

THE EFFECT OF INFERENCE STRATEGY  
ON STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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2017

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**Abstract**

This research is aimed to find out the effect of using Inference Strategy on students' reading comprehension at SMPN 9 Jember. Many students find it is hard to do the reading comprehension. The problems are reading word by word, lack of vocabulary; the lack of understanding of the target language or the background of the materials being read. So this research tries to reveal whether there is a significant difference in the students' reading comprehension of the eighth grade students who are taught using inference strategy and those who are not, in the academic year of 2016/2017.

This research is classified as a quasi-experimental study. The subjects of this study were 54 students of eighth grade at SMPN 9 Jember where 26 students of VIIC and 28 students of VIID. Class VIID was chosen as the Experimental Group which was taught using inference strategy as the treatment while Class VIIC was chosen as the Control Group which was not taught using inference strategy. In this case, the control group was taught using lecture method. In the beginning of the study, both of Experimental and Control Groups were given a pre-test to measure the students' reading comprehension in the form of a test consisting of 20 questions. Then, they were given a post-test with the same questions as the pre-test to find out whether there was a significant difference in their reading comprehension after the treatment or not. The data of the pre-test and post-test of both groups were analyzed by using the computer program SPSS. After the data were tested and found to be homogeneous variance but the distribution of the data is not normal, the hypothesis was tested using Mann-Whitney test.

The result of this research shows that there is a significant difference in the students' reading comprehension of the students who are taught using inference strategy and those who are not at the 0,014 level of significance. It means that the use of inference strategy has significant effect on the students' reading comprehension.

This research can be used as an information or reference to conduct a further research dealing with the same or different design with the same topic at other school and different subject. In addition, the information can be used as a consideration to improve the teaching quality and creativity in teaching English

by using inference strategy.

**Key Words:** reading comprehension and inference strategy

## **INTRODUCTION**

Reading is important because through reading, people can get information from written media. Reading cannot be separated from daily activities. People read many kinds written materials such as newspapers, magazines, novels, academic books and so on. Through reading people can get a lot of information, knowledge, enjoyment and even problem solution. Therefore, the ability to read the text in any form will bring great advantages to the readers. Gambrell et. al. (2002) mentioned that the most important thing about reading is comprehension (Ness, 2009:60). Reading comprehension is a crucial part of our everyday lives, because it is commonly used to get knowledge. If we are unable to comprehend what we read, then we are unable to learn the information we read (Metzger:2015). The problems can be concluded as; reading word by word, phrase by phrase, or line by line, usually at a very slow speed; lack of vocabulary; too much looking for of new words in the dictionary in the process of reading causing the lack of the ability of inferring the meaning of some new words; the lack of understanding of the target language or the background of the materials being read (Mi, 2016:85).

In fact, many students find it is hard to do the reading comprehension. Many studies have been undertaken to examine the level of reading literacy by measuring students' reading activities. One of the largest international comparative studies was the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

(PIRLS). According to PIRLS, Indonesia has taken the tests in 2006 and 2011 which 45 countries around the world. Indonesian reading skill four grade students stands in the lowest level in East Asia with score of 51.7. It was compared to 75.5 (Hong Kong), 74.0 (Singapore), 65.1 (Thailand), and 52.6 (Philippines). The study also revealed that Indonesian students could only master about 30% of reading materials as they finds difficulties in answering questions that require more understanding and reasoning (Ratri, 2016:968). These problems will be harmful if the teachers in Indonesia cannot solve those problems.

From the explanation above, the researcher is interested in improving students' reading comprehension by using Inference strategy, and wants to prove whether the Inference Strategy can be effective for increasing students' reading comprehension and their achievements.

The Inference Strategy is a reading comprehension strategy designed to help students in creating meaning from clues provided in text and respond to a variety of inference questions. Students were analyzed to determine the types of inference questions and asked to answer the questions. Four main types emerged: purpose, main idea/summarizing, predicting, and clarifying (Fritschmann, et al., 2007:248). It can be viewed as an natural thinking process that students use to solve problems in reading comprehension. Inference help the reader to identify author's biases, provide details about the setting, or figure out the meaning of an unknown word.

Based on the explanation above, this research took a title "The Effect of Inference Strategy on the eighth grade students' reading comprehension at SMPN 9 Jember in the 2016/2017 academic year".

