Point-Counterpoint Strategy for Better Reading Comprehension on EFL Junior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Point-Counterpoint is one of the strategies that can be used to stimulate students and make them free in reading. This study is conducted to reveal the significant difference in reading ability under Point-Counterpoint strategy and conventional technique in class seven students at SMP Negeri 1 Batauga, South Buton regency. The design of this study was a quasi-experimental method. The sample was taken using cluster sampling, in which took class VII-F was selected as an experimental group and class VII-E was a control group. The instruments used were a pretest and a posttest. The results revealed that the average score for the pretest in the experimental group was 47.83, while the average score in the control group was 34.77. The average score for the posttest in the experimental group was 71.13, while it was 58.62 in the control group. Those scores indicated that the students had good reading ability in the experimental group, while the students in the control group had moderate comprehension in reading. The requirement testing outcome informed that the data had a normal distribution and were homogeneous. The hypothesis testing indicated that the t_{count} was 4.489 and the significant score was 0.000. Both results meant that the Point-Counterpoint strategy was significantly different from a conventional method toward students' reading comprehension.

ABSTRAK

Point-Counterpoin adalah salah satu strategy yang dapat digunakan untuk merangsang siswa dan membuat mereka merasa bebas dalam membaca. Studi ini dilakukan untuk mengungkapkan apakah pemahaman membaca siswa antara strategi Point-Counterpoint dan metode konvensional berbeda secara signifikan di kelas tujuh SMP Negeri 1 Batauga. Desain penelitian ini menggunakan kuasi eksperimen. Sampel diambil menggunakan Teknik sampling kelompok, di mana kelas VII-F sebagai kelas eksperimental dan kelas VII-E sebagai kelas kontrol. Instrumen menggunakan tes awal dan tes akhir. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa nilai rerata tes awal di kelas eksperimen adalah 47,83, sedangkan nilai rerata di kelas control adalah 34,77. Nilai rerata tes akhir di kelas eksperimen adalah 71,13, sedangkan di kelas control sebesar 58,62. Nilai rerata tersebut menunjukkan bahwa siswa memiliki pemahaman membaca yang baik untuk kelas eksperimen,

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dan pemahaman membaca yang sedang untuk kelas kontrol. Setelah dilakukan uji prasyarat, data terbukti normal dan homogen. Uji hipotesis menunjukkan bahwa nilai t_{hitung} sebesar 4,489 and nilai signifikansi sebesar 0,000. Kedua hasil tersebut berarti bahwa ada perbedaan yang signifikan dari strategi Point-Counterpoint dan metode konvesnional pada pemahaman membaca siswa.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the factors supporting the success of development because the quality of a nation can be assessed by the quality of its human resources and it is closely related to education. Pristiwanti *et al.* (2022) state that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a pleasant learning and learning atmosphere so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves and society. It relates to how people can enter the workforce for the provision of education they have taken. Alpian *et al.* (2019) agree that education can improve careers and jobs, in which with education people can gain the skills needed in the world of work and assist in realizing career development. Expertise is in-depth knowledge of a particular field that can open up good career opportunities for the future. So that with proper and good education it can help people to make dreams come true. Those facts show that education is an investment for the community to be able to get capital in the future, because competition will get tougher as globalization enters the era where people from other countries can find work in Indonesia, and this shows that competitors are not only from the Indonesian people themselves but also from citizens of other countries.

During the learning process, teachers must have the ability to teach the subject to students with certain learning methods so that the material taught can be easily absorbed by students. Mukrimaa (2014) adds that every teacher is required to master various methods in order to process effective, efficient, enjoyable learning, so as to achieve the targeted learning objectives. The learning method is the whole procedure taken by the teacher and students that allows or gives opportunities to students to engage in studying action to obtain certain goals. Given the importance of learning methods, a teacher is required to choose and use good learning methods. This is useful for increasing student interest in these subjects. Monotonous learning methods will make students less interested in receiving teaching material. One part of the curriculum is that teachers must be able to develop English learning. As an international language, English must be given at the formal education level. One aspect of English that must be fulfilled by students is reading, since reading skill is an aspect of language skills that is productive and useful to support other language skills. Reading skill is very important to functioning in today's society. Through reading, students can explore the world.

