

Enhancing Literacy Insight: Elevating Students' Reading Comprehension through Pair Check Strategies

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Abstract : *The pair-check method is a novel instructional approach to enhance students' reading comprehension. The study aimed to examine the impact of applying the pair check method for teaching reading comprehension students at SMPN. The experimental group consisted of 30 students, while in the control group, 30 students received instruction without any specific reading method, relying solely on opening a dictionary. The sample comprised 20 students from class A and B as the sample. The control group was instructed by using reading method and the experimental group was taught by applying pair checks method. The pre-test and post-test scores were compared between the experimental and control groups. The results indicated that the experimental class exhibited significant improvement in both pre- and posttest scores, with a notable increase in the average score from 33.6 in the pretest to 33.32 in the posttest. In addition, the control class, employing traditional teaching methods, exhibited a substantial increase in posttest score, indicating noteworthy progress in learning outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of instructional methods in influencing student outcomes, with the pair-Check method emerging as a practical and effective tool for improving reading comprehension in the educational setting. Further research and analysis are recommended to delve deeper into the statistical significance of these observations and to inform future instructional strategies for optimizing student learning outcomes in the classroom.*

Key Words: *Elevating Literacy, Reading Comprehension, Pair Check Strategy*

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension stands out as a paramount activity within the educational landscape, representing a crucial language skill for students to master. Its significance extends to the core of individual development. A receptive skill, reading comprehension involves the ability of readers to discern main ideas and extract the intended message. For learners navigating English as a second language, this task proves notably challenging (Amin & Wahyudin, 2022; Septiyana & Aminatun, 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Engaged in the study of descriptive texts, they encounter formidable difficulties in grasping the essence of a given text. This challenge stems from a myriad of factors, including limited exposure to the English language, scarce educational resources, the absence of internet access, constrained English study time within the school curriculum, and a lack of English dictionaries. Undoubtedly, students in this context require additional time and diligent effort to extract meaningful messages from English texts, even when dealing with seemingly straightforward descriptive content (Ismayanti & Kholiq, 2020).

Descriptive paragraph serves as a means for a writer to vividly illustrate an object to their readers, encompassing both concrete and abstract entities. Typically, this genre of text is

crafted in the simple present tense. It is imperative for educators to enhance the allure of teaching and learning the art of composing descriptive texts. In our daily lives, descriptive text serves as a fundamental tool for elucidating various subjects. For instance, when individuals seek information about a particular place, the respondent typically employs descriptive language to delineate the characteristics of the location in intricate detail, facilitating a comprehensive understanding (Purwati, 2023; Wibowo et al., 2023). Primarily employed to depict places, descriptive text holds practical utility. However, students exhibit distinct aptitudes in learning, particularly in the domain of English writing skills. Junior high school curriculum encompasses various writing types, including descriptive texts. Within this spectrum, some students demonstrate proficiency in crafting descriptive narratives, while others struggle to adhere to the correct generic structure of such texts (Ismayanti & Kholiq, 2020; Nurlaila, 2013). Confronted with this diversity in student abilities, English educators find themselves compelled to exert significant effort in aiding students' learning journeys. Reading skills, deemed essential for English as a second language learners, not only contribute to success in mastering the English language but also extend their impact to proficiency in other academic subjects (Yusuf & Hasanudin, 2020).

Based on the writer's observations of the eighth-grade students at SMPN Satap Nian, the institution where the writer conducted teaching practice, it is evident that the students exhibit a diminished interest in learning English, particularly in the realm of reading. The writer noted that these students encounter substantial challenges in comprehending descriptive texts. While they can decipher the words, a notable issue arises—they struggle to grasp the meaning of the text. Consequently, this predicament leads to disinterest and boredom among the students when confronted with comprehending the text. The students follow a pattern of reading the text from start to finish. However, when encountering challenging words, they halt their reading and resort to consulting a dictionary for word meanings. Some students perceive reading as a daunting task due to their difficulty in understanding how to extract main ideas, identify interesting information, decipher complex words in the reading material, and comprehend the meanings of certain vocabularies.

Pair check, a collaborative learning technique introduced by Spencer Kagan in 1993, emphasizes group dynamics between two individuals. This approach fosters student autonomy and problem-solving skills while cultivating social responsibility, cooperation, and critical judgment. Within this learning framework, students collaborate in pairs to tackle and resolve problems, engaging in the practice of verifying and evaluating each other's work or problem-solving abilities (Syahdila, 2022)

This is the rationale behind the writer's adoption of a novel instructional approach to enhance students' reading proficiency through the implementation of the Pair Check method. The Pair Check method is employed as a pedagogical strategy to instigate critical thinking skills in students, prompting them to engage in problem-solving within presented examples through collaborative assessment with a partner. This approach not only prevents student monotony but also serves as an effective means to elevate reading comprehension (Istri & Permanamiarta, 2023; Rihana, 2014). The selection of the Pair Check method stems from its recognized advantages, including the enhancement of collaboration among students, the facilitation of peer tutoring, the augmentation of comprehension regarding learning concepts and processes, and the cultivation of effective communication skills among students, as elucidated (Giri, 2019; Hasibuan, 2019).

