

## PARAPHRASING STRATEGY IN ENHANCING THE STUDENT'S READING COMPREHENSION

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### Abstract

*The objective of this study is to identify the implementation of the paraphrasing strategy for the students at Mts Ummul Mukminin Makassar in teaching reading comprehension and the interest in using that strategy in the teaching and learning process. 30 students for the experimental group and 30 students for the control group were involved in the subject. The resources consisted of a test for reading comprehension and a questioner. The result showed that paraphrasing strategy substantially improves the reading comprehension of the students ( $.000 < .05$ ). The questionnaire was given to the students covered the statement about whether or not the students are interested in the use of paraphrasing strategy. The questionnaire result shows that the use of paraphrasing strategy in teaching reading improves their interest in reading comprehension. In other words, the students have high interest to the use of paraphrasing strategy in learning reading. The interest of the students was classified in high category for experimental community, which is shown by the mean interest of students 71.87. Finally, the paraphrasing technique leads to enhancing the achievement of reading comprehension and students are involved in using the strategy in the course of teaching and learning.*

**Key words:** Paraphrasing, strategy, reading comprehension

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat implementasi strategi paraphrase dalam meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa Mts ummul Mukminin Makassar, serta ketertarikannya dalam menggunakan strategi ini dalam proses belajar mengajar. Metode yang digunakan adalah quasi experimental. subjek penelitian terdiri dari 30 siswa untuk kelas percobaan dan 30 siswa untuk kelas control. Instrument terdiri dari tes pemahaman membaca dan kuisisioner. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa strategi paraprasesecara signifikan meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa hal ini dibuktikan oleh nilai t-test dari strategi paraphrase 0.00 dan mengindikasikan lebih rendah dari t-table (nilai alpha) pada level signifikan 0.05 ( $.000 < 0.5$ ). hasil dari kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan paraphrasing meningkatkan ketertarikan siswa dalam pelajaran membaca. Ketertarikan siswa berada pada kategori tinggi untuk group eksperimen yang dibuktikan dengan tugas rata – rata ketertarikan siswa 71.87. Akhirnya strategi parapraser berkontribusi dalam meningkatkan prestasi pemahaman membaca siswa dan meningkatkan ketertarikan siswa dalam membaca text bahasa inggris.*

**Kata Kunci:** Strategi, Paraphrase, Pemahaman membaca.

## 1. Introduction

In their school curriculum, most countries in the world put English as a significant subject. In Indonesia, English is a compulsory subject in every school, from junior high school to university, with the primary objective being to improve oral and written communication skills. The success of their thesis will depend on the success of their study as one of the skills has become a very important factor for good academic purposes. For most Indonesian students, reading comprehension is still an issue (Hamra & Syatriana (2012). Among other factors, the problem is generated by different factors: students lack English knowledge, global knowledge, and strategies for reading. The students of Mts. Pondok Pesantren Ummul Mukminin, Makassar, also have this phenomenon. The preliminary survey shows that, based on the teacher's teaching approach, the English achievement of the students is below the minimum target criteria (75) of the English curriculum. Teachers should be able to develop a new approach to address the issue of learning in this situation.

Paraphrasing is one of the appropriate methods for improving the achievement of reading comprehension by students. The paraphrasing strategy helps students learn to read and recall information in their own words. To define key points, students work with brief passages and then reword them. This approach builds the confidence of learners in their ability to correctly recall information and state the meaning of new words or phrases. In relation to the paraphrasing technique, previous studies have been performed. Achmad (2011) notes that the technique of paraphrasing increases the vocabulary, reading and writing capacity of students by paraphrasing the reading passage, and they are interested in using the strategy; while it is challenging to do paraphrasing exercises, they know that they are very useful for understanding. Lee (2003) from the University of Kansas conducted a study with the title: "The effect of instruction on reading fluency and comprehension in the paraphrasing strategy" with the conclusion that a positive effect was observed after the instruction on understanding and reading rate. Hadijah (2009) conducted a study entitled "Teaching writing by using SMA Wahyu Makassar students' paraphrasing reading passage technique to the second year students with the conclusion that the use of paraphrasing reading passage is interesting and relevant to enhance students' writing skills.

