

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STAD IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING SKILL

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Abstract

In the process of teaching, teachers must employ various strategies to ensure that students grasp and understand the subjects they are learning. One effective strategy for teaching reading is the Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) approach. The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of the STAD technique on improving the reading comprehension scores of students at SMK Kesehatan Assyifa School in Banda Aceh. The sample for this research comprised of twenty-six second-semester grade XI students. The research involved conducting pre-tests and post-tests. The pretest was administered before implementing the STAD strategy and the posttest was conducted after four sessions of STAD treatment. The reading tests encompassed five aspects that aid in enhancing students' reading comprehension; identifying topic sentences, main ideas, details, inferences, synonyms/antonyms, and conclusions. The findings of the study revealed that students improved their reading comprehension through the STAD technique by engaging in discussions with their peers about the issues presented in the reading texts. A comparison of the pretest and posttest results demonstrated that the average score in the posttest was higher than in the pretest. Specifically, the students achieved an average score of 80.19% in the posttest, meeting the criteria for completing the minimum competency standard (KKM) set at 73%. Moreover, the students collaborated in heterogeneous teams to maximize their improvement in each cycle, which fostered a competitive atmosphere in the classroom and heightened students' motivation to comprehend the reading texts.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, STAD Technique, Class Action Research

1. Introduction

Reading is a fundamental skill that holds great importance in English learning. When it comes to reading, students engage in information processing, critical thinking, recalling background knowledge, and acquiring new knowledge from the passages they read (Marantika, 2013). Within the reading comprehension classroom, students assume the role of text readers and are expected to comprehend the written content. As pointed out by Duffy (2009), the essence of reading lies in "comprehension", as the purpose of written language is to convey a message. In this context, the teaching and learning processes significantly impact students' English learning success. Consequently, teachers play a crucial role as guides, assisting students in attaining a comprehensive understanding of the text. This emphasizes the necessity of employing effective teaching and learning strategies to facilitate students' comprehension of the provided materials.

For high school students, mastering reading comprehension is highly important as it aims to teach them how to identify the main idea, topic, details, vocabulary, and make inferences. Reading serves as a

means for students to acquire information from various sources such as books, journals, articles, and magazines. Therefore, students' proficiency in reading comprehension plays a critical role in the curriculum. Among the language skills, reading receives particular emphasis. According to Hidayat (2018), reading is not only a valuable source of information and an enjoyable activity, but also a way to reinforce and expand one's language knowledge. By developing strong reading abilities, students are expected to enhance their understanding of specific contexts presented in their learning materials and effectively extract meaning from textual cues.

In the pursuit of language mastery, the significance of reading and comprehending written material cannot be overlooked. According to Komiyama (2009), reading plays a vital role in enhancing overall proficiency and grants individuals' access to essential information in academic and professional settings. Additionally, reading is an engaged process that involves the skills of recognition and comprehension. It serves as a means to update one's knowledge, as highlighted by Jain and Patel (2008).

Based on the writer's observations, there are several issues encountered by students at SMK Kesehatan Assyifa School in regards to reading comprehension. Firstly, students display less active participation and tend to work on texts individually, and have lack of cooperation due to their perceived role as passive learners. The teaching methods employed for reading comprehension often prove to be ineffective, relying on traditional approaches where students are initially required to read the text aloud, then tasked with independently searching for difficult and unfamiliar words in dictionaries before answering comprehension questions. In case of difficulties, students typically prefer seeking the teacher's assistance rather than collaborating with their peers. Consequently, students become overly reliant on the teacher's help or waste time relying heavily on dictionaries. Furthermore, students' struggle to comprehend the text can be attributed to their limited vocabulary. When encountering challenging words, they are unable to interpret their meaning and draw conclusions as the sentences do not make sense to them. Difficulties in grammar also contribute to their struggles in understanding the text. Consequently, reading becomes perceived as a difficult and tedious task. If students do not enjoy reading, their knowledge acquisition is hindered. Loss of interest in reading poses a significant obstacle to becoming self-directed learners in reading comprehension and hampers their ability to achieve high scores according to the minimum passing standards outlined in the curriculum.

