

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF READING STRATEGIES TRAINING TO TEACH READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract: This study investigated the effect of reading strategies training technique on the students' reading skill in literal and inferential comprehension. The training techniques were modified from the procedure developed by Brown and Palincsar (1984), which involved three concrete reading strategies: predicting, text mapping, and summarizing. To achieve the purpose of this study, the quasi experimental design was conducted with the experimental group was given reading strategies training technique and the control group was conventional technique. The subjects were two classes of office administration tenth grade students of SMKN 1 Sooko. The instrument of this study was test that used to compare the students achievement which used reading strategies training technique. The test for the post-test was constructed in multiple choices. In this study mid-test score is a covariate, it is used to know the students' average score both experimental and control group before giving the treatment. The experimental data were subjected to descriptive statistics of mid-test score and post-test score, and both the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of post-test score in literal and inferential comprehension. Furthermore, the increase of the mean score of teaching reading comprehension by using strategies training technique is higher than the conventional technique group. It means that two groups both of experimental and control group differ significantly in literal and inferential comprehension.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Reading Strategies Training

INTRODUCTION

Comprehension is making a sense out of a text (McNeil, 1992) as the result of interaction between the perception of graphic symbols that represent language and the reader's prior knowledge. Reading comprehension is defined as the level of understanding of a text. Furthermore, Rathvon (2008) defined *Reading comprehension* as the product of two component skills: (1) decoding – recognizing the words on the page – and (2) comprehension – understanding the words once they have been recognized.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand the meaning of written or printed text which includes: 1) identifying general information, 2) identifying explicit information, 3) identifying implicit ideas, and 4) identifying word meaning, phrases or sentences from the context.

Research into reading strategies has concentrated on describing those strategies which are involved in understanding. Reading strategies indicate how readers conceive a task. What textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand (Block, 1986). They range from simple fix-up strategies such as simply rereading difficult segments and guessing the meaning of an unknown word from context, to more

comprehensive strategies such as summarizing and relating what is being read to the reader's background knowledge (Janzen, 1996). Different strategies to help students understand the text were recommended to address the students' problem.

The training techniques were modified from the procedure developed by Brown and Palincsar (1984), which involved three concrete reading strategies training: predicting, text mapping, and summarizing.

This article reports a study of strategies training for reading comprehension in tenth grade of Vocational High School students in reading classroom. More specifically, this study is aimed at investigating the effectiveness of reading strategies training technique on students' reading comprehension skill. The following specific research question was addressed: "Do the students taught by reading strategies training have better reading achievement in literal and inferential comprehension than those who taught by conventional technique?"

METHOD

The subjects of this research were the students of the tenth grade students of office administration department of SMKN 1 Sooko Mojokerto. Before determining the sample, however, the pre-test in the form written was administered before in order to know whether the two groups of students have approximately the same level of proficiency. However, the pre-test was in the form of mid-test and the results of the test were counted by finding the class average to determine the control class group and experimental class group. The result was experimental group (A) consisted 36 students and control group (B) consisted 35 students.

Instrument was tool that used by the researcher to collect the data. In this study, the researcher used test. The purpose of this test was to compare the student achievement which used reading strategies training technique.

One day prior to the scheduled of the training, all subjects were given a mid-test. Twelve meetings later, when both experimental group giving treatment and control group giving conventional technique were completed the session, the subjects were given the same reading comprehension test as a post-test. Before giving post-test to the experimental and control group, the test was tried out first to another class which has the same level capability in reading comprehension skill. Then, the result of the try-out was analysed to know how standardized tests the process of standardized test design are used with the students, it also to know the differences between item difficulty, item discrimination, and test reliability. In addition, it is used to know the resources and strategies, and the issues in selecting and evaluating standardized tests. Moreover, any effects due to experience with the test would be comparable for both of the experimental and control group.

The subjects had given reading texts in type of report, descriptive, and procedure text which had been provided by the teacher; however, the teachers were allowed to take additional materials from another source such as internet besides from text book. Therefore, the teacher (the researcher) selected five reading passages which would be covered during the treatment session from a variety of sources. The reading passages were chosen on the basis of subjects' presumed interest and for their readability; however, they were appropriated with the main competence and basic competence of the tenth grade students of office administration department.

