

IMPROVING ENGLISH READING SKILLS OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AT MUHAMMADIYAH 2 BOARDING SCHOOL USING DISCOVERY LEARNING METHOD THROUGH ROLE PLAY STRATEGY

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of the Discovery Learning method combined with Role Play strategy in improving the English reading skills of 8th-grade students at Muhammadiyah 2 Boarding School. The research addresses the challenges students face in reading comprehension, which is crucial for their academic success. The study employs a classroom action research. There are 22 students as the sampling. Data was collected through two cycles namely cycle I and cycle II, along with descriptive quantitative and student feedback. Result indicates a significant improvement in reading skills among students. In pre-cycle the students average score was about 70,54(55%). It is indicated that they don't pass the passing grade. Through cycle I, the score was increased to 75,55 or there were 8 (36%) students who didn't pass the passing grade. Moreover in cycle II, the student average score was increase to 8,04 point (83,59). There were 2 students (9%) who didn't pass the passing grade. The Discovery Learning method, which encourages students to explore, inquire, and engage actively with the material, fosters deeper understanding and retention. The Role Play strategy enhances this by allowing students to immerse themselves in various contexts, making the reading experience more relatable and enjoyable. This approach not only improves reading comprehension but also boosts students' motivation and engagement in learning. The findings suggest that incorporating interactive and student-centered methods, such as Discovery Learning and Role Play, can lead to enhanced language skills and better educational outcomes and underscores the importance of innovative teaching strategies in fostering effective learning in English class.

Keywords— discovery learning, reading, role play

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill essential for academic success and lifelong learning. It is a complex cognitive process that involves decoding text, constructing meaning, and making inferences. In line with (Yue Ding , 2023) for junior high school students, reading play an indispensable part in the English learning. Reading can enlarge students' vocabulary and cultivate students' learning ability. While English is increasingly recognized as a global language, many students, including those in Indonesia, struggle to achieve proficiency in reading English texts. This study focuses on enhancing the reading abilities of grade eight students at Muhammadiyah 2 Boarding School through the implementation of discovery learning and role-play strategies. According to (Lan Huifang, Chen Xian, 2022) the basic skills of junior high school English include listening, speaking, reading and writing. As we are known, reading is an effective way for students to understand and acquire information. The standards of the Compulsory Education English Curriculum stipulate that language skills are an important

part of language use ability, mainly including listening, speaking, reading, writing and the comprehensive use of these skills (Yu Long, 2023).

Previous research has highlighted the importance of engaging teaching methodologies and the use of authentic materials in developing reading comprehension skills. However, limited studies have specifically investigated the combined impact of discovery learning and role-play on students' ability to comprehend narrative texts in the Indonesian context. This research aims to fill this gap by examining how these strategies can be effectively employed to improve students' reading performance. By integrating discovery learning, students are encouraged to actively construct knowledge through exploration and inquiry. This approach aligns with constructivist learning theories, which emphasize the importance of learners constructing their own understanding (Endang Lestari, Joko Priyana, 2020). Role-play, on the other hand, provides opportunities for students to practice language in a meaningful and engaging context. By immersing themselves in different roles and scenarios, students develop language fluency, confidence, and critical thinking skills.

This study seeks to contribute to the field of English language teaching by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of discovery learning and role-play in enhancing reading comprehension. The specific objectives of this research are: to investigate the impact of discovery learning and role-play on students' reading comprehension scores, to examine the students' perceptions of the implemented teaching strategies, and to explore the relationship between students' motivation and their reading performance. By addressing these objectives, this study aims to provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers regarding the effective teaching of reading comprehension in English. The findings of this research can inform the development of instructional materials and professional development programs to support teachers in implementing innovative teaching approaches. Related to (Meriyanti, Thia Jasmina, 2022) Indonesia has a proportion of students with PISA test scores below the minimum level of competence, which is reasonably large for reading, mathematics, and science.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader goal of improving English language education in Indonesia by providing evidence-based strategies for enhancing students' reading abilities.

