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ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS AMONG SEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH THE 5W+1H QUESTIONING STRATEGY

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Abstract

The aims of this study was to increase students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts using the 5W+1H questioning strategy to address concerns identified in the classroom. This study focused on seventh-grade students, specifically those in class VII.2, which consisted of 34 individuals. The classroom action research (CAR) approach was used in this study. The data were collected using an observation checklist and tests. The researcher analyzed the data using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, as well as the observation checklist. Furthermore, the researcher assessed the test based on the mean score for each cycle in qualitative data. Based on qualitative data, this study found that the 5W+1H questing approach and learning process increased students' classroom reading behavior. The observation checklist showed that the student's performance improved between the first and second cycles. The quantitative data results also demonstrated an improvement in the students' reading comprehension mean scores between the first and second cycles. The study suggests that implementing the 5W+1H questioning strategy can significantly improve students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: Descriptive Text, Reading Comprehension, 5W+1H questioning strategy.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman membaca siswa terhadap teks deskriptif melalui penerapan strategi bertanya 5W+1H. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasarkan pada permasalahan yang ditemukan di dalam kelas terkait rendahnya pemahaman siswa terhadap teks bacaan. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VII.2 SMP yang berjumlah 34 orang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi dan tes. Data dianalisis dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Analisis kualitatif dilakukan melalui lembar observasi aktivitas siswa selama proses pembelajaran, sedangkan analisis kuantitatif dilakukan dengan menghitung nilai rata-rata tes pemahaman membaca pada setiap siklus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi bertanya 5W+1H dapat meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dalam proses membaca di kelas serta meningkatkan skor pemahaman membaca siswa. Peningkatan terlihat dari perbandingan hasil observasi dan nilai tes antara siklus I dan siklus II. Dengan demikian, penerapan strategi bertanya 5W+1H terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman membaca siswa terhadap teks deskriptif.

Kata kunci: Teks Deskriptif, Pemahaman Membaca, Strategi Bertanya 5W+1H

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is useful for language acquisition; it is one of the essential language skills that play a crucial role in academic success. It allows learners not only to acquire new information but also to develop critical thinking and language proficiency. Harmer [1] states that as long as students can comprehend the material to some extent, the more they read, the better their overall language skills become including vocabulary development, spelling, and writing fluency. Any educational system must prioritize the development of reading skills, which can be achieved with the use of efficient reading strategies by Ulker [2]. As long as children comprehend what they read, reading further improves their writing, spelling, and vocabulary [1]. The more they read, the more proficient they become. Furthermore, effective reading books can introduce new ideas, spark

conversation, excite imaginative reactions, and serve as the springboard for well-rounded, fascinating courses [1]. Nonetheless, learners frequently face difficulties in comprehending texts because of restricted vocabulary, insufficient strategy application, and inadequate reading practices by Putra & Suzanne [3].

Comprehending written text is a crucial ability in acquiring English. This skill not only supports the mastery of other materials but also becomes the basis for students' critical thinking processes regarding the information presented in the text. Reading instruction for primary school students should not only focus on decoding text, but also on developing their ability to comprehend, interpret, and express ideas clearly. Skills that are essential for both academic achievement and future professional success, Amaliya et al. [4]. According to Mardiyana Devanti & Amalia [5] Understanding that goes beyond the level of individual words is referred to as text comprehension. It describes a situation where readers understand the context of the text, can construct meaning from it, and understand the writers' intentions. Reading for general comprehension is, in its most evident definition, the capacity to understand and interpret information from a text correctly, Grabe & Stoller [6].

The ability to analyze descriptive literature is a basic curriculum requirement at the Junior High School (SMP) level, especially in Grade VII. The goal of descriptive writing is to portray a person, place, or object as vividly and correctly as possible. In order to assist readers visualize the subject, these texts highlight particular characteristics and use sensory details, Knapp & Watkins [7]. The goal is not just to describe, but also to create a vivid mental image for the reader. Understanding literature, particularly descriptive writings, is a fundamental skill that all seventh-grade students must learn. According to Terasne et al. [8], many students struggle to comprehend what they are reading, resulting in an inability to comprehend what they have read. This was also seen among grade VII.2 students at SMP 11 Tanjungpinang, where the researcher conducted the observation. The majority of VII.2 students displayed an adequate basic of English. However, when given descriptive

reading materials, just a few children were able to understand the content. The majority of students struggled to apply their knowledge to the context of the text, demonstrating low reading comprehension skills. It reveals that, despite possessing a wealth of knowledge, students were unable to retain crucial information, comprehend details, or grasp the text's overall meaning. It indicates that the children lacked reading comprehension, which should be corrected.

