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# Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Using Paired Reading Method

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***Abstract.*** *This study was conducted in the purpose to find out whether the implementation of paired reading can improve students' reading comprehension at SMP SATAP N.1 Beo Selatan or not. This research was delimited on the use of paired reading in teaching reading to students at SMP SATAP N.1 Beo Selatan, especially eighth grade students. More specifically, narrative texts were selected as the reading text taught during this research. The design is pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test. Class 8A was one of the classes in the eighth grade of SMP SATAP N.1 Beo Selatan, the academic year of 2020-2021 who were the subjects of this research. The class A consisted of 30 students in all. In this research, the researcher used test of narrative text which consisted of 20 questions in form of objective test in form of multiple choice as the instrument to get the data. The data analysis proves that (1) the mean score of the post-test is 7.93 and the the mean score of pre-test is 6.63, and (2) the standard deviation of the pre-test data is 0.59 whereas the post-test data is 0.95. These results of data analysis confirm that the students' reading comprehension improves after applying paired reading as the treatment. It shows that the use of paired reading is successful in improving the students' reading comprehension. Since paired reading is effective to be used in improving students' reading comprehension, English teachers are suggested to implement paired reading as a useful alternative for improving students' reading comprehension particularly narrative texts.*

***Keywords****: Paired Reading; Reading Comprehension; Narrative Text; Junior High School*

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is a part of language skill which has important role in the learning process (Tatipang, Oroh & Liando, 2021). Reading is gaining messages from the text and interpretation (Harrison, 2004). In other words, reading refers to the being able to transform from the textual contents and understand the meaning informed in suitability. Tankersley (2003) defines reading as a complex process made up of several interlocking skills and processes. As also argued by Gordon Wainright (2007), reading skill is a complex process which comprises the successful or unsuccessful use of many abilities. Reading eventually is a grasping of thoughts, sets of activities performed by students and not only question answering process. It means that reading is seeking information from written contents and concepts belongs to the reader who has the main role in forming the meaning.

The main purpose of reading is to find and obtain information, including the content and comprehension of the reading material. During classroom reading activities, teachers should use media to set reading goals (Van Den Broek & Espin, 2012). For students to successfully acquire knowledge, they must be able to use a variety of English vocabulary. Without mastering English vocabulary, it is impossible to have specific ideas in English. So when students were given a passage containing phrases that were assumed to have been taught in the past, they found the words remained difficult to understand. Some important reading skill strategies are making connections, visualization, organization, determining important information, asking question and monitoring comprehension (Moosr, 2010). What is needed, therefore, is an appropriate method for teaching English (Liando, 2009).

Snow (2002) conceptualized reading as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Regardless of its complexity, reading is very important for students who are learning foreign language. Reading is ranked as the number one skill that English as a foreign language (EFL) students' wish to gain mastery (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). Students can understand written information they couldn't discuss orally with the same

precision or completeness through reading. When the students are going to read an English text, it is common that they were going to experience numerous problems in reading activities such as analyzing process of the text, finding the topic or the main idea of the text, finding answers of the questions and also describing the text. So, the teacher needs to give more attention about the students' interest on reading English text (Tuerah, 2002). Reading also has two models namely top down model and bottom up model (Hermer, 2000).

In the education field, the lack of interest in reading leads to the increasing number of students that face certain problem to improve their reading skills (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). The reading proficiency gap among students was growing. This issue needs to be treated seriously because without the right assistance, many students who struggle with reading may not be able to make up for the many obstacles they faced when trying to comprehend what they read. The main cause of the students' propensity to be reluctant readers has been their reading difficulties (Liando & Tatipang, 2022). Teaching is not merely a matter of techniques and teacher's teaching role as well as material but also aspects related to an atmosphere or climate within which the teaching and learning take place.(Maru, n.d.) This means that there should be process of activities which will make the condition of class more interesting as well as effective especially in reading class.

In paired reading, students take turns playing the roles of teacher and students in order to increase reading fluency and comprehension. Students sit side-by-side while one reads and the other follows along, assisted by the teacher when necessary(Topping, 1995). Another way to practice paired reading is to let two students read aloud to one another at the same time. Together, they read the words aloud. When a reader makes a mistake, the tutor simply clarifies what the word is. Tutors adjust their tempo to match that of the readers. Never should the reader struggle, break up the word, or attempt to sound it out. This avoids reading that is disjointed and tiresome, where comprehension is hampered by the reading's slow speed and focus on individual words.