The present study explored the use of paraphrasing or rephrasing strategy in teaching reading comprehension, and the research questions are as follows: 1. Does paraphrasing strategy improve the students' reading comprehension achievement? 2. Are the students interested in studying reading by using paraphrasing strategy The outcome of this research is expected to be a piece of useful references toward learning and teaching process in improving the students' reading comprehension achievement. Richards and Schmidt (2002, p.293) argue that listening, speaking, reading, and writing are generally called language skills. Speaking and writing are called the active/productive skills and reading and listening are the passive/receptive skills. Harmer (2003) in *The Practice of English Language Testing* states that "Reading is an exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain.". Patel and Jain (2008, p.113) state that reading is understanding the meaning of printed words i.e. written symbols. Patel and Jain (2008, p. 114) classifies that reading is form of experience. Reading brings us in contact with the minds of great authors, with the written account of their experiences. A simple conclusion can be presented that reading is an act of getting information through the eyes and the brain of the readers. Readers before reading should realize the purpose that can lead them to get meaning. Byrne (1998, p.9) argues that determining the reading purpose before reading will help readers obtain comprehension: perceptive, selective, interactive and extensive.

Extensive reading is intended for long texts, usually for fluency and pleasure to get global understanding (Grellet, 1983, p 2). Nunan (2003, p.72) states that extensive reading is reading for longer texts) without focus on classroom exercises for comprehension skills. Therefore, extensive reading involves reading different texts (journal articles, reports, long essays, short stories, and textbooks. Carrel and Carson (1997) in Richards and Renandya (2002, p.295) state that extensive

reading is generally involves quick reading of large quantities for general knowledge. Day and Bamford (1998), Nation (1997) in Richards and Renandya (2002, p.298) mention a number of advantages of extensive reading, among others: enhancing language learning in the areas of spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and text structure; increasing knowledge of the world; improving reading and writing skill. Richard and Schmidt (2002, p. 418; Harmer, 1991, p. 70) point out that principles in teaching are beliefs and theories that teachers use concerning effective approaches to teaching and learning as the basis for teaching decision-making.

Snow and Chair (2002, p.11) state that reading comprehension as a process of constructing meaning at once through the interaction and involvement of the written language. Lems, Miller and Soro (2010) state that in general, reading comprehension is the ability to acquire meaning from a written text. That idea gives the sense that a reader tries to comprehend the meaning what he/she has read. Cooper (1987) states that comprehension is a process in which the reader may construct meaning by interacting with the text. In reading comprehension, a reader should have knowledge about understanding the reading passage. In paraphrasing a passage, paraphraser first read the passage and try to find the main idea and some details of the texts. They have to be selective in altering the words and sentences, and they are not necessary to paraphrase the entire passage instead of choosing and summarizing the material that helps them to make a point for their papers, and think of their own words. Larson (2004, p. 5) presents two ways of paraphrasing: (1) literal paraphrase allows paraphraser to substitute the original words of each sentences with synonyms as the first step in drafting paraphrasing. Since paraphrasing by sentences the overall structure may be awkward, and it may result greater risk of plagiarism. To avoid this the paraphraser may use free paraphrasing for all of the final results. In this case, paraphraser can use synonym and rearrange the sentences structure.

This study is based on team based-learning (Hamra &Haryanto, 2015) in which the students should read the instructional reading materials first at home (outside of the classroom). While reading they are to prepare reading notes by finding/underlining the main ideas, some details, and to answer comprehension questions. When the students come to the class they have to meet their groups and discuss the instructional materials. Each group has to submit the best work from the group as a weekly submission. The last procedure is one group is to present the work in front of the class. The teacher is to control the group work and the class presentation.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1.Design**

The method used in this study was quasi-experimental with one experimental group, 30 students and one control group, 30 students. The population was the second graders of MTS Ummul Mukminin, and the subject was chosen through cluster sampling technique.