Students are still having difficulty answering standard questions and 5W+1H. This issue shows that students have not been able to retain important information, understand specifics, or understand the text's general meaning while possessing a wealth of knowledge. In order to assist students in comprehending the text in a methodical and comprehensive way, a learning methodology is necessary. The questioning strategy 5W + 1H is one that is thought to be useful in addressing this problem. Correct questioning style resolves readers' doubts by providing an explanation of the subject at hand. Questioning not only increases learners' understanding but also helps them to interact with the text, resulting in increased active participation and more engaging learning settings, Ting et al., [9].

A question is a technique used by the teacher to develop an interaction with pupils by asking some questions and getting feedback from them, Putri & Reflinda, [10]. These questions are helpful in helping students understand a text literally, identify content in the text, form opinions, and make their own predictions, Habib [11]. Halstead & McLaughlin [12], assert that one of the most crucial instruments for directing and enhancing student learning is the question. This might assist them in creating their own plans to enhance student's critical thinking skills. Students may become more engaged in the language learning process as a result of the questioning technique. Asking skills are phrases or inquiries that are used as prompts to get answers from students, Cotton [13]. A student's reading comprehension can be guided and focused by questions, which can also provide ideas, Mardiyana Devanti & Amalia [14]. For example, the Herringbone strategy, which involves asking 5W+1H questions to identify the main idea and

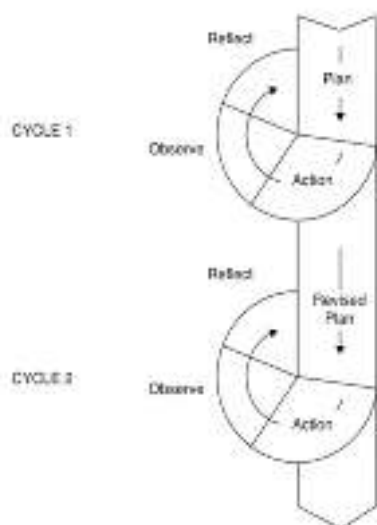
supporting details, has been well received by students and has been shown to improve comprehension levels, Indah & Ramadhana [15]. This is consistent with the findings of Azmi & Primana [16], who demonstrated the strategy's usefulness in boosting understanding, especially among students with intellectual limitations.

According to Susanto [17], the 5W+1H strategy can encourage students to explore information thoroughly and deeply through key questions that stimulate analytical thinking. Additionally, research by Rahmah & Indriani [18], indicates that using the 5W + 1H strategy in reading instruction can improve text comprehension skills and bolster students' memory of reading details. Phillips [19] found that teacher questioning, particularly in guided reading contexts, scaffolds students' comprehension on several levels. The purpose of adopting the 5W+1H questioning strategies in this classroom action research is to assist students get a better grasp of descriptive texts by activating their literal and inferential thinking skills. According to King [20], student-generated questioning fosters elaborative learning and deepens understanding by directing attention to important textual elements. This study focuses on how students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts is enhanced when the questioning approach 5W + 1H is used. The researcher conducted classroom action research to ascertain whether the method enhanced students' reading comprehension of descriptive literature. This study examined how students' reading comprehension skills for descriptive texts can be enhanced by using the 5W + 1H questioning strategy. As a result, the researcher used classroom action research as the most effective method to gather in depth information regarding the strategy.

2. METHODS

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design based on the cyclical model introduced by Kemmis et al., [21]. This research was conducted in two cycles, wherein each cycle applied four steps: planning, action, observation, and reflecting to improve students' reading comprehension through the questioning strategy 5W+1H.

Figure 1. Cyclical AR model based on Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) cited in Burns [22].



The study was conducted in Class VII.2 of SMP Negeri 11 Tanjungpinang, which consists of 34 seventh-grade students. The study was conducted in two cycles, each with four meetings: one for the post-test and three for the action's execution. Based on the assumption that the first cycle would provide an initial overview of the strategy's effectiveness, while the second cycle would serve as an improvement based on the reflection results from the first cycle. This research's instruments were reading comprehension assessments and observation checklists. The reading comprehension exams, which were given as pretests and posttests for each cycle, assessed students' ability to recognize specific information in descriptive texts using the questioning strategy 5W+1H: who, what, when, where, why, and how. The quantitative data generated by these tests were analyzed using descriptive statistics, particularly mean score comparison, to ascertain how much students had improved over time.