Based on the researcher's observation in SMP SATAP N.1 Beo Selatan, it is known that in teaching reading comprehension, teacher usually instructed students to read text, then translating it, to find the unfamiliar words, topic, main idea, social purpose, specific details, and generic structure of the functional text. Teacher also gave text which is interesting. As described, students have been taught reading well, however, most of them are still difficult in reading comprehension especially in narrative text. Most of students only got low score under the passing grade. It means that there was a gap between the expectation of curriculum and the reality. The curriculum demanded students to comprehend the text, but in reality the text still could not be understood as well as expected in curriculum. The students' achievement in reading comprehension particularly on narrative text was still far from the expectation of curriculum.

## METHOD

This research is classified as quantitative research, since the data are in the form of number. The design is pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test. Pre-test is the test that was given to the students before treatment. The purpose of the test is to see the student's reading skill especially narrative text before applying paired reading as treatment. The post-test is the test which was given to the students after treatment or after implementing paired reading. The purpose of post-test is to find out whether there is an improvement in student's reading comprehension, particularly narrative text. "One group pre-test and post-test design is similar to the one shot case study". It is different in that the pre-test will be given before treatment begins. So, there are two tests: *T1* is pre-test and *T2* is post-test, *X* is used to symbolize the treatment (Hatch & Farhady, 1982).

Researchers used tests to measure student comprehension before and after the teaching and learning process. The aim is to determine whether pair reading techniques can improve students' reading comprehension. The test consists of questions or exercises that measure competence, knowledge, intelligence, ability, or talent, and are undertaken by individuals or groups (Arikunto, 2019). Pre-tests were administered before the teaching and learning process and post-tests were administered after the students were treated. It is useful to know whether the pair reading method can improve students' reading comprehension. Before and after test results were collected and compared. In this study, researchers used a narrative text test consisting of 20 questions in the form of an

objective multiple-choice test as a tool for obtaining data. The pre- and post-test questions given to each group differed based on grade level. When assessing a student's answer, 1 point is given for each correct answer, so the maximum score is 20, and the total number of correct answers is multiplied by 5 to get the final score for the test.

Class 8A was one of the classes in the eighth grade of SMP SATAP N.1 Beo Selatan, the academic year of 2020-2021 who were the subjects of this research. The class A consisted of 30 students in all. The subjects were involved in this pre-experimental research. The data then were analyzed after each of the process (pre-test and post-test) had been done. The results of the tests were put in the tables to see the frequency distribution of the tests. The data were presented in data matrix with score value (x), tally frequency distribution (frequency (f), proportion (p), percentage (%) cumulative frequency (c.f) and the percentage of cumulative frequency (c.p.%), then, it was be depicted in bar graphs.

Frequency distribution of scores was calculated using this formula:

$$\text{Score \%} = \frac{\text{Total number of students got a given score}}{\text{Total number of students}}$$

The mean of pretest and post-test scores, symbolized $\overline{X}$ and $\overline{Y}$ respectively, was calculated using this formula:

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum \chi}{n}$$

(Hatch & Farhady, 1982)

Where:

$\overline{X}(\overline{Y})$ = the mean; $\sum\chi$ ($\sum Y$) = the sum scores of subjects X/Y; n = the total number of subjects

Standard deviation, symbolized as s, was computed using the following *Raw Score Method* (Moore, 2009).

$$s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2}{N} - \overline{(X)}^2}$$

Where: s = standard deviation; $\overline{X}$ = mean; N = number of subjects

**RESULT**

**Table 1**
**The Students' Scores of Pre-Test And Post-Test**

| Number of Student | The Scores Of Students | |
|---|---|---|
| | Pre-Test Scores ($x_1$) | Post-Test Scores ($x_2$) |
| 1 | 60 | 70 |
| 2 | 65 | 75 |
| 3 | 70 | 80 |
| 4 | 60 | 75 |
| 5 | 65 | 90 |
| 6 | 60 | 95 |
| 7 | 75 | 80 |
| 8 | 70 | 70 |
| 9 | 65 | 70 |
| 10 | 65 | 70 |
| 11 | 60 | 85 |
| 12 | 60 | 80 |
| 13 | 60 | 60 |
| 14 | 70 | 95 |
| 15 | 65 | 95 |
| 16 | 60 | 85 |
| 17 | 70 | 80 |
| 18 | 80 | 70 |
| 19 | 60 | 95 |
| 20 | 65 | 90 |
| 21 | 95 | 95 |
| 22 | 60 | 85 |
| 23 | 75 | 80 |
| 24 | 75 | 80 |
| 25 | 80 | 90 |
| 26 | 65 | 90 |
| 27 | 60 | 75 |
| 28 | 85 | 85 |
| 29 | 60 | 65 |
| 30 | 90 | 95 |

