IMPROVEMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION OF GRADE 10 STUDENTS AT SMA DEZ DE DEZEMBRO, COMORO, DILI, TIMOR-LESTE THROUGH THE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

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Abstract: This study aims to improve the reading comprehension of grade 10 students at Dez de Dezembro High School, Comoro, Dili, Timor-Leste, through the application of graphic organizers. Carried out during the 2024 academic year, this study involved a sample of 30 students. Data collection methods include observation checklists used during classroom action research, as well as preliminary and final tests. The findings from this two-cycle study show that the use of graphic organizers significantly improves students' reading comprehension. When integrated with skimming and scanning strategies, as well as communicative reading activities, this approach substantially enriches the teaching and learning process. Reading activities become more interactive and engaging, facilitating students' understanding of concise information and connections between ideas. As a result, students show noticeable improvement, with focus and active participation in the lesson. In addition, they become proficient in implementing various reading strategies, resulting in more effective and efficient reading comprehension.

Keywords: Key words: Graphic Organizers, Reading Comprehension, CAR, Student Engagement, Educational Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is an important skill that students must master to support their academic success. At Dez de Dezembro High School, Comoro, Dili, Timor-Leste, many 10th grade students face difficulties in understanding the reading text. This research aims to overcome this problem through the application of graphic organizers, which is expected to improve students' reading comprehension.

Reading is one of the basic skills that is very important in daily life. Good reading skills not only help students in understanding the subject matter in school, but also in developing critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills. In today's information

era, good reading skills are also indispensable to filter and understand various information that is available abundantly in various media.

However, not all students have good reading skills. Many factors affect students' reading ability, including internal factors such as motivation, interest, and reading habits, as well as external factors such as the learning environment, teaching methods, and the availability of reading materials that are interesting and appropriate to the student's ability level. At Dez de Dezembro High School, Comoro, Dili, Timor-Leste, many 10th grade students face difficulties in understanding the reading text. These difficulties can be caused by a variety of factors, including a lack of interest in reading, a lack of effective reading strategies, and a lack of support from the learning environment.

This research aims to overcome this problem through the application of graphic organizers. Graphic organizers are visual aids that can help students organize the information they read, making it easier for them to understand and remember the information. Graphic organizers can take many forms, such as Venn diagrams, concept maps, tables, and flowcharts. By using graphic organizers, students can see the relationships between various information in the text, making it easier for them to understand the text as a whole.

According to Tarigan (2008), reading comprehension is a type of reading to understand literary standards or norms, critical reviews, written dramas, and fictional patterns in an effort to gain an understanding of the text. Readers use certain strategies to achieve this understanding[1]. Rubin (2011) added that reading comprehension is a complex intellectual process that includes two main abilities, namely mastery of word meaning and the ability to think about verbal concepts[1]. Based on some of the opinions above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is a person's ability to reconstruct the message contained in the text read.

The application of graphic organizers in reading learning is expected to improve students' reading comprehension. Several previous studies have shown that the use of graphic organizers can help students in understanding reading texts. For example, research conducted by Putri and Wicaksono (2023) shows that the application of reading strategies involving the use of graphic organizers can improve students' reading comprehension skills[2]. The study also showed that students who used graphic organizers were more able to organize information and make connections between various information in text, compared to students who did not use graphic organizers.

In addition, research conducted by Sarika, Gunawan, and Mulyana (2021) also shows that the use of graphic organizers can help students understand reading texts[3]. This study shows that students who use graphic organizers are more able to identify the main ideas and important details in the text, as well as more able to make conclusions and inferences from the text they read. This study also shows that the use of graphic organizers can increase students' motivation and interest in

reading, because students find it easier and more enjoyable in understanding reading texts.

At Dez de Dezembro High School, Comoro, Dili, Timor-Leste, the application of graphic organizers is expected to help grade 10 students in overcoming their difficulties in understanding reading texts. By using graphic organizers, students are expected to be able to organize the information they read more easily, making it easier for them to understand and remember the information. In addition, the use of graphic organizers is also expected to increase students' motivation and interest in reading, because students find it easier and more fun to understand the reading text.

