PARTNER READING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract
The researchers decided to implement the Partner Reading Strategy in this research because it is an effective strategy for improving the students' reading comprehension. The students worked together to read, analyze, and discuss the text assigned in this cooperative learning strategy. This research aimed to help the students of the VIII C class of MTs Mambaul Hikam improve their reading comprehension using the Partner Reading Strategy and identify their engagement in learning activities. This research used a Classroom Action Research method as a research design. Partner Reading Strategy is an independent variable, and students' reading comprehension is a dependent variable. The subject of this research were 31 students, consisted of eleven (11) male students and twenty (20) female students. The researchers used some instruments to assess students' reading comprehension: formative tests and summative tests. In collecting the data, the writers used non-tests, including interviews, observation sheets, questionnaires, and field notes. The improvement of students' reading comprehension can be concluded from the improvement of the mean score of pre-test, formative test, and summative test. The summative test was given in the last meeting of each cycle. The result shows that using the Partner Reading Strategy successfully improved students' reading comprehension. Moreover, students' engagement played an influential role and impacted their learning outcomes. Implementing a Partner Reading Strategy can make students be involved in the educational activity and have a high level of engagement to earn high learning outcomes.

Keywords: Improving, Reading comprehension, Partner Reading Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Basically, every teacher or instructor in the class should be able to determine the right strategy when using it. Learning objectives will be achieved if teaching and learning activities can be carried out effectively by using the right strategy, it can help the learning objectives that have been set (Ardiana, 2015). Partner Reading Strategy is one of the efforts that educators can use in learning English in the secondary and higher education system (Meisinger, Schwanenflugel, Bradley, & Stahl, 2004). The reasons related to the needs of students who aim to master these various aspects are in line with those in English. Conventional learning strategies to improve students' English skills will gradually be replaced by this phenomenon. Techniques that educators or teachers can use to help students improve reading skills through the Reading Partners strategy are experiencing significant developments at this time (Irianto, Imranuddin, & Syafrizal, 2019). This strategy offers students exclusive opportunities for teaching and learning activities when applied in the classroom and can also be used in their spare time by the teacher. Thus, the position of the three components, namely; the mobility of learning strategies, learning activities, and student mobility is one way to achieve the learning targets that have been determined because the three components support each other (Zulianti & Hastomo, 2022).

The Partner Reading Strategy that can be found in previous researchers conveys some limitations, such as (Pilonieta, Hathaway, & Casto, 2020); (Rizki, 2019); (Harahap, 2021); (Sinaga & Siahaan, 2020). From their research, it seems that there is still one gap that has not been unraveled, namely the absence of discussion about student involvement in learning English as an important aspect when implementing a strategy. Students really need to be involved with the aim of improving relationships with other individuals, teachers, and the community as an effort to increase understanding of what is the target of learning itself (Anggeraini & Madenta, 2020).

The learning strategies that were previously applied were only to improve English language skills, but are now starting to experience changes towards developing student engagement through behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects (Dahliana, 2017). In addition, to encourage students' new thinking in learning activities through reading strategies, pairs must be identified first so that the relationship between one individual and another appears more intimate. In achieving English learning objectives, teachers can encourage the implementation of Partner Reading Strategies and motivate mutually supportive relationships between students to help each other (Syambas, 2020).

In addition, the aspect discussed in this study is reading competence. Constructing meaning from written text is the meaning of reading itself. Meanwhile, people are learning to read from alphabet picture books to novels, even checking messages on cell phones and reading newspaper headlines begins when students start school (Liao & Wang, 2018). Reading activities in this case have become part of everyday people's activities. Reading will certainly have several benefits, such as getting information about everything that is around their environment or even news around the world (Abdukadirova & Mirzajonova, 2021). Reading is a flexible activity that requires time and resources to develop. When people try to read, they indirectly have built their own knowledge. When people have to store enough memory to make understanding when reading something because reading is a fast process. Some of the purposes of reading, whether it's just to find entertainment, get information, or just research. Meanwhile, reading is one of the four critical skills that every student must have. Reading will certainly help make it easier for students to find meaning or even interpret language. They can get information from the books they have read. Identifying and comparing important ideas is an active process of reading itself (McGeown, Osborne, Warhurst, Norgate, & Duncan, 2016). Understanding the text rather than getting the meaning of each word or sentence is the goal of reading activities. Getting new information and representations of the importance of the text combined with previous knowledge is the goal of reading comprehension (He, 2008).