METHOD

This section outlines the comprehensive design of the study, encompassing the research design, study participants, data collection, and analysis procedures.

Research Design

Quantitative research employing an experimental design framework was employed in this study. The sample comprised two distinct groups: the experimental group, consisting of 30 students, was instructed using the pair check method, while the control group, also comprising 30 students, received instruction without any specific reading method, relying solely on opening a dictionary to enhance their reading comprehension. Prior to the intervention, both groups underwent a pre-test. Subsequent to the instructional phase, both groups were administered a post-test. This research design was implemented to discern the impact of applying the pair check method on students' reading comprehension. As per (Kauchak & Eggen, 2012), pair check is a collaborative learning approach wherein students work in pairs to collaboratively address problems encountered in the learning process. in pair to solve the problems in learning.

Study Participants

In this study, the writer took the data from the eighth grade students of SMP Satap Negeri Nian, the following is the total population and samples that the writer took. Population is a subset of the target population from which the sample is actually selected. It is broader than the concept sample frame. It may be appropriate to say that sample frame is an operationalized form of study population. Population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristic (Creswell, 2017). This study used purposive sampling. According to (Arikunto, 2010),

purposive sampling is the process of selecting sample by taking subject that is not based on the level or area, but it is taken based on the specific purpose. The study involved 20 students from class A and B as the sample. First, class A was used as the experimental group, where students were taught using the pair check method. And class B as the control group where students are taught using the regular reading method.

Data Collection Procedures

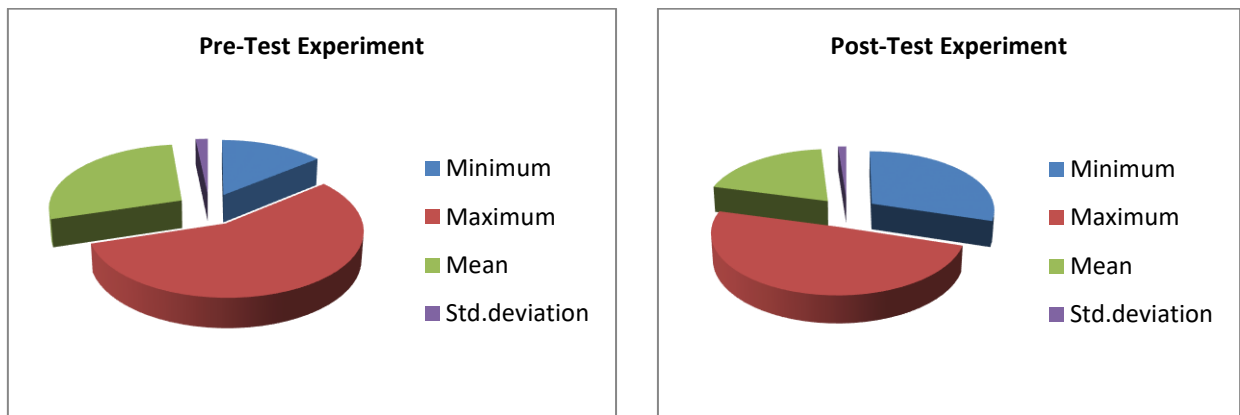
The collection of data to be used is an important part of conducting a research. The research data were collected using tests. In collecting data, this study use a pre-test and post-test were given to the experimental group and the control group. Pre-test was administrated to the experimental group and control group. The pre-test was used to find out the homogeneity of the samples and the mean score of each group. Treatment. The experimental and control group was taught by using the same topics but different treatment. The experimental group was taught by applying pair checks method, while in the control group was taught by using reading method. Both of the classes get the same reading material. Post-test was given to each group. The items of the post-test were exactly the same as the ones in the pre-test, it was intended to discover the means score of the experimental group and control group.

Analysis Procedure

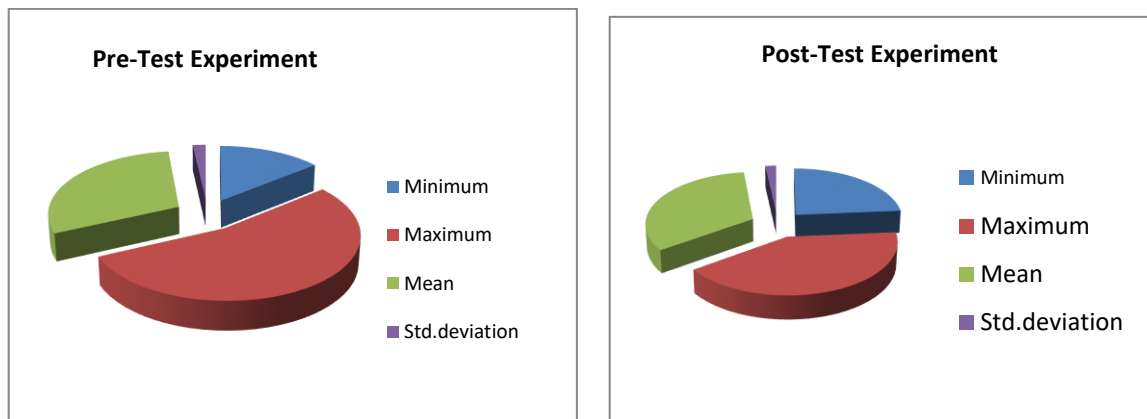
After collecting the data, the researcher made statistical analysis and tabulation of the data. Compare students' pre- and post-test scores, category percentages of students' pre- and post- test scores, and mean of pre- and post-test scores. Descriptive statistics like mean, median, and standard deviation offer a snapshot of central tendencies and variability. Visualization tools, such as graphs, aid in comprehending data distribution. Statistical tests, such as pre-test and post-test, assess the significance of observed patterns.

