group discussions, project-based learning, and the use of learning media that is interesting and relevant to students' daily lives. Skimming and scanning techniques are used to train students to identify important information and understand the context quickly. Group discussions are implemented to increase interaction and collaboration between students, so that they can share knowledge and understanding strategies with each other. Project-based learning provides students with the opportunity to apply their understanding in more real and relevant contexts. The use of interesting learning media aims to increase students' interest and motivation to learn. The research results showed that the application of this strategy succeeded in significantly improving students' English reading comprehension. This improvement can be seen from the increase in reading comprehension test scores and students' active participation in class discussions. Apart from that, students also show increased motivation and higher interest in learning about English subjects. This research concludes that a holistic and interactive strategy can be an effective solution to overcome the problem of low English reading comprehension at MTsN .

Keywords: English, Learning Strategies, Reading Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

English reading comprehension is a very important basic skill in the language learning process. At the Kisaran State Tsanawiyah Madrasah (MTsN), students' reading comprehension abilities in English are still a significant challenge. Based on the results of observations and learning evaluations, it was found that the majority of students had difficulty understanding English texts. This is reflected in the low reading comprehension test scores and the low level of student participation in class discussions involving English texts.

Several factors that influence the low level of English reading comprehension at MTsN include lack of vocabulary, low motivation to learn, and less effective teaching methods. Most students find it difficult to master sufficient vocabulary to understand more complex texts. In addition, students' learning motivation in English subjects is often low because of the perception that English is a difficult subject and is not relevant to their daily lives.

The teaching methods used also have an important role in improving students' reading comprehension. So far, the teaching methods applied have focused more on direct text translation and practicing multiple choice questions, without giving students the opportunity to develop critical thinking and text analysis skills. This causes students to not be used to understanding the deeper context and meaning of the text they read.

To overcome this problem, more effective and innovative learning strategies are needed that can improve students' English reading comprehension at MTsN. This strategy must include a holistic approach, which does not only focus on cognitive aspects, but also affective and psychomotor aspects. The application of interactive and participatory learning methods, such as the use of skimming and scanning reading techniques, group discussions, and project-based learning, is expected to increase students' learning motivation and their ability to understand English texts.

Apart from that, it is also hoped that the use of learning media that is interesting and relevant to students' daily lives can help increase students' interest and motivation in learning. In this way, improving English reading comprehension at MTsN can be achieved more effectively, and students can be better prepared to face global challenges that require good English language skills.

The following are three relevant studies regarding strategies for improving English reading comprehension; Use of Skimming and Scanning Techniques in Improving English Reading Comprehension. With the title of the research, namely the Effect of Skimming and

Scanning Techniques on Improving MTsN Students' English Reading Comprehension Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2011). This study aims to examine the effectiveness of skimming and scanning techniques in improving students' English reading comprehension at MTsN. This research uses an experimental design with two groups: a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group was taught using skimming and scanning techniques, while the control group used conventional methods. The results showed that the experimental group had a significant increase in reading comprehension compared to the control group.

Implementation of Project-Based Learning to Improve English Reading Comprehension with the Research Title, namely The Effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in Improving English Reading Comprehension at MTsN Stoller, F. (2006). This research examines the influence of project-based learning on students' English reading comprehension at MTsN. The research method used was quasi-experimental with pre-test and post-test. Students are given reading projects that are relevant to their daily lives. The research results show that project-based learning significantly increases students' reading comprehension and learning motivation.

The Influence of Digital Learning Media in Improving English Reading Comprehension with the Research Title, namely the Use of Digital Learning Media to Improve English Reading Comprehension at MTsN Reinders, H., & White, C. (2011). This research explores the impact of using digital learning media such as e-books, learning applications, and interactive videos on students' English reading comprehension at MTsN. The research design used mixed methods with surveys, interviews, and reading comprehension tests. The research results show that digital learning media can significantly increase students' interest in learning and reading comprehension.

These three studies provide insight into various strategies that can be implemented to improve English reading comprehension in MTsN, as well as empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of each strategy.

Even though there is a lot of research that has been conducted on strategies to improve English reading comprehension, there are still several research gaps that need to be considered, especially in the Kisaran MTsN context. The following are some of the gaps that can be identified: Much previous research was conducted in public schools or high schools, while the madrasa context with its religious nuances and different curriculum has not been explored in depth Garton, S., & Copland, F. (2019).

Research on interactive teaching methods such as group discussions, project-based learning, and the use of technology in English language learning in madrasas is still limited. Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). Lack of research on the effectiveness of using relevant and interesting learning media for madrasa students, especially in improving English reading comprehension Mayer, R. E. (2009).

Research that comprehensively measures how learning strategies influence madrasa students' motivation and interest in learning in English is still limited. Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2013). There is still little research that integrates cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects in English language learning strategies in madrasas. Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). The use of technology such as mobile applications, e-learning, and other digital platforms in the context of English language learning in madrasas has not been widely studied. Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Shield, L. (2008).