Meanwhile, qualitative data were collected using structured observation checklists that assessed students' involvement, participation, and capacity to respond to 5W+1H cues throughout the learning process. The checklist items were adapted from the model developed by Azmi & Primanan [16], who emphasized the value of structured WH questioning in enhancing cognitive participation and reading understanding, especially among students with learning challenges. In this study, Cycle I

served as a trial phase where students were first introduced to the strategy and applied it to short descriptive texts. Observations during this cycle indicated increased interest but uneven comprehension performance, especially in answering "why" and "how" questions. In response, Cycle II included more scaffold questioning, group work, and teacher modeling. As a result, students' comprehension and participation improved significantly in the second cycle, as reflected in both test scores and observation data.

The methods used in completing the study are written in this section including methods of analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with the aim of knowing the results of the application of Classroom Action Research (CAR) in improving the reading comprehension of students in class VII.2 SMPN 11 Tanjungpinang through the 5W+1H questioning strategy. The study was carried out in two cycles, following the four CAR stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The second cycle was implemented based on the evaluation results of the first cycle. An observation checklist was used during the observation stage to monitor student engagement, participation, and behavioral changes throughout the learning process. The findings are presented in two main sections: (1) a quantitative overview of students' reading scores from the pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2, and (2) a qualitative analysis of students' performance development, supported by relevant theories and previous studies. The first and second cycles will provide an explanation of the findings from the research in this chapter. The action in this study was split into two cycles, with cycle I reflection serving as the final cycle. The tests were carried out to detect and analyze each cycle. Two research cycles were conducted. Planning, acting, observing, and reflecting are the steps in each cycle.

Cycle I

The researcher found that reading comprehension was still a problem for most students on this issue in cycle I, especially when it comes to descriptive texts. It was

concluded from the reading comprehension test results that the majority of students still lacked the necessary reading comprehension skills. Out of 34 students, only 12 passed the minimum success criterion of 70, resulting in an average score of 64. This outcome demonstrated that the application of the 5W+1H questioning strategy in Cycle I did not yield satisfactory results, with the majority of students still struggling to understand the descriptive texts, particularly in accurately identifying key information such as "Why" and "How." Many students scored between 47 and 67, which further indicated limited comprehension. The results of the students' tests are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Result of students post-test in cycle I

Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage	KKM Score
Students scored < 70	12	35.29%	70
Students scored $\geq$ 70	22	64.70%	70
Highest Score	87		
Lowest Score	47		
Mean Score	64		

According to the reading test results in Table 1 above, 35.29% of students received a score of 70 or above, while 64.70% received a score of less than 70. This indicates that in cycle I, 12 out of 34 students received a score of ≥ 70 (passed), while 22 out of 34 students received a score of < 70 (failed). The reading comprehension test score had not yet attained the 70% success criteria. If 70% of the students receive a score of at least 70, the research cycle is deemed successful. This suggests that cycle I activity was unsuccessful and should proceed to cycle II. In the first meeting, 11 out of 34 students (32.35%) were active in the class, whereas 23 out of 34 students (67.64%) were passive, according to the observation checklist from cycle I. In contrast, 16 out of 34 students (47.05%) were passive in the class during the second and third meetings, while 18 out of 34 students (52.94%) were active. According to cycle I's average observation checklist results, 54.58% of students were passive in the class and 45.41% of students were engaged.

Observational data reinforced these findings. Students were only able to partially identify information related to "Who," "What," "When," and "Where," with their performance in answering "Why" and "How" questions being notably weak. The ability to respond correctly to these aspects of the text was marked as low, with only a small portion of students showing adequate understanding. Student participation was also relatively limited; although some interest and enthusiasm were observed, only a few students actively asked or responded to 5W+1H-based questions during the lesson. While the teacher applied the strategy consistently through activities like group discussion and guided questioning, it became clear that additional scaffolding and motivational techniques were needed to enhance students' engagement and comprehension. As a result, Cycle I was considered unsuccessful, and the findings prompted the researcher to revise the instructional approach in the next cycle. Planned improvements included the use of motivational tools such as game interaction, more scaffold questioning, group work, and teacher modeling clearer and more engaging explanations of text content, and structured opportunities for students to practice formulating and answering questions based on the 5W+1H framework. These adjustments aimed to address the shortcomings identified in Cycle I and improve overall student performance in Cycle II.

Cycle II

In this section, planned improvements included the use of motivational tools such as game interaction, more scaffold questioning, group work, and teacher modeling. As a result, students' comprehension and participation improved significantly in the second cycle, as reflected in both test scores and observation data. These adjustments aimed to address the shortcomings identified in Cycle I and improve overall student performance in Cycle II. The implementation of these revised strategies in Cycle II showed a significant improvement in both student engagement and reading comprehension outcomes. Based on the observation, the majority of students were able to correctly identify information related to "Who," "What," "When," and "Where" from

descriptive texts. There was also a notable increase in the students' ability to answer "Why" and "How" questions, though these areas still required further reinforcement. Furthermore, it was evident that the action's adjustment was made in an effort to raise the standard of the descriptive text teaching and learning process in the classroom. Thus, the research's outcome was improving.