Reading is a purposeful activity. A person can read to learn new things or to confirm what they already know. Reading can also be done for pleasure or to improve someone's proficiency of the language being read. Reading has an effect on our attitudes, beliefs, requirements, morality, judgments, and fashionable behavior; it shapes our questioning and moves. Reading aims to link the thoughts inside the text to what you have got already regarded. Several advantages are obtained from reading for kids and other individuals, for instance providing new knowledge, information, and even a fresh idea for writing things down (Ibhar, 2022). To connect the ideas, the reader must first comprehend the subject. Grabe and Stoller (2013) explain that reading serves four primary functions:

a. Searching of knowledge and skimming.
b. Learning from texts.
c. Methods of integrating data, composing, and critiquing texts.
d. General understanding.

Regardless of how important reading comprehension are, the reality is different. There are still many students who cannot read well enough to understand. According to the interview results with English teachers on students of SMP Negeri 1 Batauga, it was known that students feel difficult to understanding the text, specifically in narrative text. The researcher identified the causes of the low reading comprehension of students on seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Batauga are students are not used to reading text and the less vocabulary mastery which makes students feel difficulty to understand the content of the reading. In addition, teacher teaching methods that are considered ineffective and monotonous make students bored and passive. The worst situation is students who have no interest in learning English do activities outside of learning English.

The performance of the students' reading comprehension can also be affected by the external variables. One example of an external variable is the effect of the teacher, which can refer to any characteristics associated with the instructor. The ability of students to comprehend what they read can be impacted, for instance, by the instructional strategies and resources used, the subject matter of reading lessons, and the extent to which students believe they will be able to apply what they have learned in their everyday lives (Taladngoen et al., 2020). Related to teaching strategy, Point-Counterpoint strategy is usefull for enhancing students' comprehension of what they read. One reason for choosing the method is that it is a great technique for stimulating the students in reading. This method can make students feel free in reading because this method focuses on students. The more freely and often students get used to reading, gradually the level of student comprehension in reading will increase. Bruner (2011) explains that the Point-Counterpoint strategy is to give people who read the opportunity to think about and explore a number of different ways that a text or reading might be interpreted. Rogers (1990) emphasizes that Point-Counterpoint strategy is designed to aid students acquire a toolbox of interpretation startegies that may be used with challenging short stories. It implies that as a result, it stimulates students' interpretive skills for themselves rather of constantly submitting to the viewpoint or interpreting teachers, books, or others. This is in contrast to the traditional approach, in which students always default to these sources for their interpretations.

There are some steps used for using the Point-Counterpoint strategy as explained by Berdiati (2010) as follows:

a. The teacher opens the lesson with an interesting puzzle;

b. The teacher formulates the learning objectives or competencies that want to be achieved;
c. The teacher determines the actual topic which is interesting to be discussed;
d. The teacher makes some group students;
e. The teacher informs that during the learning process the teacher carries out the assessment process both in groups and individual;
f. The teacher asks to draw up an argument following the ideas and agreements;
g. After the time limit is enough, the teacher leads the discussion in the plenary. Each group presents its argument. Other groups give a response and each group maintains their argument by expressing logical reasons;
h. When a lesson is over, the teacher and the class reach a conclusion as the results of the discussion; and
i. The teacher assigns each student to summarize the results of the discussion in the workbook.

Students will benefit from the use of the strategy in the following ways: students will be exposed to a variety of interpretations; students will be asked to compare their thoughts with those of other students; students will think about and evaluate their own interpretations and those of others; and students will be tasked with providing an interpretation of a thing on their own rather than relying on the interpretation provided by the teacher.

