LET'S RAP: IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT
       Reading is faced as a difficult activity to do. The preliminary study presented that the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 kediri in the academic year 2022/2023 are difficult to identify general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference. Looking at the prior condition, this research aims at knowing the students' improvement after being treated with read-ask-put **(**rap) strategy. Therefore, classroom action research was considered to be undergone in two cycles. The instruments were tests and a questionnaire. The data was analyzed by looking at the result of the tests: pre-test and post-tests. The results showed that there occurred improvement from the mean score of the pre-test to the post-tests. It is in line with the result of the questionnaire which showed positive responses. Further rap strategy implementation is needed to be integrated with other language skills.

Keywords: improvement, reading comprehension, RAP

ABSTRAK
       Membaca dihadapkan sebagai kegiatan yang sulit untuk dilakukan. Studi pendahuluan menunjukkan bahwa siswa kelas VIII SMPN 1 Kediri tahun pelajaran 2022/2023 sulit mengidentifikasi informasi umum, informasi khusus, makna tekstual, dan referensi tekstual. Melihat kondisi tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui perkembangan siswa setelah diberi perlakuan dengan penerapan strategi Read-Ask-Put *(RAP). Oleh karena itu, penelitian tindakan kelas dilaksanakan untuk mengatasi masalah tersebut dan diterapkan dalam dua siklus. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah tes dan angket. Data dianalisis dengan melihat hasil tes:* pre-test *dan* post-test. *Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terjadi peningkatan dari nilai rata-rata* pre-test *ke* post-test. *Hal ini sejalan dengan hasil kuesioner yang menunjukkan respon positif. Implementasi strategi RAP lebih lanjut diperlukan untuk diintegrasikan dengan keterampilan bahasa lainnya.*

Kata kunci*: peningkatan, pemahaman bacaan, RAP*

INTRODUCTION

Effective learning can be done through reading. It is the most natural activity (Smith, 2004) that gives the knowledge to acquire English for a better future (Pramerta, 2022). It has a close relation to knowledge and information. The readers understand and remember during the reading process. It puts reading as a process of thinking, understanding, and getting the meaning of a text (Serravallo, 2010).

Serravallo also stated that reading comprehension is a simultaneous process of extracting and constructing meaning. There is an interaction with the texts. Finding the main ideas, the meaning of words, phrases, or sentences, and textual references of the text are kinds of the student's difficulties. It is confirmed by the result of the interview with the English teachers.

Reading comprehension is not only a process of recognizing and understanding words and meanings but also a complex cognitive process. The students have to understand the meaning of the texts, connect to their prior knowledge, and build a mental representation of the information from the text that is being read (Keenan, et al., 2008; Takaloo & Ahmadi, 2017).

Moreover, based on the observation, a

teacher-centered was revealed. The students were asked to read some texts without providing direct feedback. Asking them to read-only is not enough. The teacher should build their spirit and interest in reading (Dewi & Pramerta, 2021). So that, reading activity becomes meaningful for them.

To solve the problems above, Read-Ask-Put (RAP) could be used as the choice. RAP could help in improving memory (Hagaman et al., 2010). They will be engaged to increase understanding in more controlled learning situations. The students are required to read a text and rearrange its main ideas and specific details. Thus, by considering the RAP strategy, the students' reading problems could be overcome.

This study is done based on the result of the preliminary study. Therefore, the study on classroom action research was conducted to give treatment for helping them in improving their reading comprehension with the aforementioned strategy.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used is classroom action research (car). Initial reflection is carried out in order to find out students'problems. It was done through interviews, observations, and pre-test. Planning is the second part: formulating procedural plans. The next step is action. It consists of pre-activities, whilst activities, and post-activities. After that, observation of the teaching and learning process was done. The last step is the reflection on the implementation of each cycle. There were 32 eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Kediri in the academic year 2022/2023 as the participants.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
Findings

The present study was under classroom action research in nature. The findings were obtained by collecting necessary data using the research instrument. The researcher met the data using tests and a questionnaire. The improvement of reading comprehension was expected to be significantly improved, and they could develop their reading comprehension.

In the pre-cycle, it was found that the student's reading comprehension was low. Reading was a difficult activity for the subject because they had to read the reading text and comprehend the meaning. The difficult situation resulted in the subjects failing in the reading activity. Therefore, the pre-test was administrated before the implementation of the strategy. The purpose was to find out the pre-existing condition.

The pre-test was conducted on Thursday, 20 November 2022, to find out their initial reading scores. There were 32 participants who joined the pre-test. The researcher asked them to answer 20 items of a short answer test. The pre-test result was in a number of 1160, with a mean score of 36.25. It showed under the maximum passing grade of 72.