Based on the preliminary research, the writers found that some of the students found it very difficult to comprehend reading text (Handani & Jufri, 2017). In this case, they faced difficulty finding the main idea and supporting the idea of the text. This statement is supported by (Desfiyenti & Gafar, 2021), who states that the low proficiency of English words also causes the student's problem in comprehending reading the text with the students. Furthermore, being unfamiliar with the term related to text makes it difficult to understand the content of the text (Wexler, Swanson, Kurz, Shelton, & Vaughn, 2020). Another problem, they could not summarize the content of a text and recognize references that occur in a text.

Reading is a constant process of guessing, and what one brings to the next is often more important than what one finds in it. It means that, when people read, people use their eyes to

acquire written symbols (letters, punctuation marks, and spaces), and people employ their minds to transform them into words, sentences, and paragraphs that speak something to us. In reading, the students are taught to use what they know to understand unknown elements, whether ideas or simple words (Kendeou, McMaster, & Christ, 2016).

The authors decided to conclude that reading is an active process where the people who read try to find the information given by the author and understand the author's purpose or get more knowledge and information from the written message. Teaching reading has two aspects, the first who are learning to read in the first place and the second is who already have reading skills in their mother tongue. According to (Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001), there are three steps of teaching reading as (1) Before reading is an activity that the teacher can do before reading step, such as simulating students' curiosity, the teacher explains the goal and presents the background information, (2) In while reading is an activity which takes the students part, the students read the sentences, answer the questions, and the teacher guides the students, (3) After the reading is an activity which the students summarize the text; compare several texts, and practicing their reading skill.

Partner reading is a strategy that involves two students in a reading class, and this strategy provides reading practice for both students (Sinaga & Siahaan, 2020). According to (Harahap, 2021), partner reading can effectively help students with reading problems. It is suggested for the students to read the next confidently and independently with a partner to practice if they find a new or unknown word. Students can give each other feedback during partner reading while they read the text. Students feel more confident about reading as they give and receive feedback. Students can be partnered in any way or choose their partners. The teacher can pair the student has more skilled with less skilled one. The less capable student read the text first, followed by the partner, then talk turns until they finish it. While the students practice with their partners, the teacher monitors each student to give critical feedback (Rizki, 2019).

In partner reading, students work together on a different text, building confidence. Furthermore, increasing their concentration also improves their reading skills (Anggeraini & Madenta, 2020). Furthermore, partner reading can improve students' reading rate, fluency, and vocabularies skill and help them comprehend the text they read. In the partner reading strategy, two students are paired into one group to provide one another with support in the oral reading of the connected text (Zulianti & Hastomo, 2022). The writers conclude that the Partner Reading strategy is a good learning reading strategy for students to improve their reading comprehension skills. By using a reading partner, the students get error correction and aid from their companion for the duration of the practice.

This study sought to answer the following research questions.

1. Does Partner Reading Strategy Improve students' reading comprehension?
2. Does Partner Reading Strategy improve students' learning activities?
3. What are the students' engagements in teaching reading via partner reading strategies?

METHOD

The writers used Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the analysis method in this research. It is a research method that originated from Action Research Concept developed by American School Psychology Kurtz Lewin. Classroom Action Research (CAR) is research conducted in the classroom, and it is learning activities in the form of action. Classroom here is not only

about room space, but also it is a group of students in the learning process (Arikunto & dan Supardi, 2010).

There were four steps in action research that the writers did. They are: 1) Planning was a step in which the writers as teachers had to prepare all the materials they needed, and the writers prepared the lesson plan based on the current syllabus. 2) Action is a step in which the writers will implement the strategy or start teaching the material by using the strategy which is Partner Reading Strategy with the lesson plan and the materials prepared, (3) Observing is a step in which the writers collect the information from the instruments that are used. Then the writers observed students'

learning process from each meeting after doing a teaching strategy. (4) Reflecting is a step in which the researchers reflect on what they have done in the previous steps. It was to find whether there were any improvements in students' ability in reading text or whether the strategy was a success or not for the next cycle (Arikunto & dan Supardi, 2010).

The dependent variable of this research is students' reading comprehension, and the independent variable of this research is partner reading strategy.