Literature Review

Discovery learning, a constructivist approach, empowers learners to construct knowledge independently through exploration and inquiry. Several studies have explored the efficacy of discovery learning in enhancing reading skills. However, while these studies highlight the benefits of discovery learning, they often overlook the integration of active learning strategies, such as role-play, to deepen comprehension.

In Discovery learning learning, the material or learning materials are not delivered in a final form, but students are encouraged to identify what they want to know, followed by searching for information, and then organize or shape what they know and understand in a final form (Inayatus Zakiati, Joko Sutarto, Eko Handoyo, 2023). It is in line with (Juan Wang, 2024) who stated that guided discovery method focuses on developing students' learning independence and creative thinking. Although different people have different understanding of the guided discovery method, the essence of it is that students learn knowledge actively under the guidance of teachers.

According to (Keezhatta, Muhammed Salim, 2020) role-play is an effective technique used widely for the purpose of solving classroom interpersonal troubles and imbibing human-relations skills in the students. Thus role play advocates natural method which recommends a process of learner discovery through trial and error. Finally the ultimate goal achievement in acquiring language proficiency and fluency is supported. According to (Delis Meta Tiana, Rini Apriani, 2021) role play seems more effective because it encourages the students an opportunity to practice communicating in real-life spoken language. There are two types of role playscripted and unscripted. Unscripted role play does not depend on textbooks. It is known as a free role play or improvisation. The students themselves have to decide what language to use and how the conversation should develop. This teaching technique can

empower the students to communicate independently, make the students feel comfortable during discussing any topics, and foster interaction with one another. Nevertheless, studies primarily focus on the isolated effects of role-play, neglecting its potential synergy with discovery learning. Role-play enhances clarity in understanding, interest to participate and confidence to perform in students. It helps learners to empathize with the role he/she enacts and thus motivates the learner to have a better understanding of real-time problems and the solutions. It helps students practice speaking skills like debating, enacting, reasoning and negotiating. Moreover it also helps them to adapt to unexpected situations in real-life. English is one of the lessons that must be learned in schools in Indonesia ranging from JHS (Gracella Andaresta Simanjuntak, Meiyanti Simanjuntak, Anggita Sihombing, 2022). One of the competencies contained in the 2013 curriculum is analyzing a text. This analyzing learning is more directed on reading skills. Reading skills in the 2013 curriculum contains material about analyzing the text base on the content and aspect of the language.

According to (Michael Pressley, 2023) one of the benefits of reading comprehension is a person can get information from what he/she read directly without the help of anyone. Reading is very closely related to a text. Because when we read, there must be a text or writing that becomes an instrument when reading. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the combined impact of discovery learning and role-play on reading comprehension. By merging these two approaches, we hypothesize that students will not only construct deeper meaning from texts but also develop the ability to apply their knowledge in authentic communicative contexts. This innovative approach differentiates the current study from previous research by examining the interactive effects of these strategies and their influence on reading performance.

Research Method

This study employed a classroom action research design to enhance English reading skills of grade eight students at SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Boarding School through discovery learning and role-play strategies. This research used Action Research Model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) cited in Putra (2023), which says that the Classroom Action Research is conducted in four steps: (1) Planning, (2) Action, (3) Observing, and (4) Reflecting. The Classroom action research is intended to improve the teaching and learning process leading to the improvement of learning outcomes. The aim of action research is to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of routine work is improved by taking the work that is being performed to analyze the problem conditions that cause that work to not be as successful as it should be (Siribhorn Semathong, 2023). If the classroom action research is implemented appropriately, it is believed the teachers will have better performance in their class. As the results, the students will be more motivated in learning. Data collection involved pre-tests, observations, interviews, and document analysis. Pre-tests measured students' initial reading comprehension levels. Observations focused on classroom activities and students' engagement. Interviews were conducted with students and teachers to gather their perspectives. Document analysis included students' reading assignments and assessment results.