### **2.2. Variables**

The use of paraphrasing strategy is independent variable, and the reading comprehension achievement is dependent variable. The students' interest to the use of the reading strategy is extraneous variable, not relating to the purpose of the study. The students' reading comprehension achievement is the improvement of the students' reading comprehension after treating with paraphrasing strategy. Paraphrasing strategy is a strategy used to improve the students reading comprehension achievement by restatement of the original words, word order, and grammar without changing the meaning.

### **2.3.Procedure**

Based on the previous descriptions about paraphrasing strategy, the present study implemented three techniques in paraphrasing texts or sentences in the teaching and learning process: (1) the first strategy uses different words with the same meaning, for example: It is very difficult to choose a suitable place to study mathematics becomes: It is very *hard* to *select an appropriate* place to *learn*

mathematics. (2) the second strategy changes the word order. If the sentence consists of two or more clauses, alter the order of the clauses, and if the sentence has an adjective and noun, change the adjective into the relative clause, for example: Speaking English is a challenging task for me becomes: Speaking English is a task which is challenging for me. (3) the third strategy uses different grammar. Change the words in the original sentence into different parts of speech, change the order of the words and some other words. Active sentence can be changed into passive one or passive into active sentences, for example: You should learn English becomes: English should be learned.

#### 2.4. Collecting data

A reading test with 25 multiple choice items was administered to see the reading comprehension achievement and a questionnaire with 20 items was administered to explore the information about the students' interest to the use of paraphrasing strategy. The collected data, reading comprehension used percentage score and it was analyzed by using SPSS version 20 (Santoso, 2011) to test the hypothesis, and the questionnaire used percentage analysis.

#### 2.5. Teaching treatment

Treatment applying paraphrasing strategy on the experimental group was conducted for eight times or two months with the following procedures:

- The teacher introduced paraphrasing strategy and explained the procedures in the teaching and learning process.
- The class was divided into groups, 5 students for each group.
- Students read the texts individually to find the main ideas and some details.
- Students discuss the text in group by checking the difficult words of the passage, finding the main idea and some details, and answering the comprehension questions.
- Students paraphrase the sentences or passage by applying the three strategies described previously
- In group presentation, students presented result of the group activity in front of the class.

The control group treated without using paraphrasing strategy, the teaching steps are the same, but there is no paraphrasing activity. Posttest was administered to all groups and reading interest questionnaire (20 items) to the control group. To analyze the test result, the researcher used percentage analysis. The use of percentage analysis aimed to know the percentage score of reading comprehension test, and t-test was used to test the null hypothesis through SPSS program. This study used Likert like scale survey to see the interest of the students to the use of paraphrasing strategy (Gay, et al. 2006, p. 130). The interest is ranged from very high (85-100), high, (69-84) moderate (52-68), low (35-51), and very low (0<35).

### 3. Findings and Discussion

#### 3.1. Students' reading comprehension in the pretest of the control and experimental groups.

Before conducting treatment using paraphrasing strategy, a pretest was conducted for control group and experimental group.

Table 1 The frequency and percentage score of students' reading comprehension in the pretest of the control and experimental groups.

Evaluation	Range of score	Control group		Experimental group	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	96-100	0	0	0	0
Very good	86-95	0	0	0	0
Good	76-85	6	20%	6	20%
Fairly Good	66-75	11	36,7%	14	46,7%
Fairly	56-65	5	16,7%	4	13,3%
Poor	36-55	5	16,7%	4	13,3%
Very Poor	0-35	3	10 %	2	6,7%