Subjects

The population of this research is the VIII C students of MTs Mambaul Hikam. The researchers applied random cluster sampling as the sampling technique because internally uniform groups make up the statistical population. This technique can be conducted so that the data can be divided into smaller groups which are more productive when compared to the entire existing population . Furthermore, the researchers employed the VIII C students, which consisted of 31 students, as the research sample. This class is chosen via a lottery conducted by the researchers.

Instruments

The researchers used some instruments that consisted of two kinds of tests to assess students' reading comprehension. The first test is a formative test; it is used to measure the students' achievement in each meeting of the learning process. The second test is a summative test; it assesses the students' learning at the end of each cycle.

Data Collecting Technique

In collecting the data, the writers used non-tests, including interviews, observation sheets, questionnaires, and field notes. They are used to knowing the situation, the progress in the learning and teaching process, and collecting the education students' perceptions of engagement while conducting partner reading strategies in the classroom.

For quantitative data analysis, the writers use the t-test formula to count the score of students' learning completeness.

Data Analysis Technique

In analyzing the data from the test instrument, the researcher used quantitative data analysis. The researchers will define descriptively by using a paired sample t-test in this study (Taylor & Cihon, 2004).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings
Result of Students' Reading Comprehension

Table 1. Paired Samples Statistics for Students ReadingComprehension

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. ErrorMean
Pre-test	68.4194	31	6.13066	1.10110
Post-test	85.3871	31	3.72091	.66829

A paired-samples t-test was conducted in response to the first question of this study to examine the influence of using Partner Reading Comprehension on students' reading comprehension. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of the students' reading comprehension before and after the treatment. The results present a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after the treatment. The mean score in the pre-test is 68.41, and the mean score of the post-test is 85.38. It means that there was an improvement from the previous test was 16.97. Furthermore, the standard deviation in the pre-test is 6.13 and the standard deviation in the post-test is 3.72.

Table 2. Paired Samples Test Significant Difference

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
			Lower	Upper				
- 16.96774	7.51658	1.35002	- 19.72484	-14.21064		- 12.569	30	.000

Based on table 2, it is known that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 < 0.05, so the researchers can conclude a significant difference between students' reading comprehension using Partner Ready Strategy on Pretest and Posttest data.

Result of Students' Learning Activities

Table 3. Paired Samples Statistics for Students' LearningActivities

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. ErrorMean
Cycle 1	71.0323	31	3.59151	.64505
Cycle 2	85.3871	31	3.72091	.66829

A paired-samples t-test was conducted in response to the second question of this study to examine the influence of using Partner Reading Comprehension on students' learning activities. Based on the average score of each meeting in each cycle presented, it can be concluded that students' learning activities have improved. It can be proved with the mean score of each student in learningactivities which increased. In cycle 1, the average score of the students was 71.03. Meanwhile, in cycle 2, the average score improved, which was 85.38. It means that there was an improvement from the previous test was 14.35. Furthermore, the standard deviation in cycle 1 is 3.59, and the standard deviation in cycle 2 is 3.72.

Table 4. Paired Samples Test Significant Difference

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% ConfidenceInterval of the Difference					
			Lower	Upper				
- 14.35484	5.25070	.94305	- 16.28081	-12.42886		- 15.222	30	.000

Based on table 4, it is known that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 < 0.05, so the researchers can conclude a significant difference between students' learning activities using Partner Ready Strategy on Pretest and Posttest data.

The Students' Engagement in Teaching Reading using Partner Reading Strategies

Table 5: Frequencies for Participants' Levels of Engagement (N = 31)

Scale value		*N*	*%*
1.00 – 1.80	Very negative	0	0
1.81 – 2.61	Negative	0	0
2.62 – 3.40	Moderate	6	19
3.41 – 4.21	Positive	8	26
4.22 – 5.00	Very positive	17	55

In the next part, the researchers discuss the frequencies of students' level engagement when they study reading text using Partner Reading Strategies. There are 31 students as the respondents in this research. In this research, the authors found that 19 % (6 students) show moderate engagement. For the positive engagement, the authors found that 26 % (8 students) are in this scale value. Furthermore, 55 % (17 students) show that they are in very positive engagement.

Discussion

Students' Reading Comprehension

It was proved by the result of the students' reading comprehension of the pre-test showed the mean score was 68.41, and the mean score of the post-test was 85.38. So clearly, it can be concluded that the student's reading comprehension had improved after using Partner Reading Strategy for teaching reading. This finding is supported by (Syambas, 2020), who states that there is improvement in every meeting in pre-test and post-test after the students apply partner reading strategy in the teaching-learning activities.