Based on observations at SMK Kesehatan Assyifa School, it was found that the actual performance fell short of the minimum achievement standard (KKM) objective of 73 in reading comprehension. Approximately 80% of second-grade students at SMK Kesehatan Assyifa School scored below 70, with only 20% achieving a score above 73. The average score for the first semester was 58.3, which did not meet the criteria for the minimum passing standard (KKM). Considering these findings, the intention of the writer is to ensure that at least 75% of students are capable of answering comprehension questions correctly after implementing the Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) method, with test scores surpassing 73.

Given the aforementioned explanation, it is evident that teaching reading in schools requires the implementation of innovative strategies. These strategies should not only engage students' interest in comprehending texts but also transform them into active readers capable of overcoming comprehension challenges. STAD technique offers an opportunity for students to collaborate with their peers through group discussions, where each member contributes to solving problems. Therefore, STAD proves to be a valuable technique for teaching reading comprehension. According to Slavin (2001), STAD consists of five major components: class presentation, teams, quizzes, individual scores, and team recognition. In STAD, the teacher delivers a lesson, and students work together within their teams to ensure that all members master the lesson. Each group member has equal responsibility and contributes towards achieving the group's goal. Without a clear group goal, cooperative groups often become mere collections of students working on the same task. By implementing STAD, learning outcomes, student engagement, and responses from both teachers and students can be significantly improved (Nugroho & Shodikin, 2018).

STAD strategy is not a new approach when it comes to enhancing students' reading abilities. A study conducted by Rahimi (2015) demonstrated that students in the cooperative learning condition, compared to those in the individual learning condition, performed better based on their scores in group assignments. This indicates the effectiveness of the treatment. These findings support (Ruhil et al., 2020) claim that implementing STAD as a cooperative learning technique for pre-university students not only improves their reading comprehension but also enhances their motivation to learn English. Furthermore, Sophia Fithri (2013) conducted a case study titled "The implementation of Cooperative Learning: Student Team Achievement Division Technique in Teaching Reading Comprehension." The study involved eighth-grade students and revealed that many learners encountered difficulties in understanding textbooks. The research findings identified six benefits of using the STAD technique, including engaging students in reading activities, increasing motivation for active learning, helping students overcome comprehension problems, developing social skills, creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere, and enhancing reading comprehension skills. Additionally, students responded positively to the implementation of the STAD technique in teaching reading. Therefore, it is recommended to implement the STAD technique for teaching reading comprehension.

Based on the above results, the writer proposes the implementation of the STAD technique to improve students' reading skills. The objective is to examine whether there are significant differences between students taught using the STAD technique, which emphasizes team goals and success dependent on the learning of all group members.

2. Literature Review

Student Team Achievement Division (STAD)

STAD is a cooperative learning technique in which students collaborate in groups of four or five. Within these groups, students engage in discussions and work together before individually answering tests. According to Slavin (1995), STAD involves a diverse mix of students, including different academic performances, genders, races, and ethnicities. Among various cooperative learning approaches, STAD is considered the simplest and most straightforward, making it an ideal starting point for teachers new to cooperative learning. The researcher selected this technique due to its widespread use in classrooms. In STAD, the group members are deliberately heterogeneous. The teacher presents a lesson, and the students then collaborate within their teams to ensure that all team members have a solid understanding of the material. Finally, all students take individual quizzes on the content without any assistance from their peers. Slavin (1991: 20-21) identifies five key components of STAD.

a. The class presentation.

During this phase, the teacher delivers the learning material to the students through direct teaching, instructional videos, interactive activities, and other methods. It is important for students to pay attention during the class presentation as it has a direct impact on their performance in subsequent tests. The test results are evaluated based on the overall performance of the team.

b. The team.

Students are divided into groups of four to five members, with the intention of creating diversity in terms of academic rank, gender, race, and ethnicity. This diversity helps prevent imbalances in abilities within the groups. The teams work together to review the teaching material that was presented, engage in discussions, compare answers, and address any misunderstandings among group members. This collaborative strategy promotes both individual and collective responsibility, ensuring that all team members have a solid grasp of the learning material.

c. The individual quiz.