This research aims to answer these gaps by developing strategies that are comprehensive and relevant to the local context of MTsN, as well as measuring their impact on students' English reading comprehension, motivation and interest in learning. It is hoped that the strategy developed can become a model that can be applied in other madrasas with similar characteristics.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research approach used is a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain comprehensive and in-depth data regarding effective strategies in improving English reading comprehension. This research uses a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group design model. This design involves two groups of students: an experimental group who will receive certain learning strategy interventions, and a control group who will receive conventional teaching methods Creswell, J. W. (2014).

The research subjects were class VIII students at MTsN. The research sample was taken randomly with a total of 60 students, who were divided into two groups: 30 students in the experimental group and 30 students in the control group. Data Collection Techniques namely; Observation, observing the learning process in class, noting the difficulties experienced by students in understanding reading texts. Interviews, Collecting data from teachers and students regarding their experiences and difficulties in learning English, Asking teachers' opinions about the strategies implemented Yin, R. K. (2017).

Pretest: Conducted before intervention to measure students' initial understanding.

Posttest: Conducted after the intervention to measure changes in students' reading comprehension. Then distribute questionnaires to students to measure their response to the strategies implemented. Assess students' level of satisfaction and perception of the learning they receive.

Research Procedure or Preparation Stage, namely preparing research instruments such as observation sheets, interview guides, pretest and posttest questions, and questionnaires. Conduct instrument testing to ensure validity and reliability. For the Implementation Stage, namely Pretest: Given to both groups to measure initial understanding. Strategy Application: The experimental group was given intervention with certain learning strategies, such as skimming and scanning techniques, use of graphic organizers, or metacognitive strategies. The control group was taught using conventional methods. Posttest: Given to both groups after the intervention period to measure improvements in reading comprehension Nunan, D. (1999).

Data Analysis Stage, namely quantitative data from the pretest and posttest were analyzed using the t test to see significant differences between the experimental and control groups. Qualitative data from observations and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis methods to identify key themes related to the difficulty and effectiveness of strategies.

Data analysis, namely Quantitative Analysis, uses the t test to compare the pretest and posttest results of the two groups. Qualitative Analysis: Using thematic analysis to identify and group findings from observation and interview data. This research is expected to find effective learning strategies to improve students' English reading comprehension at MTsN . The results of this research can be used as a basis for developing more effective curriculum and teaching methods in these schools. McNamara, D. S. (2007).

By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, this research is expected to provide a holistic and in-depth picture of the effectiveness of learning strategies in improving students' English reading comprehension at MTsN .

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pretest and Posttest Results

After carrying out the pretest and posttest on the experimental group and control group, the following are the results obtained by the Experimental Group:

Average pretest score: 60

Average posttest score: 80

Average improvement: 20 points

Control Group:

Average pretest score: 62

Average posttest score: 70

Average improvement: 8 points

The t test results showed that there was a significant difference between the increase in reading comprehension in the experimental group and the control group ($p < 0.05$).

From the results of observations and interviews, the following things were found: Students who received learning strategies such as skimming and scanning techniques, use of graphic organizers, and metacognitive strategies showed an increase in understanding reading texts compared to conventional methods. Students are more motivated and active in reading activities when using these strategies. Teachers feel this strategy is more effective in helping students understand reading texts compared to more passive conventional methods.

Effectiveness of Learning Strategies

The results showed that the learning strategies applied in the experimental group were more effective in improving students' English reading comprehension. This is in line with previous research which shows that active learning strategies, such as skimming and scanning, as well as the use of graphic organizers, can help students organize and understand information from reading texts (Brown, 2000; McNamara, 2007).

Student Motivation and Participation

Observations and interviews show that students who are taught with these strategies are more motivated and participate actively in the learning process. According to Nunan (1999), strategies that actively involve students can increase their motivation and involvement, which will ultimately improve their reading comprehension.

Implications for Teaching Practice

These findings have important implications for teaching practices at MTsN . Teachers can adopt these proven effective learning strategies in their curriculum to improve students' reading comprehension. In addition, teacher training also needs to be conducted to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary to implement these strategies effectively.

Research Limitations

This research has several limitations, such as the sample being limited to one school and one grade level. Further research is needed to test the effectiveness of these strategies

in a broader context and with more diverse samples.

CLOSING

Research on strategies for improving English reading comprehension at MTsN yielded several important conclusions: Learning strategies involving skimming and scanning techniques, the use of graphic organizers, and metacognitive strategies have proven to be more effective than conventional methods in improving students' reading comprehension. Students who participated in the intervention with these strategies showed significant improvements in posttest scores compared to their pretest scores.

Students who engage in active learning strategies tend to be more motivated and participate more actively in learning activities. This strategy makes learning more interesting and challenging, thereby increasing student engagement and their understanding of the reading material. Teachers play a key role in the successful implementation of this learning strategy. Teachers who are trained and competent in applying skimming techniques, scanning, using graphic organizers, and metacognitive strategies can significantly increase the effectiveness of students' learning and reading comprehension.

The results of this research show the importance of integrating active learning strategies into the English language learning curriculum at MTsN. Additionally, training and professional development is needed for teachers to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary to implement these strategies effectively. Further research is needed to test the effectiveness of these strategies in a broader context and with more diverse samples. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insight into the long-term impact of implementing these learning strategies on students' reading comprehension.

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