Source: processed data

**Table 2**
**The Frequency Distribution of Pre-Test Scores ($x_1$).**

| Score Interval | Tally | Frequency | % | Cumulative Frequency | Cumulative Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 91-95 | I | 1 | 3 | 30 | 100 |
| 86-90 | I | 1 | 3 | 29 | 97 |
| 81-85 | I | 1 | 3 | 28 | 94 |
| 76-80 | II | 2 | 6 | 26 | 88 |
| 71-75 | III | 3 | 10 | 23 | 78 |
| 66-70 | IIII | 4 | 13 | 19 | 65 |
| 61-65 | ~~IIII~~ II | 7 | 23 | 12 | 42 |
| 56-60 | ~~IIII~~ ~~IIII~~ I | 11 | 36 | 11 | 36 |

Source: processed data

**Table 3**
**The Frequency Distribution of Post-Test Scores** ($x_2$)

| Score Interval | Tally | Frequency | % | Cumulative Frequency | Cumulative Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 91-95 | ~~IIII~~ I | 6 | 20 | 30 | 100 |
| 86-90 | IIII | 4 | 13 | 26 | 87 |
| 81-85 | IIII | 4 | 13 | 22 | 74 |
| 76-80 | ~~IIII~~ I | 6 | 20 | 16 | 54 |
| 71-75 | III | 3 | 10 | 13 | 44 |
| 66-70 | ~~IIII~~ | 5 | 16 | 8 | 28 |
| 61-65 | I | 1 | 3 | 7 | 25 |
| 56-60 | I | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |

Source: processed data

As seen from the table above, the scores got by the students in post-test are higher than the scores got by the students in the pre-test. Based on the pre-test, 1 student got 95, 1 student got 90, 1 student got 85, 2 students got 80, 3 students got 75, 4 students got 70, 7 students got 65, and 11 students got 60. The result of post-test shows that 6 students got the score 95, 4 students got the scores 90, 4 students got the scores 85, 6 students got 80, 3 students got 75, 5 students got 70, 1 student got 65, and 1 student got 60. To find out the mean and standard deviation of both pre-test and post-test scores, the sums and sum square of X and Y were calculated and presented on the table below:

**Table 4**
**The sums and sum square of X and Y**

| No | Converted Pretest Scores (X) | $X^2$ | Converted Posttest Scores (Y) | $Y^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 6 | 36 | 7 | 49 |
| 2 | 6 | 36 | 7 | 49 |
| 3 | 7 | 49 | 8 | 64 |
| 4 | 6 | 36 | 7 | 49 |
| 5 | 6 | 36 | 9 | 81 |
| 6 | 6 | 36 | 9 | 81 |
| 7 | 7 | 49 | 8 | 64 |
| 8 | 7 | 49 | 7 | 49 |
| 9 | 6 | 36 | 7 | 49 |
| 10 | 6 | 36 | 7 | 49 |
| 11 | 6 | 36 | 8 | 64 |
| 12 | 6 | 36 | 8 | 64 |
| 13 | 6 | 36 | 6 | 36 |
| 14 | 7 | 49 | 9 | 81 |
| 15 | 6 | 36 | 9 | 81 |
| 16 | 6 | 36 | 8 | 64 |
| 17 | 7 | 49 | 8 | 64 |
| 18 | 8 | 64 | 7 | 49 |
| 19 | 6 | 36 | 9 | 81 |
| 20 | 6 | 36 | 9 | 81 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | 9 | 81 | 9 | 81 |
| 22 | 6 | 36 | 8 | 64 |
| 23 | 7 | 49 | 8 | 64 |
| 24 | 7 | 49 | 8 | 64 |
| 25 | 8 | 64 | 9 | 81 |
| 26 | 6 | 36 | 9 | 81 |
| 27 | 6 | 36 | 7 | 49 |
| 28 | 8 | 64 | 8 | 64 |
| 29 | 6 | 36 | 6 | 36 |
| 30 | 9 | 81 | 9 | 81 |
| N=30 | $\sum X = 199$ | $\sum X^2 = 1345$ | $\sum Y = 238$ | $\sum Y^2 = 1914$ |