The research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. In the planning stage, learning objectives, materials, and procedures were developed based on students' needs and the research questions. During the action phase, the researchers implemented discovery learning and role-play activities in the classroom. Observations were conducted to monitor students' progress and identify challenges. Reflective discussions were held with the teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategies. Data analysis utilized an interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (Endang Lestari, Joko Priyana, 2020). This model involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Quantitative data from pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data from observations, interviews, and documents were analyzed thematically to identify patterns and trends.

Results and Discussion

The implementation activities for improving learning were conducted at the Creative School of *Muhammadiyah 2* Boarding School in the subject of English. This research was conducted in the eighth-grade class, *Hagia Sophia*, with a total of 22 students, consisting of 14 male students and 8 female students, who tended to be passive in participating in learning activities, or whose level of activity was classified as low. This classroom action research was carried out through two cycles, where each cycle consists of four stages, including planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Wardani, 2021). The planning stage involves preparing an action plan to improve the learning process. Next, the acting stage is the implementation of the plan that has been made. In the observing stage, the researcher observes and collects data on the implementation of the actions to evaluate their effectiveness. Finally, the reflecting stage is used to analyze the observation results, identify strengths and weaknesses, and plan improvement steps for the next cycle. Cycle I begins with the planning stage. In this planning stage, the researcher determines the subjects to be used as the research class, prepares guidelines for implementing learning activities in class, namely the Lesson Plan, prepares learning media, which includes visual aids tailored to the learning theme, and conducts a simulation of the use of the discovery learning method with role play in the learning activities. Discovery learning was chosen because, according to Bruner (Endang Lestari, Joko Priyana, 2020) discovery learning is described as the process of students being active in the class and identifying the key principles for themselves rather than simply accepting the teacher's explanation.

The learning activities support learners to engage in collaborative learning. It facilitates students' practice in reading and writing. Therefore, the development of the Discovery Learning activity was important to conduct. The next stage is the implementation. The researcher develops the following steps for learning: Preparing visual aids, asking students to identify the narrative text displayed on the whiteboard, having students listen to the teacher's explanation of the narrative text, and having students and the teacher draw conclusions together. The next stage is observation. In this stage, the teacher observes each activity conducted by the students. It starts from the problems that arise at the beginning of the learning process until the end, followed by an assessment for each student based on indicators of activity and process skills that have been prepared. Peers observe the course of learning to identify any problems faced by the students and in which parts they experience difficulties. Peers observe the learning process in individuals who can and cannot solve their problems. Observations are made throughout the action research process. Through these observations, it is hoped that shortcomings in the implementation of actions can be identified so that modifications to the design can be made promptly.

After all stages in Cycle 1 have been carried out, reflection is necessary. In this stage, collaboratively, the teacher analyzes the observation results. Next, a reflection is made, drawing preliminary conclusions about the implementation of Cycle 1 and discussing the analysis results based on the observation indicators, making an improvement action or revision design based on the analysis of the achievement indicators. Before Cycle 1 was conducted, data on the pre-cycle student scores were obtained, as shown in table 1 and table 2 below.

Tabel 1 Pre-Cycle Learning Score

Score Range	N
51 - 60	2
61 - 70	10
71 - 80	7
81 - 90	3
91 - 100	0
total	1553

average	70,59
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Tabel 2. Pre-Cycle Passing Score

Criteria	N	%
complete	10	45%
incomplete	12	55%

In the pre-cycle, there were 2 students (9%) who scored below the Minimum Completeness Criteria of 71, 10 students (45%) scored between 61-70, 7 students (32%) scored between 71-80, 3 students (14%) scored between 81-90, and 0 students (0%) scored between 91-100. The average score in the pre-cycle was 70.59. This indicates that the majority of students (10 students) fell into the category of scores between 61-70, reflecting a basic understanding of the material. There were 7 students in the category of scores between 71-80, indicating a good understanding. Still, 2 students were in the category of scores between 51-60, indicating a need for improvement in understanding. The average score of 70.59 shows that, overall, students' understanding still needs to be enhanced. The average score improved after learning enhancements were implemented. The results of the scores from the first learning cycle are presented in Table 3 and 4 as follows:

Tabel 1 Cycle I Learning Score

Score Range	N
51 - 60	3
61 - 70	5
71 - 80	7
81 - 90	4
91 - 100	3
total	1662
average	75,55