Then, a post-test of the cycle I was given to evaluate the improvement after applying the RAP strategy. This was important to figure out the subjects progressing achievement. There were 20 items of short answer tasks that should be finished in 30 minutes. The total score of the post-test 1 was 2485 with a mean score of 77.65. This showed an improvement in reading comprehension after being taught with the RAP strategy.

In addition, the data showed that 27 students achieved the minimum passing grade. Some of the subjects were able to comprehend the text that they read compared to the pre-test. However, a few subjects were still confused in identifying specific information and textual meaning of the reading texts. Therefore, it was continued to the second cycle.

In cycle II, the researcher gave a post-test 2 to determine whether there was an improvement in their reading comprehension compared to post-test 1 in cycle I. It was completed by 32 subjects. It was 2785 with the mean score of post-test 2, 87.03. There were 31 of 32 subjects who could achieve the minimum passing grade. The subjects were more active in asking questions during the teaching and learning process and able to find general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual references.

Furthermore, the questionnaire was administered at the end of cycle II. The questionnaire consisted of ten items. The result showed that option SA (Strongly agree) was 910; A (Agree) was 492; U (Undecide), 36; D (Disagree), 2; and SD (Strongly Disagree), 0. The results showed that 79.54% of respondents strongly agree; 43.35% of the responses agree; 3.14% of the responses undecided; 0,17% of the responses disagree; and 0% of responses, strongly disagree. The research showed that the student's reading comprehension improved from session to session after being treated with RAP.

Discussion

The present study was intended to figure out whether the student's reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Kediri in the academic year 2022/2023 can be improved through the RAP strategy. In the pre-cycle, the researcher interviewed the English teacher of SMPN 1 Kediri, observed the situation in the classroom, and administered the pre-test to the subject in the form of a short answer task. The results of the pre-test were far below the minimum passing grade. The subject's mean score was 36.25. It proves that reading comprehension is a problem and also a challenge for students (Fadillah, 2020; Teng, 2020).

The result of the subject's pre-test showed they had difficulties in those four aspects of reading (Saraswati et al., 2021). As a result, the researcher decided to conduct cycle I to give the subjects a better teaching-learning process, especially reading comprehension. In cycle I, the researcher applied the RAP strategy to the subjects' learning process and experience.

Cycle I was conducted after getting the result of the pre-test. It was an opportunity since the researcher could apply the technique, RAP strategy. The mean score of post-tests 1 was 77.65 and 27 subjects achieved the minimum passing grade. The mean score of the post-test in cycle I significantly showed the improvement of the subjects achieved in reading comprehension after the implementation of the RAP strategy. The subjects could identify general information and specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference.

The researcher teaches the subjects about descriptive texts and explains what is general information, specific information, textual meaning, textual reference and also the researcher gives the subjects student worksheet and discuss them together in class, which was given

before post-test 1 was conducted so that subject could achieve a good score in post-test 1. However, some subjects did not know how to write the answer using correct grammatical functions and some subjects had difficulties in identifying textual meaning and textual reference. It was not an optimal outcome, so the process was continued into the next cycle.

The researcher added activities that gave examples and explained how to answer the question using correct grammar after doing the reflection phase. There was good improvement achieved in post-test 2 in cycle II. The mean score of post-test 2 was 87.03. it was much higher that the researcher's expectation. The mean score of the post-test in this cycle really proved that the implementation of RAP strategy could help the student in improving their learning experience. It helps them go beyond their level (Escudero et al., 2019). In addition, there were 31 of 32 subjects achieved the minimum passing grade of SMPN 1 Kediri, which has been previously determined.

Then, the researcher wanted to improve reading comprehension and know the subject's responses toward the strategy used. As a result, the researcher know the subject's responses as to whether they agreed or disagreed on the implementation of the RAP strategy. Therefore, the researcher gave questionnaires to the subjects. The questionnaire results showed the comparative percentages of 62.54% of the subjects who strongly agree, 34.83% Agree, 2.49% Undecided, 0.14% Disagree, and 0% Strongly Disagree. The obtained comparative percentages of the questionnaire items as indicated by the subject's motivation in competing through the RAP strategy.

These results showed that the responses to the implementation of the RAP strategy in teaching reading were effective. The process of teaching and learning in the classroom becomes more active after the implementation of the RAP strategy as the teaching strategy. This result strengthens the previous studies that offered benefits, found positive attitudes of the participants toward the RAP implementation (Que & Wakim, 2020; Sudarmawan, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the RAP strategy could improve eighth-grade students' reading comprehension. Their learning experience in finding general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference is also showing improvement. Further RAP strategy implementation is needed to be integrated with other language skills with a larger number of participants.

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