Research has been conducted on the Point-Counterpoint strategy to reveal its benefit in improving reading comprehension. The result finds that it is effective to improve reading comprehension (Wastuti, 2005), give a significant effect on reading comprehension improvement (Nurlaili, 2013), and give a beneficial effect to improve reading achievement (Alfina, 2013). In other English skills, Faharuddin *et al.* (2021) find that the Point-Counterpoint strategy effectively improve writing performance. In speaking ability, Rambe & Amri (2019) reveal that through the Point-Counterpoint strategy, a teacher can figure out the students' problems, for instance lack of prior knowledge of the subject matter, a lack of willingness to speak, an inability to trust his/her own abilities, and a fear of making errors. Suwadi (2016) concludes his research by explaining that the Point-Counterpoint strategy can improve students' critical power and also their learning outcome in Civics Education subject. This research is also focused on the use of Point-Counterpoint strategy in learning reading comprehension. Therefore, this research is conducted to find out whether there is a significant difference between students who are taught using Point-Counterpoint strategy and those who are not, in addition to know whether the stragegy also improve students' reading comprehension.

METHOD

This research used a quasi-experimental method. It meant there were two groups of students, in which one group was taught using the Point-Counterpoint strategy and another group was taught using a conventional method that the English teacher usually used. Variables used in this research was the dependent variable which was reading comprehension and the independent variable which was a Point-Counterpoint strategy. This research was located at SMP Negeri 1 Batauga, South Buton regency. The population was grade seventh students with a total number were 156 students distributed into six classes. In taking the research sample, the researchers applied a purposive cluster sampling technique. It means two classes that the students had low of reading comprehension was picked as the samples of this

research. Therefore, class VII-F containing 24 students was selected as an experimental group and class VII-E containing 26 students was a control group.

The pretest and posttest with a treatment applied between them was utilized as the instrument of this study. The pretest was held to investigate students' reading comprehension before the treatment was applied, while the posttest was used after the treatment was applied. The test itself was adapted from English Comprehension for Junior High School developed by Nusantara (2018). It contained 30 multiple-choice items that were given to the students to answer. Data obtained were analyzed using four kinds of testing: descriptive statistics, requirement, inferential statistics, and effect size statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to find out the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and variance of each variable. Normality and homogeneity tests were conducted as the requirement testing. It aimed to figure out whether the data had a normal distribution and were homogeneous. They were measured by comparing the probability value to 0.05. The data were normal and homogeneous if the value was more than 0.05. Requirement testing itself was done to decide whether the inferential statistics used parametric or nonparametric statistics. The inferential statistics was applied to find out whether there was a significant difference in reading comprehension between those two groups of samples. All the data were analysed using SPSS version 21.0. Lastly, the effect size was conducted to know whether the Point-Counterpoint was effective to improve reading comprehension or not. It applied Cohen's d statistics. Cohen *et al.* (2018) categorized the level of effect size, which was the poor effect (0-0.20), modest effect (0.21-0.50), moderate effect (0.51-1.00), and strong effect (>1.00).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The researchers administer a pretest both in experimental and control class to obtain the score of reading comprehension before the treatment is done. Furthermore, those data are analyzed to find out the mean score of both group, so that the level of their reading comprehension is revealed. The result of the descriptive statistics test as is presented below:

Table 1: Result of Descriptive Testing in Pretest.

Data	Experimental Group	Control Group
Mean	47.83	34.77
Median	50.00	33.00
Mode	60.00	30.00
Standard Deviation	13.84	9.24
Variance	191.45	84.31
Range	50.00	33.00
Lowest Score	23.00	23.00
Highest Score	73.00	56.00

