IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH THE LISTEN READ DISCUSS STRATEGY

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Listen-Read-Discuss (LRD) strategy in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive texts to eighth-grade students of MTs Ishlahul Ummah Lubai. The study employed a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design. The participants were 35 students of class VIII.A selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through a 30-item multiple-choice reading test administered before and after the treatment. The reported mean score increased from 47.94 on the pre-test to 64.03 on the post-test. The paired-samples t-test yielded $t = 17.773$ with 34 degrees of freedom and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate a statistically significant difference between students' scores before and after instruction using LRD. The findings suggest that the strategy may support students' comprehension of descriptive texts by activating prior knowledge, guiding purposeful reading, and providing opportunities to discuss information.

Keywords: reading comprehension; Listen-Read-Discuss; descriptive text; pre-experimental study

Introduction

Reading is an important skill in English language learning because it enables learners to obtain information, develop knowledge, and understand written messages. Reading, however, involves more than pronouncing written words. Readers need to construct meaning, identify main ideas, locate supporting information, and connect what they read with their existing knowledge. Brown (2007) emphasizes that reading should be viewed as part of overall language proficiency and can be developed in connection with other language skills. Pang et al. (2003) similarly explain reading comprehension as the process of relating prior knowledge to information presented in written texts.

At MTs Ishlahul Ummah Lubai, the preliminary observation described in the research report indicated that some eighth-grade students had limited interest in reading, particularly when they encountered long or unfamiliar texts. Their limited vocabulary made it difficult to understand passages, obtain new information, and draw conclusions. Some students concentrated on pronouncing words correctly rather than understanding the message of the text. These conditions suggested the need for a classroom strategy that could help students activate relevant knowledge and read with a clear purpose.

One strategy considered in the study was Listen-Read-Discuss (LRD). The strategy organizes learning into three connected stages: students first listen to an explanation or overview from the teacher, then read a related text, and finally discuss the information. Manzo and Casale (1985) describe LRD as a lesson design that can support more active learning. The listening stage provides an initial framework, the reading stage allows students to compare the text with the information they have heard, and the discussion stage encourages them to clarify and reflect on their understanding.

The research focused on descriptive texts, which describe the characteristics of a person, place, or thing. Such texts commonly contain identification and description, and often use adjectives and the simple present tense (Wardiman et al., 2012). The study was guided by the following research question: was the use of the Listen-Read-Discuss strategy significantly effective in teaching reading comprehension to the eighth-grade students of MTs Ishlahul Ummah Lubai? Accordingly, the purpose was to determine whether students' reading comprehension scores differed significantly before and after instruction using LRD. The findings are expected to provide information for English teachers and researchers who are interested in reading instruction.

Methodology

This study used a pre-experimental method with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The design involved three stages: administering a pre-test, providing instruction through the Listen-Read-Discuss strategy, and administering a post-test. The study did not include a control group; therefore, the findings describe changes observed in the participating group and should not be interpreted as evidence from a controlled experiment.

The population consisted of 72 eighth-grade students of MTs Ishlahul Ummah Lubai in the 2013–2014 academic year. The sample was one class, VIII.A, comprising 35 students (18 male and 17 female), selected through purposive sampling. The research report identifies the school and academic year but does not provide further demographic information about the participants.

Data were collected using an objective reading test in the form of multiple-choice questions with four options. The instrument used for the study consisted of 30 items and was administered twice: before the treatment as the pre-test and after the treatment as the post-test. The thesis reports that an instrument try-out was conducted and that five of the 35 tried-out items were considered invalid, leaving 30 valid items. It also reports a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .963 for the 35-item try-out instrument, which was interpreted by the researcher as indicating high reliability.

The treatment applied the LRD sequence to descriptive-text instruction. In the listening stage, the teacher introduced and explained the topic, using an overview and a graphic organizer to guide students' attention. In the reading stage, students read a text related to the teacher's explanation and compared the written information with what they had heard. In the discussion stage, the teacher guided whole-class or small-group discussion, invited students to ask and answer questions, and asked groups to formulate and share conclusions. The research report gives "The Sea Eagle" as an example of a descriptive text used to illustrate the procedure.