Overall, this study aims to overcome the problem of reading comprehension difficulties faced by grade 10 students at Dez de Dezembro High School, Comoro, Dili, Timor-Leste, through the application of graphic organizers. By using graphic organizers, students are expected to be able to organize the information they read more easily, making it easier for them to understand and remember the information. In addition, the use of graphic organizers is also expected to increase students' motivation and interest in reading, because students find it easier and more fun in understanding reading texts. This study uses a classroom action research method to test the effectiveness of the application of graphic organizers in improving students' reading comprehension, by involving several stages, namely planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to improving students' reading comprehension, as well as providing insights and recommendations for teachers and education practitioners in developing effective learning strategies to improve students' reading comprehension.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses the classroom action research method (CAR) which consists of two cycles. Each cycle involves four stages: planning, execution, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, researchers and teachers design an action plan that includes the use of graphic organizers, skimming and scanning strategies, and communicative reading activities. The implementation involves the implementation of the plan in the classroom, where students use graphic organizers to understand the reading text, as well as apply skimming and scanning strategies in daily reading activities.

According to Hopkins (1993), PTK is research conducted by teachers in their own classrooms through self-reflection with the aim of improving learning practices1. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) added that PTK is a form of reflective research conducted by practitioners to improve their understanding of educational practices and improve the conditions in which they are practicedIn addition, according to Elliot (1991), PTK is a study of social situations with the intention of improving the

quality of actions through the process of diagnosis, planning, implementation, monitoring, and studying the effects it causes3.

During the implementation, researchers and teachers made observations to collect data on the learning process and students' reading comprehension. Data were collected through observation checklists and initial and final tests to measure students' reading comprehension before and after the intervention. Observation includes aspects such as student involvement, the use of graphic organizers, and participation in communicative reading activities. The initial test and final test are used to measure the improvement of students' reading comprehension. After each cycle, researchers and teachers conduct reflection to evaluate the results of the actions that have been implemented. This reflection includes analysis of observation data and test results, as well as discussions of successes and obstacles faced. Based on the results of the reflection, the researcher and the teacher design corrective actions for the next cycle. With this method, the research can make a significant contribution in improving the reading comprehension of students at Dez de Dezembro High School, Comoro, Dili, Timor-Leste.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to test the hypothesis that the graphic organizer method can improve students' reading comprehension. The results showed that this hypothesis was proven to be true in the Second Cycle. The post-test score in the Second Cycle indicates that the success indicator has been achieved. For example, the average post-test score in the Second Cycle was 76.50, which was significantly higher compared to the average post-test score in the First Cycle which was only 60.50. This improvement shows that the graphic organizer method is effective in improving students' reading comprehension skills (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Students' Scores of Reading Comprehension Test at Pretest,

Cycle 1, and Cycle 2 Post-Test

Student No	Pre-test	Cycle 1	Cycle 2

	s t		
1	6 5	7 0	8 0
2	6 5	7 0	8 5
3	6 5	7 0	8 0
4	5 5	6 0	7 0
5	5 5	6 0	7 5
6	5 5	6 0	7 5
7	5 0	5 0	7 0
8	6 0	6 0	7 5
9	6 5	7 0	8 0
10	5 0	5 5	7 5
11	5 5	5 5	7 5
12	5 5	5 5	8 0

13	50	60	85
14	50	55	75
15	55	60	75
16	55	60	70
17	65	65	80
18	60	65	75
19	65	70	80
20	55	60	70
21	55	55	80
22	55	60	75
23	50	50	75
24	60	60	75
25	65	70	80

26	50	55	90
27	55	60	75
28	55	60	70
29	50	55	75
30	50	60	70
Mean	56.5	60,5	76,5

Table 4.1 shows that students' reading comprehension scores increased from pre-test to post-test in both cycles, with significant improvements seen in Cycle 2. This increase led the researchers to conclude the study at the end of Cycle 2.

4.1 How the Graphic Organizer Method Improves Students' Reading Comprehension

As shown in the first and second cycles of this class action study, the use of graphic organizer strategies in teaching reading comprehension has resulted in better reading comprehension. The following procedures are necessary to achieve these results.

4.1.1 First Cycle

In the first cycle, although there was an increase in students' reading comprehension, the increase was not as significant as in the second cycle. This is due to the difference in the stages of lessons in the two cycles.

As observed from the table above, student grouping or mixing, which is the third stage in the first cycle, is moved to the fifth stage after setting lesson objectives, providing explanations, and providing examples. The stage of grouping or mixing students is then followed by the stage of giving instructions to groups or pairs of students to do group or pair work using the graphic organizer strategy in carrying out reading comprehension exercises and practices.