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this thesis, the kind of the research is an experimental research and the design of this research is Quasi-Experimental, Nonrandomized Control Group, Pretest-Posttest Design because it tries to investigate the effect of using Inference strategy on students' reading comprehension. Ary (2010: 265) states the goal of experimental research is to determine whether a causal relationship exists between two or more variables. The nonrandomized control group, pretest–posttest design is one of the most widely used quasi-experimental designs in educational research (Ary, 2010: 316).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **RESULT**

Based on the research, it found that there is a significant difference in students' reading comprehension between the students who are taught using inference strategy and those who are taught using lecture method. The students' reading comprehension of the students who are taught using inference strategy and those who are taught using lecture method before the treatment are same. It is based on the result of the mean score and t-test in the pre-test for both of the experimental and control groups. From the pre-test, it found that the mean score of the control group is 62.88 and the mean score of the experimental group is 63.04. The result of independent t- test of significant different is 0.943. It means that the significant more than ( $>$ ) 0.05. Then the null hypothesis is accepted means there is no significant difference of means between experimental and control groups.

The result of the normality test shows that both of the experimental and

control groups on pre-test have normal distribution. Whereas the result of the normality test on post-test on the experimental group and control groups is not normal distribution. Moreover, based on the homogeneity of variance test, the result shows that the variance of the experimental and control group on pre-test and post-test are homogenous.

The students' reading comprehension of the students both in the control and experimental groups in the post-test has a significant difference. It proves that the proposed hypothesis "There is a significant difference between the students who are taught using inference strategy and those who are not" is accepted. The significance is 0.014 is lower than the significance level of 0.05 which means that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected while the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted.

## **DISCUSSION**

Teaching reading comprehension by using inference strategy in language teaching is supported by some researchers and shows that the results do not much different with this research. A result of the research conducted by Attaprechakul (2013:82) concludes the students are successful read journal articles when they applied the inference strategy. Eighty-eight graduate students read a set of texts on education and economic growth and answered comprehension questions. Twenty-four of these participants also volunteered for an in-depth interview. The findings revealed that students usually relied on their bottom-up processing. They skipped difficult parts, especially technical information and graphic illustrations. They sought help from friends to enhance their understanding. Overall, they were successful at interpreting the thesis statement, the gist of the section, the meaning

of the tested words and clause. Based on that explanation, Attaprechakul was conduct the same research but he applied the inference strategy on reading journal article and also for the graduate level. In this research, the inference strategy is applied in narrative text on the eighth grade students.

The other study carried out by Fritschmann, et. al (2007:258). The result represent an average increase grade levels in reading comprehension are high, the students were enjoying the exercise and passages while learning the startegy and using the startegy to aid understanding in class. Their research is different with this research because they design the inference startegy by using instruction, but it has the same result of research. In addition, Azizmohammadi (2013:158) in his research showed that there were no significant differences in reading comprehension between the groups at pre-test, while there were significant differences among them in recall test. So, the students in experimental group who were exposed to teaching short story by drawing inferences outperformed in recall test than control group. Azizmohammadi's research has the same result with this research but he applied inference strategy without the "INFER" steps, because he did not use the inferential questions.

The result of previous research revealed that the use of inference strategy on teaching reading comprehension is effective. Therefore, base on the findings of this experimental research, the researcher found that inference strategy can be effective on students' reading comprehension.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **CONCLUSION**

This research found there is significance different between experimental and control group based on the result on post-test. From the pre-test, it found that the mean score of the control group (VIII C) is 62.88 and the mean score of the experimental group (VIII D) is 63.04. It indicates the experimental groups have better achievement than the control group, because there is no significance different to both classes on pre-test. It can be said the ability of both classes are same on pre-test. Therefore, it can be stated that the use of the inference strategy in teaching narrative text can be an alternative solution to improve the students' reading comprehension of narrative text.

### **SUGGESTION**

This research has the weakness and limitation, so some suggestions are proposed. First, this research used quasi experimental design then there is no randomized of the subject. It is used because the limited of time and the recommendation from the school to use the exist classes; therefore it is impossible to randomized the subject. Expected to the future researcher will use true experimental design with randomized the subject, therefore the researchers are able to control all of the external variables that affect the result of experimental research.

Second, this research does at Junior high school. Hopefully the inference startegy will do on all level of the students. Then this research only focused to the students' reading comprehension in narrative text. Expected to the future researcher will conduct the use of inference strategy not only on students' reading



comprehension on narrative text but also on other kind of English texts.

In addition, hopefully it will be useful for the English teacher as information to select, provide, and use appropriate inference strategy as main sources on learning English in classrooms. The information can be used as a consideration to improve the teaching quality and creativity in teaching English by using inference strategy.

The result of this research can be used as an information or reference to conduct a further research dealing with the same or different design with the same topic at other school and different subject.

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