Table 1 above shows that the average score in the experimental group is superior to the control group. It is plain to observe that the overall average score for the experimental group is 47.83. While this is going on, the average score in the control group is 34.77. Besides, both groups obtain the same lowest score, but different the highest scores in which the experimental group gets a higher score than the control group. Even though the experimental

group performs better than the control group, both groups have the same reading comprehension level. The data above are then distributed into the scoring category to find out the frequency distribution of each category.
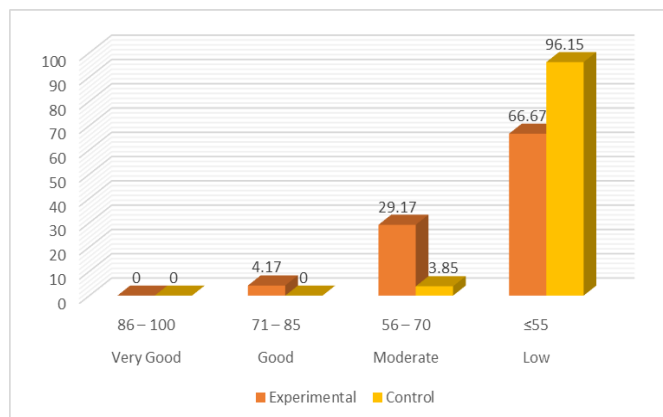

Figure 1: Percentage Score Comparison in Pretest.

Figure 1 above shows the comparison of percentage scores for the pretest in both groups. It is seen that both groups have the same percentage score in the very good category. The biggest range is in a low category, in which the experimental group obtains 66.67% and the control group obtains 96.15%. From those data, it can be concluded that both groups have low reading comprehension. More specifically, the control group has lower reading comprehension than the experimental group.

The descriptive data for the post-test in the experimental and control groups are presented in the following table:

Table 2: Result of Descriptive Testing in Posttest.

Data	Experimental Group	Control Group
Mean	71.13	58.62
Median	73.00	58.00
Mode	73.00	53.00
Standard Deviation	11.28	8.31
Variance	127.25	69.05
Range	40.00	27.00
Lowest Score	50.00	46.00
Highest Score	90.00	73.00

Table 2 above indicates that the average score in the experimental group is still better than the control group. It is seen that the average score in the experimental group is 71.13. Meanwhile, the average score in the control group is 58.62. In addition, the lowest and the highest score in the experimental group are higher than in the control group. The data above are then distributed into the scoring category to find out the frequency distribution of each

category. The figure below presents the comparison of percentage scores in the experimental and the control group for the posttest.
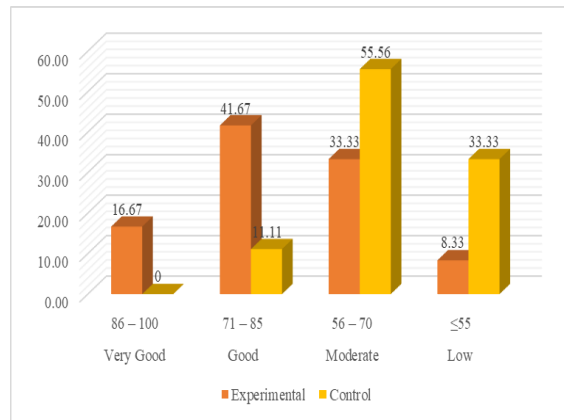

Figure 2: Comparison of Percentage Score in Posttest.

Figure 2 above shows that the top percentage in the experimental group is in a good category which obtains 41.67%. Meanwhile, the moderate category gets the top percentage in the control group. Therefore, it implies that the students in the experimental group have good reading ability, while those who are in the control group have moderate reading comprehension.

The next step is doing the requirement test. There are a normality test and a homogeneity test applied for this stage. The result of each test is presented as follows.

1) *Normality Test*

It is applied to find out whether the data has a normal distribution. The criteria for determining the normal data is if the significance value is higher than α that is 0.05. The result of the normality test for the experimental and control group is displayed in the table below:

Table 3: Normality Test Result.

Group of Data	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Stat.	df	Sig.
Pretest_Experimental	.970	24	.656
Posttest_Experimental	.949	24	.253
Pretest_Control	.948	24	.243
Posttest_Control	.929	24	.093

From the table above, the data that must be interpreted are from the Shapiro-Wilk test, since the number of the sample is less than 50. It can be seen that the significant value for the pretest in the experimental group is 0.656, it is 0.253 for the post-test in the experimental group, it is 0.243 for the pretest in the control group, and it is 0.93 for the post-test in the control group. Those results exceed the value of α which is 0.05. Thus, they indicate that the acquired data are normally distributed.

