IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING ABILITY THROUGH THE READABLE APPLICATION AND SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION AT SMPN 4 PAREPARE

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Abstract

Reading in English is a fundamental skill that plays an important role in supporting academic success and personal development. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the Readable application combined with small group discussions in enhancing the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMPN 4 Parepare. The study used a descriptive quantitative approach with a one-group pre-experimental design. A total of 24 students participated as the sample. Instruments used were reading tests and student response questionnaires. The analysis showed an increase in average scores from the pre-test (67.50) to the post-test (80.00). The t-test result showed that the calculated t-value (13.58) was greater than the t-table value (1.710), indicating a statistically significant improvement. Furthermore, students' responses to the Readable application were positive. This study concludes that the integration of digital technology and collaborative strategies is effective in improving students reading comprehension at the junior high school level.

Keywords: Readable application, small group discussion, reading comprehension, ICT in education, English language learning

1. Introduction

Reading in English is a fundamental skill that plays a crucial role in students academic success and personal development. English proficiency is increasingly required across fields such as education, business, technology, and research. The Indonesian government has integrated English into the national curriculum to enhance students' language skills from an

early age. However, many students still struggle to understand text structure, lack vocabulary, and have difficulty making inferences.

Observations during the School Field Introduction Program (PLP) revealed that most students faced these difficulties, in addition to low motivation, limited access to English texts, and non-interactive teaching methods. Therefore, alternative learning strategies are needed to enhance student engagement.

One effective approach is small group discussion, which fosters interaction, critical thinking, and collaboration. According to Cao (2019), this method encourages students to participate in meaningful discussions and deepen text comprehension. Additionally, digital tools like the Readable application offer adaptive reading materials, audio features, and vocabulary support. This combination shows great potential in improving students' motivation and comprehension simultaneously.

2. Method

This study used a quantitative approach with a one-group pre-test and post-test pre-experimental design. The research sample included 24 eighth-grade students at SMPN 4 Parepare. Data collection techniques involved reading tests (pre-test and post-test) and student response questionnaires.

The procedure comprised four stages: (1) administering the pre-test and introducing narrative texts, (2) introducing the Readable application and individual practice, (3) small group discussions using the app's texts, and (4) post-test and student reflection.

Data analysis was conducted using a paired sample t-test with SPSS version 25 to determine the significance of the results.

3. Results and Discussion

The results showed an increase in the average score from 67.50 (pre-test) to 80.00 (post-test). The standard deviation decreased from 26.66 to 18.95, indicating a more homogeneous distribution of scores.

Table 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Statistics

Test Type	Average	Standard Deviation
Pre-Test	67.50	26.66
Post-Test	80.00	18.95

The t-test indicated that the calculated t-value of 13.58 was greater than the t-table value (1.710), signifying a statistically significant improvement. This demonstrates the effectiveness of using the Readable application in combination with small group discussions to enhance reading comprehension.

Table 2. Student Score Classification

Category	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)
Very Good	33%	41%
Good	33%	33%
Fair	21%	20%
Poor	13%	4%

Students also gave positive responses to the Readable application, citing ease of understanding texts, increased enthusiasm for learning, and greater confidence. These findings are consistent with those of Soojin Lee et al. (2021), who found that interactive technologies and collaborative learning can improve motivation and retention of reading comprehension.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the Readable application combined with small group discussions significantly improves students' reading comprehension. The findings highlight the importance of implementing technology-based and collaborative learning strategies in junior high school English education.

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate digital media in their teaching, and future researchers should explore the effectiveness of this strategy with different text types and education levels.

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