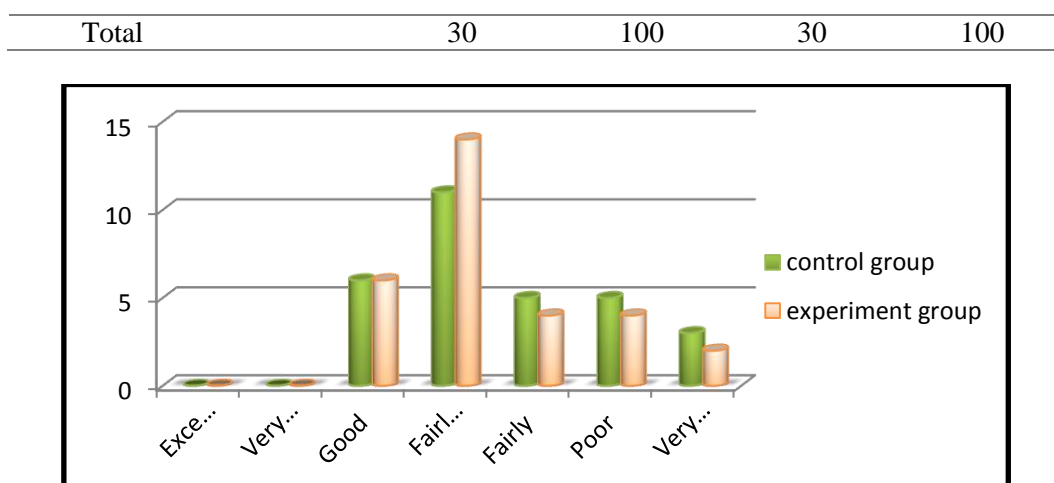


Chart 1. The frequency and percentage score of students reading comprehension in the pretest of control group and experimental group.

Table 1 and chart 1 show that in the control group, there are 3 students (10 %) classified as very poor category, 5 students (16,7 %) are poor and fairly, 11 students (36,7 %) are fairly good, 6 students (20 %) are good, and no one students are in the category of very good and excellent. Besides that, the in experimental group, there are 2 students (6,7 %) are very poor, 4 students (13,3%) are poor and fairly, 14 students (46,7 %) are fairly good, 6 students (20 %) are good and no one students are very good and excellent. Based on the presented data before treating the students, most of the students are in fairly and good classification, and means the students are ready to apply the paraphrasing strategy.

### 3.2. Percentage score of students' reading comprehension for the posttest of control group and experimental group.

After treatment of paraphrasing strategy, a posttest of reading comprehension was administered for control and experimental groups.

Table 2. The frequency and percentage of students reading comprehension on posttest of control group and experimental group.

Evaluation	Range of score	Control group		Experimental group	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	96-100	0	0	4	13,3%
Very good	86-95	3	10 %	3	10%
Good	76-85	8	26,7%	10	33,3%
Fairly Good	66-75	9	30 %	9	30%
Fairly	56-65	7	23,3%	2	6,7%
Poor	36-55	3	10,7%	2	6,7%
Very Poor	0-35	0	0	0	0
Total		30	100	30	100



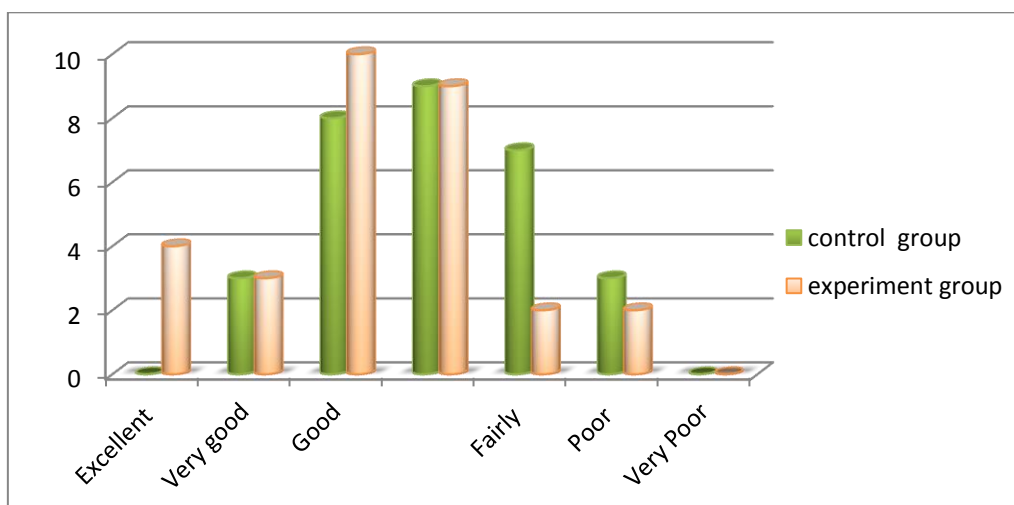


Chart 2. The frequency and percentage of students reading comprehension on posttest of control group and experimental group.

