

USING CHORAL READING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

This study aimed to enhance reading comprehension achievement of seventh graders by implementing choral reading strategy. The research was conducted with seventh-grade students from SMP Setia Darma Palembang, totaling 31 participants. The study used both a pretest and a posttest as instruments. Initially, the researcher administered the pre-test, followed by a treatment using choral reading, and concluded with the post-test. To analyze the data, a One Sample T-test was employed. The results showed a mean difference of -23.03226, a standard deviation of 8.64285, and a standard error mean of 1.55230. The lower and upper differences were -26.20248 and -19.86203, respectively, with a degree of freedom (df) of 30. The two-tailed significance (Sig) value was .000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. The t-table value was -14.837, which is much greater than the critical value of 1.697 for 31 subjects. This indicates a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension achievement after using choral reading.

Keywords: reading comprehension, choral reading

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Introduction

Everyone must know that language is a part of life. People need language to communicate so they can convey information or share their feeling to others. More, Oviogun & Veerdee (2020) stated that all languages have some common characteristics and based on linguists' language is a system of sounds and symbols people use to communicate, work together and express their identity. But some languages are used as an international language likes English and Mandarin. Due to its widespread international use, English has been officially recognized as a foreign language by the Indonesian government. However, it has low proficiency in English its was shown by EF EPI (2023) Indonesia is now placed 69th out of 81 countries for English ability.

When learning English, there are four skills that should be mastered, they are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The most crucial skill for

students whose first language is not English is reading skill. The activity which is regarding as the most important activity for acquiring knowledge and information that students needed is reading. Moreover, reading is a never-ending guessing game, and what one brings to the next is sometimes more significant than what one discovers. (Grellet, 2004). So, students should thus be taught to apply their prior knowledge to comprehend unfamiliar elements-whether they be concepts or straightforward language-while they read.

From PISA (2022), even though Indonesia increases its rank but its reading literacy score in PISA reach 359 points. This score is 12 points lower than in 2018 where Indonesia got a score of 371. In fact, Indonesia's reading literacy score in 2022 is also lower than in 2000, namely 371. In the latest PISA, Indonesia's reading literacy score in 2022

recorded its lowest value since 2000. Here is Indonesia's reading literacy score in 2022 according to the latest PISA. 2000 score: 371, 2003 score: 382, 2006 score: 393, 2009 score: 402, 2012 score: 396, 2015 score: 397, 2018 score: 371, and in 2022 score: 359. This means that students; enthusiasm for reading is rather poor, and needs more attention. Based on data also, there are numerous internal (such as self-motivation, strength/flexibility, and competitive nature) and external (for instance, the completeness of learning facilities, various ways of teaching, and the education environment at home and at school).

Despite having studied English since elementary school, the majority of Indonesian students struggle to understand English text. Ibrahim, et al (2024) stated that there are five factors affecting students' difficulties in learning reading, they are; understanding long sentences, lack of reading strategies, lack of concentration, and environment of school and house. More, there are internal and external factors that affected students' reading comprehension difficulty. The internal factor comes from students; ability, likes linguistics knowledge (grammar and vocabulary) even vocabulary is harder than grammar knowledge. Next, the external factor comes from students' though of their interest, feel bored, anxiety, sickness and personal problems (Guna, 2023).

Students' performance and achievement were affected by difficulty in comprehending reading text. Teachers and students should work together in order to solve this problem. Based on previous observation and conversation with SMP's English teacher Setia Darma there are several problems revealed on the surface. First is students' vocabulary mastery, where hard for them to understand the reading text. Second, students' lack of confident when students.

Students' feel nervous and worried if there is too much attention. Last, students have poor reading interest.

Many ways of teaching may help both students and teacher to master and solve problems regarding reading skill. One of the strategies to teach reading is by using choral reading strategy. It's a way which may be good for teaching and learning process in improving reading skill. Berry (2011) stated that one of teaching method for introducing articulatory preparation for formal learning is the choral reading. Students that participate in choral reading improve their vocabulary, motivation, self-confidence, fluency, and appreciation of literature. Moreover, Herlambang (2022) found in his research; in improving students' achievement of reading on recount text, choral reading was effective way. Otherwise, Lestari (2017) found that by using choral reading students were more dynamic and comfortable while teaching in the class. Last, Ningsih (2018) found that there was an improvement of student's reading comprehension on descriptive text.