After engaging in group discussions on the presented material, students proceed to independently answer an individual quiz or test. During this phase, they are not allowed to seek assistance from their peers. This component emphasizes individual accountability, as each student is responsible for their own learning and performance on the worksheet. Higher scores achieved by individual team members contribute to the overall improvement of the team in subsequent parts of the learning process.

d. The Individual Improvement Score.

Slavin (1991) introduces the concept of a base score, which represents the minimum score expected from each student on a 30-point quiz. These base scores are determined when students are assigned to their teams. If there are 25 or more students in a class, the first three students can be assigned a base grade of 20, the next three with 19, and so on, until all students have a base grade. In subsequent quizzes or assessments, students can earn points for their team based on the increase in their individual score compared to their base score. This component encourages students to strive for improvement and rewards their progress in relation to their initial performance.

e. Team Recognition.

After each individual quiz or assessment, the teacher collects the individual development points earned by each student and adds them to the team summary form. The team summary form keeps track of the points accumulated by each team member throughout the learning process. Based on these individual scores, the teacher calculates the team's total score for each division. This component allows for the recognition and celebration of team achievements, fostering a sense of collective success and motivation among the students.

Reading Comprehension

Reading is a cognitive activity that allows the reader to engage in a conversation with the author through the text. Reading strategies play a crucial role in cognitive psychology and contribute to successful comprehension (Zare, 2012; May, 2001; Walker, 2000). The main purpose of reading is to derive meaning, and comprehension is the ultimate goal, as reading without comprehension is simply reading words. Comprehension involves actively constructing meaning from the text (Durkin, 1993). It is a complex interplay of automatic and strategic cognitive processes that enable the reader to form a mental representation of the text (van den Broek & Espin, 2012). Comprehension depends not only on reader characteristics, such as prior knowledge and working memory, but also on language processes such as foundational reading skills, decoding, vocabulary, understanding text structure, making inferences, and motivation.

3. Research Method

This study conducted at SMK Kesehatan Assyifa School in Banda Aceh, located at Jalan H. T Moh Hasan 110 Bathoh, Banda Aceh. The researcher has observed that many second-year students at the school struggle with reading comprehension. The specific focus of the study is on the second semester of grade XI, specifically class XI Farmasi A, which consists of 26 students. The researcher has chosen classroom action research (CAR) as the method for this study. The CAR procedure involves identifying the general idea, conducting fact findings and analysis, planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The last four steps are referred to as a cycle (McNiff, 1992). In each cycle, the researcher will observe the students to monitor their behavior and activity during the implementation of the STAD technique, assessing their level of engagement. To collect data, the researcher used test instruments. Pre-tests and post-tests in the form of multiple-choice questions will be administered to the experimental group before and after implementing the STAD strategies. The tests will consist of 20 questions covering various reading comprehension skills such as identifying topic sentences, main ideas, details, making inferences, recognizing synonyms/antonyms, and drawing conclusions. The research will be conducted over six sessions, focusing on reading materials related to report and analytical exposition in the second semester.