Table 2 and the chart 2 show that in the control group, no students are classified as very poor category, 3 students (10,7 %) are poor, 7 students (23,3 %)are fairly, 9 students (30 %) are fairly good, 8 students (26,7 %) are good, 3 students are very good and no one students are excellent. Besides that, in experimental group, no one students are very poor, 2 students (6,7%) are poor and fairly category, 9 students (30 %) are fairly good, 10 students (33,3 %)are good, 3 students (10 %) are very good, and 4 students (13,3%) are excellent. Based on the presented data, some students in the experimental group are in excellent classification and many students are in good classification, and these results surpassed the scores of control group. The paraphrasing strategy improves the reading comprehension of the students in general.

### 3.3. The mean score and standard deviation of the student's pretest and posttest.

The mean score and standard deviation of the pretest and posttest of the control group and experimental group:

Table 3 The students' reading comprehension in the pretest and posttest

Variabel	Group	Mean	Standar deviation	Mean difference
Pretest	Control	62.26	12.83	2.53
	Experiment	64.80	16.78	2.53
Posttest	Control	70.06	10..29	6.93
	Experiment	77.00	11.89	6.93

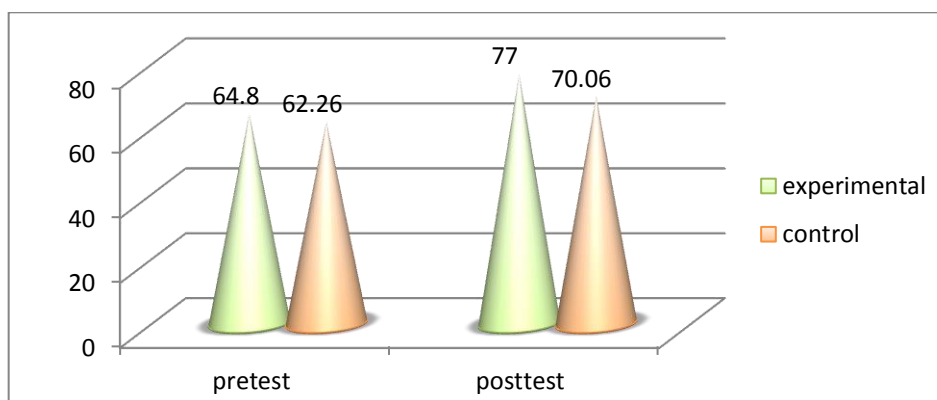


Chart 3 the students' reading comprehension in the pretest and posttest

Table 3 and chart 3 show that in the pretest the mean score of the experimental group and the control group are almost same reading achievement before giving the treatment (64.80 and 62.26). After giving the treatment, the mean score of experimental group shows 77.00 and the control group 70.06, and it shows that there is teaching improvement in reading with the paraphrasing strategy (Hagaman& Reid, 2008; Firman, 2013).

### 3.4. The result of the t-test

#### a. The result of t-test from pretest of experimental group and control group

In testing the hypothesis, t-test was used and the data from the reading comprehension test were analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Table. 4 The t-test of students' pretest of experimental group and control group.

Variable	$\alpha$	Probability Value
Pretest	0.05	0.07

Table 4 indicates that the probability value was greater than  $\alpha$  ( $0.07 > 0.05$ ). It means that  $H_0$  was accepted and  $H_1$  was rejected. In other words, there was no significant difference of reading achievement of the two groups. In other words, the students almost have the same achievement of the control and experimental groups before starting the study.