The students' test scores were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. The report presents the pre-test and post-test means and uses a paired-samples t-test to examine the difference between the two sets of scores. The significance level was set at .05. The report also describes a Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test; the pre-test result was reported as 1.103 with an Asymp. Sig. value of .175. The post-test normality result is not reproduced here because the corresponding complete numerical output was not clearly available in the extracted report.

Finding and Discussion

Students' Reading Comprehension Scores

The descriptive results show an increase in students' reading comprehension scores after the implementation of the LRD strategy. The pre-test was administered on March 26, 2014, and the post-test was administered on April 17, 2014, following the instructional treatment. The research report states that the pre-test scores ranged from 23 to 73, while the post-test scores ranged from 37 to 93.

Assessment	Number of students	Mean score	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	35	47.94	23	73
Post-test	35	64.03	37	93

As shown in Table 1, the mean score increased by 16.09 points, from 47.94 to 64.03. The higher post-test mean indicates that students performed better on the reading comprehension test after participating in the LRD lessons. The minimum and maximum scores also increased, suggesting that the improvement was not limited to the highest-scoring students.

Paired-Samples t-Test

The thesis reports the results of a paired-samples t-test comparing the students' pre-test and post-test scores. The reported test statistic was 17.773 with 34 degrees of freedom, and the significance value was .000. In statistical reporting, this value is interpreted as $p < .001$ rather than a probability of exactly zero. Since the reported significance value was below the .05 threshold, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected.

Statistical measure	Reported result
Pre-test mean	47.94
Post-test mean	64.03
t value	17.773
Degrees of freedom	34
Sig. (2-tailed)	< .001

The result indicates a statistically significant difference between the students' reading comprehension scores before and after the treatment. The score increase is consistent with the study's conclusion that LRD was effective for the participating class. Nevertheless, because the study used a one-group pre-experimental design without a comparison group, factors other than the strategy itself cannot be ruled out as possible contributors to the change.

Discussion

The improvement may be understood in relation to the sequence of activities in LRD. First, the listening stage gives students an initial explanation of the topic before they encounter the written text. This may help activate background knowledge and provide a framework for understanding unfamiliar information. This feature is relevant to Pang et al.'s (2003) view that comprehension involves connecting prior knowledge with information in a text.

Second, the reading stage gives students a clear purpose: they can compare the teacher's explanation with details in the passage, identify information that is similar or different, and return to the text to confirm their understanding. This can shift attention away from word pronunciation alone and toward meaning. Third, the discussion stage allows students to express their understanding, ask questions, and negotiate interpretations with peers. The use of a graphic organizer, as described in the thesis, may further help students organize details and identify the characteristics of the subject being described.

The findings are also consistent with the instructional focus of descriptive texts. Students were asked to identify information about the subject and its characteristics, such as the details in "The Sea Eagle." The combination of teacher explanation, purposeful reading, and discussion may have helped students locate specific information and organize the content before answering comprehension questions. In this respect, LRD offers a structured way to connect oral explanation, individual reading, and collaborative meaning-making.

These interpretations should be considered in light of the study's limitations. The sample consisted of one class of 35 students from one school, and the design did not include a control group. In addition, the report contains inconsistencies in some descriptions of the statistical procedure: the methodology specifies a paired-samples t-test, while one interpretation paragraph refers to an independent-samples t-test. This article follows the paired-samples result presented in the statistical table ($t = 17.773$, $df = 34$, $p < .001$), which matches the one-group pre-test and post-test design. Future research could use a quasi-experimental design with a comparison group and report complete statistical outputs to strengthen the evidence.

Conclusions

The study found an increase in the reading comprehension scores of the eighth-grade students of MTs Ishlahul Ummah Lubai after instruction using the Listen-Read-Discuss strategy. The mean score rose from 47.94 on the pre-test to 64.03 on the post-test. The paired-samples t-test result ($t = 17.773$, $df = 34$, $p < .001$) indicated a statistically significant

difference between the two assessments. Based on these results, LRD appears to have been a useful strategy for teaching descriptive-text comprehension to the participating class.

The study suggests that teachers can use the listening, reading, and discussion stages to activate students' prior knowledge, give them a purpose for reading, and encourage them to explain and compare information. However, the conclusion is limited to the group studied because the research did not use a control group. Further studies involving comparison groups, larger samples, and complete reporting of instrument and statistical evidence are recommended.

References

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