Source: processed data

As seen in the obtained results, the mean scores of pretest ($\overline{X}$) and posttest ($\overline{Y}$) are:

$\overline{X} = \frac{199}{30} = 6.63$

$\overline{Y} = \frac{238}{30} = 7.93$

The mean score of the pretest is 6.63, and the post-test mean score is 7.93. Therefore , the mean score of post-test is higher than mean score of the pre-test. Thus, the result states that students' reading comprehension is improved through the use of paired reading. In the purpose of calculating the standard deviation of pretest and posttest scores, the *Raw Score Method* theory as argued by Moore (1983:251) was used, where:

$s_x = \sqrt{\frac{1345}{30} - (6.63)^2} = \sqrt{44.83 - 43.95} = \sqrt{0.35} = 0.59$

whereas

$s_y = \sqrt{\frac{1914}{30} - (7.93)^2} = \sqrt{63.8 - 62.88} = \sqrt{0.92} = 0.95$

The results of the calculation show that the standard deviation of the pretest is 0.59 while the post-test is 0.95

The following steps were followed during the treatment: Before implementing this paired reading strategy in the reading class, the researcher had already found that students' reading comprehension skills were still poor. Additionally, students frequently make errors in their understanding of the text as well as their pronunciation and vocabulary. Some students even still struggle to read the material accurately and lack the confidence to pronounce words appropriately. In this case, researcher used the pair reading method which consisted of three meetings. The first meeting, the researcher conducted a pre-test with the aim of measuring each student's ability in understanding the text. After getting the results of the tests carried out, the researcher will make a list of students according to their abilities from the highest to the lowest. Then the researcher will determine and make groups in the form of pairs according to the abilities of each student.

The second meeting, the researcher gave treatment or treatment to students after the pre-test was carried out at the previous meeting. In this section, students will be given Reading Material (Teaching Narrative Text). Then students will be invited to begin to understand some aspects of reading; they know how to determine vocabulary, punctuation, expressions, and are able to understand the content of the text well. After that, students will start to enjoy and be active in class because they slowly begin to understand aspects of reading and they can already understand the text and learn facts from the text. After finishing the material, the researcher began to teach students to apply the pair reading method using the narrative text provided by the researcher; in this section, some students will be able to understand the content of the text well.

The last meeting, after the treatment of the students, the researcher will conduct a post-test with the aim of seeing the students' abilities or progress in the application of this paired reading method. The results of this study indicate that when the pair reading method is applied in the classroom, students will find opportunities to improve their poor reading skills. Finally, the teacher evaluates the students by allowing them to write on any points in the summary with which they disagree or suggestions for improvement. They rewrite the reading section using their own words. The data analysis proves that (1) the mean score of the post-test is 7.93 and the the mean score of pre-test is 6.63, and (2) the standard deviation of the pre-test data is 0.59 whereas the post-test data is 0.95. These results of data analysis confirm that the students' reading comprehension improves after applying paired reading as the treatment. It demonstrates

how paired reading effectively improves students' reading comprehension. It is wise for English teachers to take into account the use of paired reading in English teaching and learning activities since the study shows that it is an excellent method for teaching reading, particularly narrative material. The texts made students having independent readability level, and such reading ability is recommended with the hope which is to improve the reading of both students in the pair, as conceptualized in the theory (Topping, 1995)

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that a difference was found in tests' scores between pre-test scores and post-test scores. Prior to the treatment, students'scores in pre-test do not show any increase. Having done the treatment, the students's scores in post-test show increase. The data analysis confirmed that the students' reading comprehension is improved after being implemented with paired reading. It is able to conclude that paired reading is an effective method in improving the students' reading comprehension. To suggest, since paired reading is effective to be used in improving students' reading comprehension, English teachers are suggested to implement paired reading as a useful alternative for improving students' reading comprehension particularly narrative texts. It is suggested also for next researchers to carry out other studies to find out any breakthrough and new alternatives in relation to English teaching and learning using other methods.

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