Table 2. Result of students post-test in cycle II

Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage	KKM Score
Students scored < 70	5	14.71%	70
Students scored $\geq$ 70	29	85.29%	70
Highest Score	93		
Lowest Score	67		
Mean Score	82		

According to the reading test results in Table 2 above, 85.29% of students received a score of 70 or higher, while 14.71% of students received a score below 70. This indicates that 5 out of 34 students received a score below 70 in cycle II, while 29 out of 34 students received a score of 70 or higher. Thus, 75% of the students received ≥ 70 , which was the research's objective proportion. Students' reading comprehension ratings significantly improved between Cycle I and Cycle II, according to the comparison. A 50% increase in student accomplishment was indicated by the percentage of students who passed (scoring ≥ 70), which rose from 35.29% in Cycle I to 85.29% in Cycle II. This shows that the teaching strategy implemented in Cycle II was more effective and successfully met the success criteria of the research.

According to the cycle II observation checklist, 11 out of 34 students (32.35%) were passive at the first meeting, whereas 23 out of 34 students (67.64%) were engaged. In the second meeting, 27 out of 34 students (79.41%) were active and 7 students (20.58%) were passive. Meanwhile, in the third meeting, 30 out of 34 students (88.23%) were active and 4 students (11.76%) were passive. The average result of the observation checklist in cycle II shows that 78.42% of

students were active in the class, while 21.57% were passive.

The acting stage during the implementation of the 5W+1H questioning strategy in cycle 2 The reading comprehension test results confirmed these improvements, with 28 out of 34 students achieving scores above the minimum success criterion of 70 and the class average rising to 80. These findings suggest that the revised instructional approach was effective in helping students better understand descriptive texts through the questioning strategy 5W+1H. It is clear from the description that cycle 2 of this study successfully met the success criteria. Since this research was carried out satisfactorily, the researcher decided to halt the investigation till cycle two.

In response to these results, Cycle II incorporated several strategic improvements, including the use of motivational tools such as game interactions, enhanced scaffolding through group work, and teacher modeling. These adjustments aimed to address the shortcomings identified in Cycle I and improve overall student performance. The results were notable: the average score increased to 82, with 29 students surpassing the minimum success criterion. Students exhibited higher levels of enthusiasm and interaction, actively engaging in group discussions and confidently addressing 5W+1H questions. During the reading phase, some students even read aloud to themselves, signaling deeper engagement. The discussion sessions were notably more dynamic, with students working collaboratively and purposefully to gain points through meaningful contributions. Supporting Khomariyah [23], who found that comprehension increased significantly after two rounds of questioning-based instruction. Mardiyana Devanti & Amalia [5] the findings revealed that the Questioning Strategy effectively improved students' reading comprehension and encouraged greater participation in learning activities. It proved to be a successful method to overcome students' difficulties in understanding reading texts. Another study found that using a questioning technique improved pupils' reading comprehension. In three different groups teacher-generated questions, student-generated questions, and teacher-student-generated questions by El-Koumy [24]

examined the efficacy of questioning techniques. The findings indicated that the groups created by teachers and students had the highest scores compared to the other groups. Irawati [25], explored the implementation of questioning strategy in enhancing students' reading comprehension. The research showed that questioning strategy, integrated with student-generated questions during reading, improved reading comprehension scores and students' engagement. This finding supports the present research, which applies the 5W+1H questioning strategy to help junior high school students better understand descriptive texts. The significant improvements observed in Cycle II suggest that this strategy, particularly when combined with motivational and collaborative techniques, can be a valuable tool in language education. Future research could explore the application of this strategy across different text genres and educational contexts to further validate its efficacy.

4. CONCLUSION

According to this study, applying the 5W+1H questioning strategy to Class VII.2 at SMP Negeri 11 Tanjungpinang during the 2024–2025 academic year greatly improves students' reading comprehension of descriptive literature. The strategy facilitated students in identifying key textual elements and understanding overall structure, while also fostering higher-order thinking through "Why" and "How" questions. Furthermore, the integration of interactive methods such as educational games, group discussions, and teacher modeling during Cycle II contributed to improved student motivation, engagement, and reading confidence. These findings reinforce the effectiveness of inquiry-based approaches in language learning and highlight the pedagogical value of structured questioning to support active comprehension and critical literacy development.

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