Implementing a partner reading strategy positively affected the students' reading comprehension. This statement is in line with (Ardiana, 2015), who state that partner reading strategy can cause positive effects for the students. First, students can spend much time reading aloud or following their partners, and this strategy can manage their time. Second, Partner Reading provides opportunities for students to read the text repeatedly. Third, students receive connections and support from their partners. Applying partner reading strategy guided the students in a discussion to understand the text. They took turns practicing reading and finding the unfamiliar words during the lesson so that everyone could contribute and speak up with their idea.

Moreover, partner reading can be an effective way to help students with reading problems. Support this statement (Pilonieta et al., 2020) state that reading difficulty can be solved by applying a partner reading strategy. It happens because the students can read confidently and independently with a partner to practice if they find a new or unknown word. Furthermore, the researchers found that this strategy benefits the students to improve their reading competencies. This statement is in line with (Sinaga & Siahaan, 2020), who explains that t students have some positive things while implementing this strategy. The students can give each other feedback while they read the text and feel more confident about reading as they give and receive feedback. They talk until they finish the text.

Result of Students' Learning Activities

Moreover, the student's scores on the reading test improved students reading skills, especially in comprehending the text. In cycle 1, most students had difficulties finding the main idea, supporting idea, unfamiliar vocabularies, and inference. The improvement of students' reading comprehension could be concluded from the mean score of the cycle 1 test being 71.03, and the mean score of cycle 2 was 85.38. It means that there is an improvement in the learning activities conducted in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. This finding is in line with (Rizki, 2019), who states that there is some improvement in the students' learning activities after implementing partner reading comprehension.

This phenomenon occurs because the students can give each other feedback during partner reading. Students feel more confident in the teaching-learning activities as they give and receive feedback. Students can be partnered in any way or choose their partners. The teacher can pair the student has more skilled with less skilled one. The less capable student read the text first, followed by the partner, then talk turns until they finish it. While the students practice with their partners, the teacher monitors each student to give critical feedback (Zulianti & Hastomo, 2022).

The Students' Engagement in Teaching Reading using Partner Reading Strategies

The researcher will discuss the last research question, which is about students' engagement in implementing the Partner Reading Strategy and their learning outcomes, especially in reading comprehension. There are several findings of student involvement that the author found. First, behavioral engagement analysis shows that students have a high level of participation when they carry out learning activities using the Partner Reading Strategy. The finding supports this statement that the partner reading strategy can improve students' reading comprehension (Anggeraini & Madenta, 2020).

Second, students have high self-confidence and significant interest after implementing this strategy based on the emotional engagement survey. However, there are limitations in applying these techniques; namely, not all students are ready to learn to use this strategy. However, this problem can be overcome if the teacher provides attention and guidance to participate in active learning activities. This phenomenon can happen because a partner reading strategy can create a unique learning environment for students. Learning English also requires attention to developing communicative competence in foreign languages (Mahmoudi & Mahmoudi, 2015).

Findings show that students spend too much time doing assignments during teaching and learning activities. Partner Reading Strategy requires students to try harder in learning activities, but satisfactory learning outcomes justify this effort. The findings were obtained based on interviews conducted by researchers about students' cognitive competence.

CONCLUSION

This study discovers that the Partner Reading Strategy can improve students' reading comprehension. After that, the finding of this research also shows that this strategy can improve the students' learning activities. Moreover, students' engagement played an influential role and impacted their learning outcomes. Implementing a Partner Reading Strategy can make students be involved in the educational activity and have a high-level engagement to earn high learning outcomes.

Limitation

This study has several limitations; namely, the sample size is relatively small, and the use of cycles in action research only consists of two cycles. In our further study, the researchers will experiment with this strategy that uses other variables, such as gender and age, to evaluate the students' learning outcomes.

Implication

The researchers expect that the findings in this study can be helpful for academics who want to research partner reading strategy as a teaching technique for teaching English. There are several suggestions for further research. Partner Reading Strategy can be used in educational technology-based learning media, such as Zoom and Google Meet, to integrate online-based learning media with effective learning techniques. Moreover, the following researchers can also discuss students' perceptions of the Partner Reading Strategy so that the discussion of this technique can describe the other perspective for teaching-learning activities.

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