RESULT

The statistical analysis of the data and tabulation of the data. Compare students' pre- and post-test scores, category percentages of students' pre- and post-test scores, and mean of pre- and post-test scores. In this section, the writer presents the student's total reading literacy score in the prediction (the student's correct answer), the student's mean score, and the percentage of the student's reading ability score in the prediction. The writer presented the data in the table and used the Ms. Excel program to calculate the scores, and then in the pre-test, the writer demonstrated the students' complete ability to use pair-check method.

Graphic 1**Pre-test and post-test in the experimental class**

In the experimental class, the lowest score of pre-test was 17%, then the highest score was 66.7. And then, in the post-test scores, the lowest score was 50.0 and the highest score was 83. These can be seen from the descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test scores show in table 4.1 was found that the average of pre-test was 33.6 and the average score of post-test was 33.32.

Graphic 2**Pre-test and Post-test in Control Class**

In the control class, the pre-test scores ranged from 15.6 to 60.5, with a mean of 33.8, while the post-test scores ranged from 40.0 to 70.3, with a mean of 55.5. These descriptive statistics illustrate a notable increase in scores from the pre-test to the post-test, indicating a substantial improvement in learning outcomes without the specific intervention applied in the experimental class.

This study employed a three-step approach, demonstrating its efficacy in enhancing students' skills. The utilization of the pair-check method particularly proved beneficial in elevating students' reading comprehension. The findings suggest that the method facilitated active learning and increased student engagement, leading to more profound understanding and retention of information. Reading, as emphasized by Patel and the Jains (2008:123), serves not only as a source of information and pleasure but also as a means of strengthening language skills. The interactive process of language and thought is emphasized, enabling students to communicate effectively through writing and reading.

Hamer (2016) elucidated that reading is an inherently active endeavor, requiring comprehension to transform it from a collection of words into meaningful content. Interviews conducted in the study revealed that students often lack motivation to read due to uninspiring teaching methods, where passive listening dominates. The pair-check method, however, emerged as a successful strategy in enhancing students' reading comprehension. The observed improvement in students' ability to find the main idea and understand the text content indicates the method's practical effectiveness in teaching reading. The active involvement of students in discussions and their enhanced confidence in presenting findings to the class further underscore the positive impact of the pair-check method on the learning environment.

There are also difficulties found by the author, when conducting research, where the author found several difficulties experienced by students when reading, including students' mistakes in recognizing words, lack of students' understanding of punctuation, and difficulty understanding the content of the reading. So the writer must help students in the process of reading.

From the examination of pre-test and post-test scores in both the experimental and control classes provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the applied interventions. The experimental class, despite the implemented three-step approach, demonstrated marginal improvement, with pre-test and post-test means remaining closely aligned. This suggests that the intervention may not have significantly impacted students' performance. Conversely, the control class, employing traditional teaching methods, exhibited a substantial increase in post-test scores, indicating noteworthy progress in learning outcomes. The pair-check method, highlighted in the study, proved to be a successful strategy for enhancing students' reading comprehension, fostering active learning, and boosting confidence in presenting their insights. These findings underscore the importance of instructional methods in influencing student outcomes, with the pair-check method emerging as a practical and effective tool for improving reading comprehension in the educational setting. Further research and analysis are

recommended to delve deeper into the statistical significance of these observations and to inform future instructional strategies for optimizing student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

From the study of the pair-check method for teaching reading comprehension students at SMPN indicate a positive impact on students' reading abilities. The experimental class demonstrated significant improvement in both pre-test and post-test scores, with a notable increase in the average score from 33.6 in the pre-test to 33.32 in the post-test. The distribution of scores also showed a shift towards higher categories, suggesting enhanced reading comprehension skills among the students. Specifically, the experimental group exhibited progress from the pre-test, where the majority of students were in poor and very poor categories, to the post-test, where a significant number achieved excellent and very good categories. This improvement underscores the pair-check method is effective in improving reading comprehension among students. However, addressing the identified challenges in its implementation will be essential to optimize the learning experience and ensure that all students can benefit from this method. Further research and adjustments to the pair-check approach may contribute to its continued success in enhancing reading skills among students.

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