Based on teacher's statement, interviewed with students, and data of students' result on reading test that given by their English teacher on daily test, most students showed that they are lack of reading skill. From the data of the observation, most students never learn English before. They never go to English course or study English in elementary school. That makes most of students lack of confident, nervous, worried, and poor of interest in learning English especially reading. So, this research focused in Improving Reading Comprehension Achievement by Using Choral Reading to Seventh Graders of SMP Setia Darma Palembang.

Literature Review

1. Reading Comprehension

Mullis & Martin (2019) stated that the ability to comprehend and utilize written language format necessary for society of meaningful for individual. Readers can derive meaning from various types of written texts. They read to gain knowledge, engage with communities of readers in school and daily life, and for personal enjoyment. In other word, the prior knowledge is needed to grasp the meaning in the text. Moreover, Daulay & Nurmalina (2021) mention where a process of gaining implicit and explicit information in a text is called reading comprehension. It involves understanding the message conveyed from text and the ability to interpret the main idea, key details, and overall meaning, as well as recalling information from previously read material.

Reading comprehension is the skill to read text in a way which allows the reader to clearly and deeply retain the main ideas, leading to a sense of satisfaction upon completion and a greater overall understanding. This involves processing and interpreting the information derived from the reading result (Palayukan, 2020). In addition, reading comprehension is a process of successfully gathering knowledge by understanding written texts (Meylana, 2019).

Erlidawati (2023) mention that there are several aspects of reading comprehension skills that students need to be mastered to comprehend the text: main idea, specific information, references, inferences, and vocabulary. Moreover, students must understand four essential components of reading comprehension in order to understand a text effectively. These include recognizing the main concept, finding particular details (scanning), drawing conclusions, and grasping vocabulary meanings or detailed information. The

aspects were commonly viewed as a difficult task that faced by students in trying to comprehend a text (Nuttall, 1982).

2. Descriptive Text

A descriptive text is a paragraph made up of sentences that are closely connected in thought and work together to serve a single purpose, often used to portray the appearance of a person (Loka, 2020). Additionally, he added, a descriptive text is a written form of information about something or explain about common person, places, and things.

A descriptive text purpose is to deliver a clear and specific information about person, location, or thing (object), enabling readers to form a clear mental image (Potradinata, 2018). Additionally, Loka (2020) stated that this type of text presents a comprehensive description of the writer's visualized context. in other word, descriptive text paints a detail picture of what the writer sees.

Zulaikah & Moklas (2018) states that descriptive texts typically follow a two-part structure: identification of the subject and a detailed description of its key features, attributes and characteristics. Loka (2020) showed the generic structure of descriptive text as follow:

Table 1. Generic Structure

Generic Structure	Function
Identification	Typically, the identification section appears in the introductory paragraph, serving as a precursor to the detailed description.
Description	Its function is to support identification and provide common information on who, or what the focus

3. Choral Reading

It's valuable instructional approach which educators can employ to enhance learners' reading articulacy, a vital part of reading ability. In this approach, both students and the teacher read briefly passages aloud together. Through the repetition of the same text, students gain insight into proper pronunciation, recognition of sight words, and the nuances of reading expression. Choral reading fosters collaborative learning, encouraging active student participation through collective recitation and explanatory discussions (Yulianto, 2019). Additionally, Herlambang (2022) defines that choral reading is a strategy where individuals read aloud together, either by single or extra speakers, all at once. This approach encourages reading in group and helping to build self-reliance by making students that struggling from being insecure.

In order to make clearer about choral reading, there are different types of choral reading, as follows:

- Antiphonal, organize the class into smaller groups, assigning each group a distinct segment of the text. Allow students time to rehearse their assigned parts and decide on their reading style before reconvening as a whole class.
- Dialogue; select a passage that features multi speaking roles. Designate one group to serve as the narrator while assigning the various characters to the other group.
- Cumulative Choral Reading, begin with one individual or a small group reading the initial line or section of the text. Gradually, additional small groups will join in, culminating in the entire class reading together by the end.
- Impromptu Choral Reading. During the reading of the text, students can choose to join in or drop out their discretion. Prior to the reading, students will decide which sections they wish to participate in.