Tabel 4. Cycle I Passing Score

Criteria	N	%
complete	14	64
incomplete	8	36

In Cycle I, there were 3 students (14%) who scored below the Minimum Completeness Criteria of 71, 5 students (23%) scored between 61-70, 7 students (32%) scored between 71-80, 4 students (18%) scored between 81-90, and 3 students (14%) scored between 91-100. The average score in Cycle I was 75.55. This indicates that there was an increase in the number of students in the score categories of 71-80 (7 students) and 81-90 (4 students). The number of students in the categories of 51-60 and 61-70 decreased. The presence of 3 students in the category of 91-100 indicates that there are students who demonstrate a very good understanding. The average score of 75.55 shows an improvement in student understanding compared to the pre-cycle. The research results indicate a significant increase in the number of students who achieved the KKM after the implementation of learning using the role play and discovery learning models. Out of 22 students, 14 students (64%) scored above the Minimum Completeness Criteria, indicating an improvement from the pre-cycle condition. This shows that this learning model is effective in improving student learning outcomes. The combination of the role play and discovery learning models has proven to be effective in enhancing student learning outcomes. This learning model encourages students to engage actively in the learning process, better understand the material, and develop critical thinking skills. The role play model

can also increase student motivation and activity in learning. The implementation of discovery learning in the role play model allows students to learn independently and actively, thus enhancing their understanding and learning outcomes. Although there was an improvement, there are still some students who have not achieved the Minimum Completeness Criteria. This indicates that further efforts are needed to enhance the effectiveness of learning for all students.

This research can be continued with the next cycle to further investigate the factors influencing student learning achievement and to develop more effective learning strategies. Cycle 2 begins with the planning stage. After reflecting on and analyzing the learning activities in Cycle I, the planning activities for Cycle II were conducted by creating a revised Lesson Plan for Cycle II. The goals of the Cycle II revision focus on: Increasing learning motivation by utilizing audiovisual media to enhance focus and providing rewards and positive reinforcement to boost student motivation. Implementing varied learning strategies using different teaching methods and techniques to keep students engaged in the learning process. Enriching the learning strategies by increasing the number of visual media, enlarging the media size, and utilizing audio and video learning materials. The next stage is the implementation stage. In the implementation of the learning improvement in Cycle II, the researcher acted as the classroom teacher. As in Cycle I, peers observed the implementation of these learning activities.

Tabel 5 Cycle II Learning Score

Score Range	N
51 - 60	0
61 -70	2
71 - 80	7
81 - 90	8
91 - 100	5
total	1839
average	83,59

Tabel 6 Cycle II Passing Score

Criteria	N	%
complete	20	91
incomplete	2	9

In Cycle II, there were 0 students (0%) who scored below the Minimum Completeness Criteria of 71, 2 students (9%) scored between 61-70, 7 students (32%) scored between 71-80, 8 students (36%) scored between 81-90, and 5 students (23%) scored between 91-100. The average score in Cycle II was 83.59. This indicates that a significant improvement occurred in the score categories of 81-90 (8 students) and 91-100 (5 students). There are no longer any students in the score category of 51-60. The average score of 83.59 indicates a significant improvement in student understanding compared to Cycle I and the pre-cycle.

Conclusion

Based on data analysis, there is a significant improvement in student learning outcomes from the pre-cycle to Cycle II. This can be seen from the increase in the percentage of students who scored above the Minimum Completeness Criteria, from 55% in the pre-cycle to 91% in Cycle II. This improvement is also reflected in the increase in the average score, from 70.59 in the pre-cycle to 83.59 in Cycle II. Interactive analysis of the student learning outcomes data indicates that the implementation of innovative learning models has a positive effect on improving student learning outcomes. The improvement occurred gradually from the pre-cycle to Cycle I and Cycle II. The learning strategies applied in Cycle I and Cycle II proved effective

in enhancing student understanding. This improvement indicates that the application of the discovery learning method with the role play model is effective in improving student learning outcomes in the narrative text material.

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