The strategy training procedure used in this study was modified from the teaching approach of Brown and Palincsar (1984), as stated in the introduction section. All of the reading lessons given in this study were conducted in English.

In this research, the researcher used test as data collection. The data were got after having mid-test, try-out, and post-test. The try-out consisted 50 items which had tested its item facility, item discrimination, and reliability. Then, the post-test also consisted 50 items which had compared in literal and inferential comprehension with the mid-test score.

As stated before those two classes were chosen, experimental group was taught by using reading strategies training technique and control group was taught by using non reading strategies training technique. At the end of the teaching learning process, they were given the same test using three kinds of genre (report, descriptive, and procedure text) in order to get better result.

The primary data are obtained in the form of quantitative data that is the score of try-out. The data analysed using statistical method. In this case, ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) is used to analyse the data. ANCOVA places the condition after treatment (achievement/post-test score) while mid-test score acts as covariate. The reading strategies training technique became independent variable. The statistical analysis was computerized using SPSS 17 for Window's program, and to make sure the statistical the researcher use manual computation. The score of mid-test and post-test just compared each other.

DISCUSSION

The experimental data were subjected to descriptive statistics of mid-test score and post-test score both literal and inferential comprehension, and the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of post-test score both in literal and inferential comprehension in order to test the research question of the present study: Do the students taught by reading strategies training technique have better reading achievement in literal and inferential comprehension than those who taught by conventional technique?

The descriptive statistics of the scores and the explanation will be shown the following tables.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Mid-test Score

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min Score	Max Score	N
Experimental	63.89	7.775	50	78	36
Control	61.46	10.057	38	88	35

The mean and the standard deviation of mid-test score are presented in Table 1. The mean of experimental group (in this case group which is taught reading by using *reading strategies training technique* in the treatment) is 63.89 (s.d = 7.775) and the control group (in this case group which is taught using conventional technique in the treatment) is 61.46 (s.d. = 10.057). It means that, experimental group which is taught using *reading strategies training technique* is actually better than the group that is taught using conventional method in their mid-test.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Post-test Score for Literal Comprehension

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min Score	Max Score	N
Experimental	53.22	5.723	42	62	36
Control	49.09	4.585	40	58	35

Based on the table above the descriptive statistics of post-test score for literal comprehension shows that mean score of experimental group (in this case group which is taught reading by using *reading strategies training technique*) is 53.22 (s.d. = 5.723) while the mean score of control group which is taught by using conventional technique for literal comprehension is 49.09 (s.d. = 4.585).

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Post-test Score for Inferential Comprehension

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min Score	Max Score	N
Experimental	25.17	1.682	22	28	36
Control	22.69	3.787	10	28	35

Then, based on the table above the descriptive statistics of post-test score for inferential comprehension shows that mean score of experimental group (the group which is taught reading by using *reading strategies training technique*) is 25.17 (s.d. = 1.628) while the mean score of control group which is taught by using conventional technique for inferential comprehension is 22.69 (s.d. = 3.787).

From those two tables above, then, it is compared with the result of mid-test score. The total mean score of experimental group both in literal and inferential comprehension is 78.39 (sd = 7.405). It means that the increase of mean score from mid-test mean score of experimental group is 14.5. While the total mean score of control group both in literal and inferential comprehension is 71.78 (sd = 8.372). Then, it means that the increase of mean score from mean score of control group is 10.32. It can be concluded that the mean score of teaching reading comprehension by using *reading strategies training technique* both in literal and inferential comprehension is higher than the conventional technique group.

In addition, the mean score of mid-test and post-test were different. The post-tests mean score of control group is lower than experimental group: 71.78 < 78.39. But the researcher cannot say that the technique used in experimental group is more effective than control group, because they had different mean score in mid-test. Therefore, the researcher used analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) in testing the Hypothesis.