Procedures of Choral Reading Strategy

Generally, there are several stages which needed to be intended when applied choral reading strategy. Paige (2009) explains as follows:

1. Selecting text, the material should align with what is currently being covered in the class. It can be beneficial to prepare students by being a week ahead in the instruction. While the text can be sourced directly from the text book, it should be adjustable to some extent. Utilizing chapter summaries can be an effective approach.
2. Pre-Reading Activities
 - 1st step Introducing Vocabulary
 - a. Identify particular words that students might find unfamiliar or hard to pronounce before demonstrating the text.
 - b. Focus on content words that may be new to the students.
 - c. The teacher articulates these words clearly for the class while students observe the written form.
 - d. Students then practice repeating the words after the teacher's pronunciation.
 - 2nd Step Demonstrating the Test
 - a. As students quietly follow the text, the teacher reads it aloud for them.
 - b. The teacher employs suitable expressive intonation and maintains an appropriate reading pace.
 - c. Emphasis is placed on punctuation marks, such as

- comas, and periods, as well as on phrases.
3. Whilst Reading Activity
 - 3rd step Initial Reading Activity
 - a. Students together currently read the text loudly.
 - b. In order to start the activity, teacher countdown 3-2-1.
 - c. Teacher read the text using a loud voice.
 - d. Teacher “travel” around the class while read.
 - e. To evaluate in following activity, teacher notes challenging vocabulary or phrases from the text.
 4. Post Reading Activity
 - 4th step Evaluate Difficult vocabulary and phrases
 - a. Teacher notes difficult vocabulary and phrases.
 - b. Teacher let students to ask a question about the text which were unclear or hard.
- 5th step, the next reading activity
- a. All students read one text each day.
 - b. Teacher repeats the 3rd step.
 - c. It’s crucial to give students reading responsibilities as they get knowing the material.
 - d. Next, teacher lowers her/his sound.
 - e. Ask students to listen to one another in order to “stay together” while the reading.

The Advantages of Choral Reading Strategy

Choral reading has many advantages both during the learning process and recent result or even in the future, from several years ago. The advantages of choral reading strategy, as follow:

1. Increase spoken words, reading with a model of generating original or nearly original speed provides a

conducive atmosphere for grasping the meaning of unknown terms in the content of the text, specifically when it is repeated a few times and key words are mentioned during the process.

2. Improving phonetics awareness, this strategy offers real-time pronunciation guidance for unfamiliar words spoken by students and affords immediate response on any mispronounce.
3. Promote meaningful word group segmentation, natural reading aloud directs students to read in chunk, after pauses between the provided word groups.
4. Build confidence, the model’s consistent, immediate, and predictable response helps students track their progress, fostering improvements in both reading speed and comprehension.

Research Methodology

An experimental design is used as a research method. This design is an objective and controlled research process that can maximize and draw a specific conclusion about the hypothesis aimed at determining the effect of independent variable on dependent variable. Pre-experimental design with one group pretest and posttest is used. Based on Arikunto (2006), the procedures, as follows:

1. Conducting a pre-test testing reading comprehension to the seventh graders of SMP Setia Darma Palembang.
2. Giving the subjects of the experiment a treatment.
3. Conducting a post-test testing reading comprehension.

There are three classes of seventh graders with total 86 students. A sample of this research was the seven graders of SMP Setia Darma in total 31 students using convenience sampling. From three

class, 7.3 is the only class that available to be studied and this class was observed before. a 30 questions of reading test was administered to students as an instrument to measure their reading comprehension, next it was scored

$$\text{Total Score} = \frac{\text{Correct numbers}}{\text{Total questions}} \times 100$$

Next, Content validity was also used to validate the materials that based on the curriculum and syllabus for the seventh graders. For the indicators of reading test are; main idea, inference, grammatical feature, supporting idea, and detail information.

In analyzing the data, first normality test was used to know whether the data come from the normal distribution or not, second homogeneity test, and last paired sample t-test was used to know the choral reading is effective or not in improving reading comprehension.

Findings and Discussion

The reading test used content validity which means the materials were stated in curriculum and syllabus of seventh graders of SMP Setia Darma. From the readability test to check level grade of texts were used, the results as follows: Text 1 title Peter has 70 words with grade level 8 and reading level 6, Text 2 entitle Boyolali has 122 words with grade level 8 and reading level 7, Text 3 entitle A Close Friend has 153 words with grade level 8 and reading level 6, Text 4 entitle Amed has 153 words with grade level 8 and reading level 6, Text 5 entitle Mrs. Allisa has 60 words with grade level 8 and reading level 6, Text 6 entitle My Pet has 92 words with grade level 8 and reading level 5. Before the test question were given to the sample, it would be tried out and checked. And the result showed that only 30 items were reliable and valid.