2) *Homogeneity Test*

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It is applied to find out whether the distribution of the data is homogeneous or not. The criteria for determining the data homogeneity is if the significance value is higher than 0.05. The result of the homogeneity test for both groups acquired from the statistical testing reveals that the significant score is 0.173 which explains that the significant value is higher than α. Therefore, it can be said that the data gained from the post-test are homogeneous. Since the data had a normal distribution and were homogeneous, the hypothesis testing is done using a parametric statistic which is an Independent Sample T-Test.

The null hypothesis stated is the Point-Counterpoint strategy is not significantly different to the conventional method on students' reading comprehension (H_o). While the alternative hypothesis is the Point-Counterpoint strategy is significantly different to the conventional method on students' reading comprehension (H_a). This hypothesis test is utilized to prove which hypothesis is accepted and rejected. If the significance (2-tailed) value is fewer than 0.05, then H_a is received and H_o is eliminated. Since the scores of students' reading comprehension, those obtained from the test, were normally distributed and homogeneous, the hypothesis test uses an Independent Sample T-Test from the parametric statistics. The output of the hypothesis is presented in the following table:

Table 4: Result of Independent Sample T-Test.

Item	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Reading Comprehension	4.489	48	.000

The table above shows the result of the Independent Sample T-Test for the result of the post-test in both groups. From the result, it can be looked that the t_{count} score is 4.489. It is consulted to the value of t_{table} for 50 samples, that is 2.008. In addition, the value of significance (2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Since the value of t_{count} is greater than the t_{table} and the significance (2-tailed) is fewer than 0.05, it reveals that the use of Point-Counterpoint strategy is significantly different with the use of conventional method on students' reading comprehension. The effect size is then applied to look for the level of effectiveness of the Point-Counterpoint strategy on reading comprehension improvement in grade-seventh students at SMP Negeri 1 Batauga. This test applies Cohen's d analysis. The effect size obtained from this research is 1.26 which is categorized as a high effect. It means the use of Point-Counterpoint strategy is highly effective to raise reading comprehension in seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Batauga.

The outcome of this investigation is backed by research conducted by Septia *et al.* (2022) point strategy has a significant influence on escalate students' reading comprehension. It may happen because of the strategy presents a freedom to the students during the learing process. In writing skill, Abdullah *et al.* (2021) found that Point-Counterpoint strategy did not only improve the writing ability, but also made the students interested and active during the learning process. As explained by Duha (2021) that Point-Counterpoint strategy is a strategy that can activate students and provides freedom to the students to argue or to give ideas from emerging problems or is purposely brought up in learning following the existing rules. Applying the strategy can get students involved in the studying activities and be more critical of the existing problems so that their learning outcomes become better.

CONCLUSION

When compared to the traditional method, the Point-Counterpoint strategy is superior in terms of its ability to enhance students' reading ability. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference of reading comprehension on the seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Batauga between those who are taught using Point-Counterpoint strategy and those who are not. Besides, the strategy also upgrade the level reading comprehension. This conclusion can be drawn as a direct consequence of the findings presented in the preceding discussion. It is possible to demonstrate this by contrasting the average scores on the post-test obtained by the experimental group with those of the control group. According to the collected data, the students in the experimental group had a significantly greater level of reading comprehension compared to those in the control group. In addition, the result of testing the hypothesis reveals that the use of Point-Counterpoint strategy has a significant difference than conventional method on students' reading ability. Those students who are taught using the Point-Counterpoint strategy have a significantly higher overall score. In addition, the effect size study carried out using Cohen's D test demonstrates that the strategy has a significant impact on the students' ability to comprehend what they are reading. It indicates that the method is more successful in enhancing ability to comprehend what they are reading. As the implication of this research, the researchers invite the English teacher to apply this strategy in teaching reading comprehension, since this research proves that the Point-Counterpoint strategy activates and motivates students in learning reading, in which they support to the improvement of reading comprehension.

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