#### b. The result of t-test from posttest of experimental group and control group.

The aim of posttest to is to inform if there is any significant effect in applying paraphrasing strategy. The data from the posttest was analyzed by using SPSS

Table 5 The result of t-test from student's posttest of experiment group and control group

Variable	$\alpha$	Probability Value
Posttest	0.05	0.000

Table 5 indicates that probability value was lower than  $\alpha$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), and it means that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_1$  was accepted. There is a statistically significant difference between the result of posttest of control group and experimental group. This indicates that paraphrasing strategy facilitates students to get comprehension of the reading texts.

Table 6 the t-test of students' pretest and posttest of experiment group

Variable	$\alpha$	Probability Value
Pretest -Posttest	0.05	0.000

Table 6 show that  $H_1$  was accepted and  $H_0$  was rejected. It means there is statistically significant difference between the result of pretest and posttest of the experimental group. In other words, there is an improvement on the student's reading comprehension between pretest and posttest in the experimental group.

#### c. The result of t-test from pretest and posttest of control group.

The reading achievement of the students' pretest and posttest in control group before and after teaching using paraphrasing strategy.

Table 7 the t-test of students' pretest and posttest of control group

Variable	$\alpha$	Probability Value
Pretest -Posttest	0.05	0.000

Table 7 shows that  $H_1$  was accepted and  $H_0$  was rejected. It means there is statistically significant difference between the result of pretest and posttest of control group. There is an improvement on the students reading comprehension between pretest and posttest in control group.

#### d. Students' interest in reading using paraphrasing strategy

In order to know whether the students are interested in the application of paraphrasing strategy, the researcher distributed questionnaire to the students. The expression of interest are: very high, high, moderate, low, and very low and the percentage score can be seen in the following table.

Table 8 Students' interest to use of paraphrasing strategy

No	Interval score	Category	Frequency	%
1	85-100	Very high	7	23,3%
2	69-84	High	14	46,7%
3	52-68	Moderate	9	30 %
4	36-51	Low	-	-
5	20-35	Very low	-	-

Table 8 shows that most students (70%) are interesting in the use of the strategy, and some (30%) of the students are moderate. The mean score of the interest is 71.87. It indicates that the interest of the students toward the use of the strategy is high. High interest in reading can be a good contribution to the reading comprehension of the students as Khairuddin (2013) states that the reading interest of students can influence the reading comprehension of EFL students.

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestion

The application of paraphrasing strategy improves the students' reading comprehension. English language teachers need to encourage learner to develop learning strategies. Karbalaei & Amoli (2011) state that reading comprehension of college students can be improved by the development of their paraphrasing abilities. This result indicates the implementation of teaching reading by using paraphrasing strategy is better than the teaching reading strategy without paraphrasing activity. Teaching with paraphrasing strategy provides creative activities: finding synonyms, changing word order, changing grammar without changing the meaning of the texts. It is an effective tool in helping students to be creative in getting meaning from reading texts. By working in groups students have opportunities to comprehend the text easily and change the texts without changing the meanings. This reading strategy increases vocabulary and reading comprehension of the students. They can build their own words, automatically make them easy to understand meaning of the words or sentences. Learning to read becomes meaningful, students are able to increase their understanding through paraphrasing the sentences from the texts. Therefore, teachers should be able to develop learning strategies that are appropriate for students (Khonbi&Sadeghi, 2013).



The questionnaire was given to the students covered the statement about whether or not the students are interested in the use of paraphrasing strategy. The questionnaire result shows that the use of paraphrasing strategy in teaching reading improves their interest in reading comprehension. In other words, the students have high interest to the use of paraphrasing strategy in learning reading. Paraphrasing is valuable skill because it is better than quoting information from a passage, and it trains students to grasp meaning from the original text. Since the use of paraphrasing strategy improves the students' reading comprehension this strategy can be an alternative strategy for teachers in teaching reading comprehension. It is also suggested that other researchers can conduct further research on paraphrasing strategy for other language skills.

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