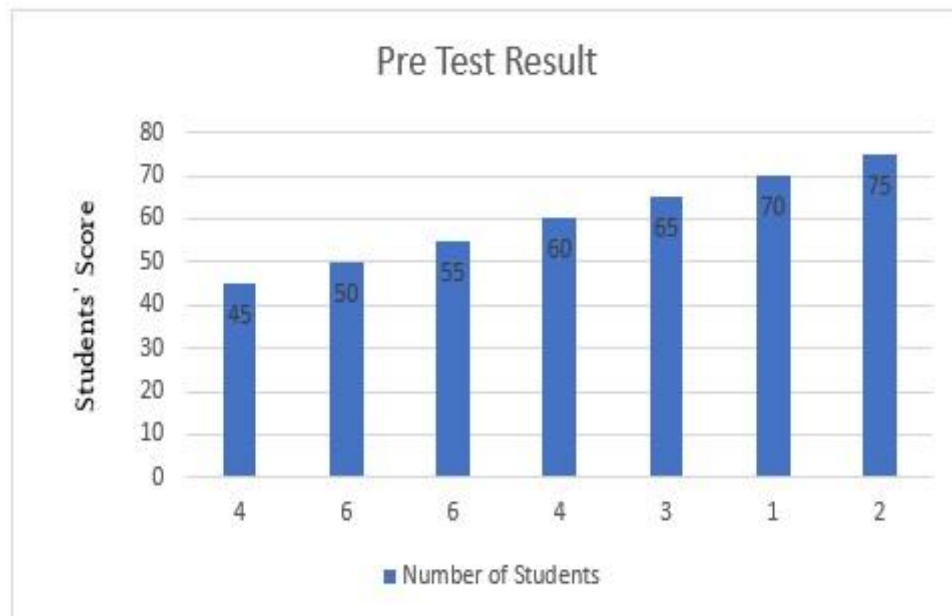
4. Results and Discussion

The implementation of STAD strategy in a language class focused on reading comprehension aimed to enhance the reading skills of the students in the experimental group. The findings from the learning process indicated that the students in the experimental group demonstrated increased focus and interest in the materials provided by the teacher during the implementation of the STAD strategy. They actively engaged in activities such as making predictions, creating outlines, and recognizing the text's

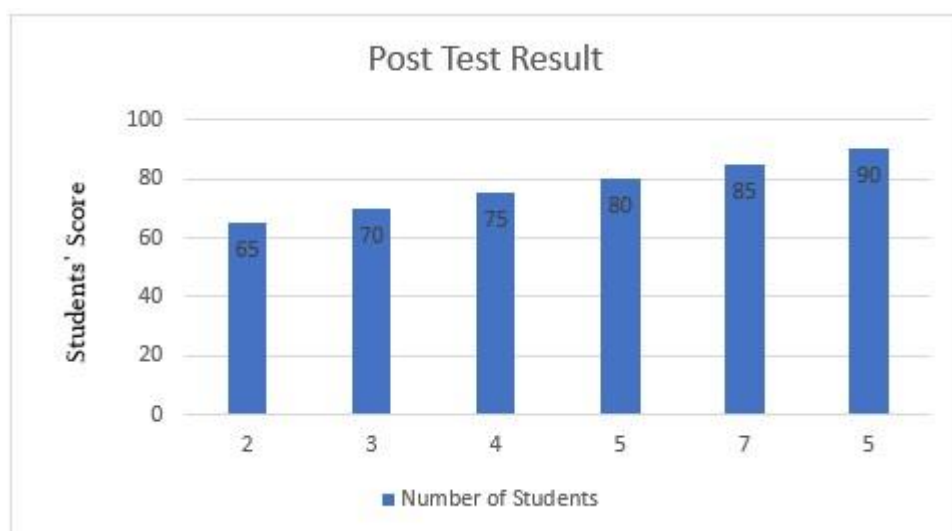
structure. The implementation of STAD strategies yielded several benefits for the students in the experimental group, including improved learning motivation, enhanced problem-solving abilities, and better assessment outcomes. According to Hashemian, Jalilifar, and Parisa (2012), the positive interdependence among group members in STAD encourages L2 learners to assist each other and exert more effort to achieve collective success. This collaborative environment is particularly beneficial for low-achieving students, as they find it easier to comprehend the material with the help of their more proficient peers. The smarter students in the group willingly support and guide their peers who may be struggling, creating an inclusive and supportive learning atmosphere. Hashemian et al. (2012) also emphasizes that students in cooperative groups receive personalized support and encouragement from their competent partners, who are available to provide customized answers and solutions when needed. Importantly, the smarter students ensure that the lower-achieving students feel comfortable and supported throughout the learning process, without causing any embarrassment. Overall, the implementation of STAD strategies in the reading comprehension class positively impacted student engagement, motivation, and competence. The collaborative nature of STAD allowed for peer support, personalized assistance, and a conducive learning environment, benefiting both the low-achieving and high-achieving students in the experimental group.