The 30 items of the questions from 6 different texts were given to the

sample where the correct number scored 1 and no minus for incorrect answer. The lowest scored was 0 and the highest score was 100. The result of the reading comprehension test was presented below.

Table 2. Reading Achievement Score

Score	Category	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
		F	%	F	%
80-100	Excellent	0	0%	24	78%
70-79	Good	6	20%	7	22%
60-69	Fairly Good	13	42%	0	0%
50-59	Weak	9	29%	0	0%
0-49	Poor	3	9.6%	0	0%
Total		31	100%	31	100%

From the data, in pre-test there wasn't a student in excellent category (0%), 6 students in good category (20%), 13 students in fairly good category (42%), 9 students in weak category, and sadly, 3 students in poor category (9.6%). Meanwhile, in post-test no students in poor, weak, and fairly good category. Surprisingly, there were 24 students in excellent category (78%), 7 students in good category (22%).

Next, analyzing students' reading achievement the output of descriptive statistic students' reading comprehension achievement showed the minimum score was 40 to 76, maximum score 70 to 93, the mean score from 59.8065 to 82.8387, the median is 60.0000 to 83.0000 and the mode are 66.00 to 83.00. From the table, it means that choral reading strategy increased students' score. The analysis is shown on the table below.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistic of Pre-Test and Post-Test

	Pre-test	Post-test
N Valid	31	31
Missing	0	0
Mean	59.8065	82.8387
Std. Error of Mean	1.62997	1.09358
Median	60.0000	83.0000
Mode	66.00	83.00
Std. Deviation	9.07531	6.08877
Variance	82.361	37.073
Range	36.00	23.00
Min	40.00	70.00
Max	76.00	93.00
Percentiles	76.0000	93.0000

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Next, Biu, Nwakuya, & Wonu (2019) stated that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is employed to verify if a dataset conforms to a predetermined distribution, assuming known mean and variance. If the significant less than .05, it means that data were not normal. While, if the significant value means that more than .05, which means data are normal. From the result above, it could be concluded that both of the data score was

normal distribution in Pre-test ($0.190 > 0.05$) and Post-test ($0.257 > 0.05$). So, the data was normal as presented on table 4. Conversely, the result of Levene Statistic presented with significant score is .018 (<0.05) which means data wasn't homogeneous.

Table 4. Normality Test of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	.095	31	.200*	.953	31	.190
Post-test	.115	31	.200*	.958	31	.257

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance
a. lilliefors Significance Correction

Next, T-Test is used to measure the T-Test score to verify effectiveness of choral reading strategy on students' reading achievement. Result as follow:

Table 5. Paired Sample Test

		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	-23.03226	8.64285	1.55230	-26.2024	-19.8620	-14.837	30	.000

From the data, it showed that after comparing pretest and post-test result, shown mean score -23.03226, with SD (standard deviation) score 8.64285, mean

SD (standard error mean) score 1.55230, lower difference was -26.2024, and the upper difference was -19.8620. The result df was 30 and significant (2-tailed) was

.000. It means that the significance value was smaller than significance level. The result of the t-table was 14.837 which greater than the level significance in the t-table with the subject 30 (2.042). So, the choral reading strategy provides a significant improvement in students' achievement in reading comprehension.

Conclusion

The result revealed that in pre-test there wasn't a student in excellent category (0%), 6 students in good category (20%), 13 students in fairly good category (42%), 9 students in weak category, and sadly, 3 students in poor category (9.6%). The pre-test results showed that almost all students were not good in reading, so the treatment was done after that. Meanwhile, in post-test no students in poor, weak, and fairly good category. Surprisingly, there were 24 students in excellent category (78%), 7 students in good category (22%). From the post test, it shown that most of students were in excellent category which means that their understanding reading comprehension were increased. Next, statistical analysis result showed, students reading achievement by implanting choral reading strategy gradually repeatedly increase, students' average score from 60 in pre-test to 83 in post-test with 24 students were in excellent category with score between 80-100. The result of t-test also showed with t-obtained 14.837 (sig. 000) grater than t-table n=30 (2.042).

In conclusion, choral reading strategy was a comprehension method which enhances knowledge through interactive reading practices, including teacher-led readings, text analysis and group discussions. Additionally, using this strategy makes the process of learning to read more interesting and varied.

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