Table 4 The Result of Post-test in Literal Comprehension Test of Between-subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Literal Comprehension

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Corrected Model	80.861a	2	40.430	5.973	.004
Intercept	779.176	1	779.176	115.109	.000
Mid-term	4.947	1	4.947	.731	.396
Group	69.369	1	69.369	10.248	.002
Error	460.294	68	6.769		
Total	47041.000	71			
Corrected Total	541.155	70			

- a. R Squared = .149 (Adjusted R Squared = .124)
- b. Computed using Alpha = 0.05

Table 5 The Result of Post-test in Inferential Comprehension Test of Between-subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Inferential Comprehension

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Corrected Model	32.812a	2	16.406	7.905	.001
Intercept	138.370	1	138.370	66.669	.000
Mid-term	5.504	1	5.504	2.652	.108
Group	23.596	1	23.596	11.369	.001
Error	141.132	68	2.075		
Total	10350.000	71			
Corrected Total	173.944	70			

- a. R Squared = .189 (Adjusted R Squared = .165)
- b. Computed using Alpha = 0.05

Based on both table of Tests of Between-Subjects Effects in literal and inferential comprehension, the researcher can analyze two results. First, it can be seen that the independent variable (in this case reading strategies training) finds an F-value of the effect of teaching reading strategies training in literal comprehension is 10.248 and column labeled Sig the value is 0.002 where it is less than 0.005 (an alternative alpha level). Second, it also can be seen that F-value of the effect of teaching reading strategies training in inferential comprehension is 11.369 and column labeled Sig the value is 001 where it is less than 0.05 (an alternative alpha level). Based on those explanations, it means that two groups both of experimental and control differ significantly in literal and inferential comprehension.

Many reading researches have shown that reading strategies can be taught to various levels of students, and when taught, they enhance student performance tests of comprehension. The result of this study clearly shows that the teaching approach of Brown and Palincsar (1984), which was effective for L1 students, can be successfully applied to an ongoing EFL students reading class with students whose reading abilities are divergent. The results of this study provide support for the educational value of strategy training in EFL students reading class.

Another finding, the strategy intervention had an effect on the improvement of students' ability to understand main ideas and to make inferences from given passages; however, had no effect on the improvement of their ability to extract detailed information from the texts. Another interpretation that the related prior knowledge of the students plays a powerful role in the comprehension was activated and learning strategies that enable students to link new information to prior knowledge. It may establish a link between their related background knowledge and information presented in the reading texts. In other words, the use of strategies training in experimental group in teaching reading comprehension helped create an interaction between their technical content schemata and the linguistic element of the written material which seems to be lacking in the control group.

However, the strategies training presented explicitly in the actual course of class activities apparently provided the students in experimental group with a more in-depth insight about the content of the texts. The students in experimental group

clearly monitored and later experienced themselves some of the covert and mental tricks proficient readers play in the process of reading. Majority of students in experimental group demonstrated effective reading behaviour during the study.

In reading strategies training technique the students can cooperate in a heterogeneous member of class in which the students who have higher capability in reading comprehension on literal and inferential can work together with those who have lower capability. It integrates the three strategies in learning reading comprehension; those are predicting, text mapping, and summarizing. This situation fulfills the definition described by Cohen (1996, 1998, 2003) that Strategies-Based Instruction is a learner-centered approach to teaching that extends strategies training to include both explicit and implicit integration of learning and language classroom.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESSTIONS

Conclution

The teaching of reading by using *reading strategies training* technique helps the students develop literal and inferential comprehension. Therefore, the development of literal and inferential comprehension skills can only result from using a strategy which forces students to apply these skills while reading. Therefore, the strategies training which used in this study were predicting, text mapping, and summarizing. Moreover, the *reading strategies training* technique is an effective technique for developing both literal and inferential comprehension skills.

Sugesstions

Having known the result of research, the researcher suggests for the teacher (specially for English teachers) to use *reading strategies training* as a technique in teaching reading comprehension. Some techniques will be the ones the teacher would utilize anyway. Building strategic technique offers some suggestions for creating an atmosphere in the language classroom in which the students feel comfortable and are encouraged to develop their own strategies.

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