This study utilized a text comprehension test as an assessment tool, with the post-test scores serving as the source of data. Both a pre-test and a post-test were administered to the experimental class. The pre-test was conducted before the implementation of the STAD strategy, while the post-test was administered after teaching and learning with STAD. During the STAD sessions, students collaborated and worked together in groups with their peers. The class started with a presentation that involved direct teaching or lecture discussions. Following the class presentation, students were divided into groups and engaged in group study. In the group study phase, each group ensured that all members comprehended the given material and the assigned task sheet, so they were well-prepared for the subsequent quiz. To aid students in understanding the material and task, the teacher provided each group with a worksheet. This worksheet facilitated students' comprehension of the text by addressing elements such as topic sentences, main ideas, details, inferences, synonyms/antonyms, and conclusions. Once all the groups completed their tasks, a discussion took place between the teacher and students to collectively review and clarify the content. After the discussion, students returned to their seats, and an individual quiz was administered to each student. During this session, students were not allowed to assist one another. Once the students completed the quiz, their answer sheets were collected by the teacher, and the quiz was discussed together as a class. The students' improvement scores were calculated by the teacher and the researcher, and the points for improvement were noted in the team summary form. After conducting four STAD sessions, a post-test was conducted to assess the students' progress and improvement. This post-test aimed to evaluate the impact of the STAD strategy on the students' learning outcomes.

From the pre-test and post-test, the results of STAD implementation after and before the treatment were obtained. It shows that students' scores without treatment did not get the expected score where the average score was 54,62 which is still below the KKM. Many students still do not meet the passing standard in reading comprehension, because the methods taught in class are still conventional in which teachers still control the learning environment and treat students as passive objects that must absorb all of the information they are given by the teacher. The lessons are still delivered in a conventional manner in class using lectures, questions and answers, and assignments. The students' pretest result was presented in the following graph.



Moreover, the students who received the STAD treatment to improve their reading comprehension showed significant improvement in their posttest scores. On average, the students achieved a score of 80,19, surpassing the minimum passing criteria of 73. This positive outcome aligns with Yunita's (2017) assertion that collaboration within groups, the use of appropriate instructional media, and well-designed materials contribute to increased knowledge, active participation, enhanced self-confidence, and a greater willingness to learn, all of which positively influence students' academic progress. The following graph illustrates the results:



The results from the pre-test and post-test demonstrate a significant improvement in students' scores. The mean score for the reading test increased from 54,62 to 80,19. Learning a language requires motivation to actively engage in the learning process, and teaching methods can serve as a catalyst for student motivation. The implementation of STAD in the learning process has shown to enhance students' motivation to learn English, particularly in the area of reading comprehension. Therefore, it can be concluded that STAD not only improves students' reading skills but also boosts their motivation to engage with the text.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of STAD technique in improving reading comprehension among second-semester students in SMK Kesehatan Asyifa Banda Aceh, Grade XI, showed positive results. The improvement observed was not only in students' grades but also in their motivation to engage in reading activities. During the implementation of STAD, students actively participated in group discussions to enhance their understanding of the text. They focused on analyzing various aspects of the text, such as topic sentences, main ideas, details, inferences, synonyms/antonyms, and conclusions. This collaborative approach, supported by the teacher's class presentation, enabled students to develop effective reading strategies, particularly in identifying the main idea through skimming techniques. Furthermore, the introduction of team recognition in the STAD process significantly contributed to increased motivation among students. The element of competition was incorporated, motivating students to strive for higher scores and outperform other teams. This competitive atmosphere made the learning environment enjoyable and exciting. The individual quiz and individual development scoring stages further fostered a sense of competition among students. Each student's performance was evaluated individually, allowing them to track their progress and strive for personal improvement. This individual accountability within the team setting motivated students to actively engage with the reading material and strive for better comprehension. Overall, the implementation of STAD in the reading comprehension class demonstrated positive outcomes, including improved grades, increased motivation, and a fun and engaging learning environment.

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