Stages	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
1	Introducing lessons	Introducing lessons
2	Giving Lesson objectives	Giving Lesson objectives
3	Grouping/ pairing students	Explanation
4	Explanation	Examples/ illustrations
5	Exemples/ illustrations	Grouping/ pairing students
6	Giving instructions	Giving instructions

As observed from the table above, grouping or pairing of students, which was the third stage in the first cycle, was moved to the fifth stage after setting lesson objectives, providing explanations, and giving examples. The stages of grouping or pairing students is then followed by the stage of giving instruction to groups of pairs of students to have pair or group works of using graphic organizer strategies in doing reading comprehension exercises and practices.

4.1.1 Limiting Time for Explanation stage to increase Teacher Time for The Stage of Monitoring Group or Pair Work and Giving Feedback.

As has also been demonstrated in the action research, teacher time for giving explanation and examples or illustration should be limited to give more time for students to work in groups or pairs, exploring reading texts for comprehension with the use of graphic organizers as tools. During students' group and pair works, teachers spend more time to monitor students works, evaluate and give feedback. This way is much more effective than giving a lot of explanation then letting students to work in groups or pairs by themselves without or with less monitoring and feedback from teachers

4.1.2 Limiting Class and Group Sizes.

As the stage of group or pair works involves discussions among students and monitoring, evaluation and feedback from teachers, time allocation for the stage should be adequate. Moreover, to have effective monitoring and feedback from teachers, group size need to be limited, as demonstrated in the action research, both in the first and the second cycle. To illustrate the procedures as described above, the following section presents actions taken in both the first and the second cycle of the research.

4.1.3 Teacher's Teaching and Students' Learning Performance in the First and second Cycle

In the first cycle of this action research, 30 tenth-grade students of Dez de Dezembro Senior High School in Comoro, Dili, Timor-Leste, were divided into six groups of five to perform reading comprehension exercises using graphic organizers. Observations indicated that grouping students into six groups of five was not very effective. During the reflection process of the first cycle, it was concluded that this ineffectiveness was due to two main reasons: 1) The number of students (five) in each group was quite high and 2) Six groups were too many for the teacher to monitor and provide feedback to all within the 80-minute class period.

This resulted in the teacher being unable to effectively monitor, evaluate, and give feedback to each of the six groups. Student learning performance was also not as expected. The result of the teaching and learning process in this first cycle, therefore, is not very significant, that is not satisfactory as observed in table 4.1 before. Following table provides teacher teaching and student learning performance in the first cycle.

4.2 Discussion

The results of this study show that the use of graphic organizers significantly improves students' reading comprehension. This increase can be seen from the increase in the average post-test score from 60.5 in Cycle 1 to 76.5 in Cycle 2. This improvement shows that the graphic organizer strategy is effective in helping

students organize the information they read, making it easier for them to understand and remember the information.

4.2.1 Effectiveness of Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are visual aids that help students organize the information they read. In this study, various types of graphic organizers were used, including concept maps, Venn diagrams, tables, and flowcharts. Concept maps assist students in identifying and organizing the main ideas and important details in the text. Venn diagrams help students in comparing and contrasting information in text. Tables help students in organizing information related to a particular category. Flowcharts help students in understanding the sequence of events or processes in the text.

4.2.2 Skimming and Scanning Strategies

The skimming and scanning strategies have also been proven to be effective in improving students' reading comprehension. Skimming is a quick reading strategy to get an overview of the text, while scanning is a quick reading strategy to find specific information in the text. In this study, students were taught to use skimming to identify the main idea and structure of the text, as well as to use scanning to find important details and specific information they needed.

4.2.3 Communicative Reading Activities

Communicative reading activities are designed to make learning more interactive and engaging. In this study, various communicative reading activities were carried out, including group discussions, presentations, and questions and answers. Group discussions are used to improve interaction and collaboration between students. Students work in small groups to discuss the text they read, using graphic organizers to organize information and make connections between ideas. Presentations are used to improve students' speaking and listening skills. Students were asked to present the results of their group discussions to the class, using graphic organizers as visual aids. Questions and answers are used to increase student understanding and participation. Teachers ask students questions about the text they read, and students are asked to answer those questions using the information they obtained from graphic organizers.

4.2.4 Reflection and Adjustment

Reflections and adjustments made in the second cycle also contribute to improving students' reading comprehension. Based on reflections from the first cycle, researchers and teachers made several adjustments, including limiting the time for the explanation stage so that more time could be used to monitor the work of the group or student pairs and provide feedback. In addition, class and group sizes are also limited to ensure adequate time allocation for the group or couple discussion stage, as well as monitoring, evaluation, and feedback from teachers. This adjustment has proven to be effective in improving students' reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the use of graphic organizers integrated with skimming and scanning strategies as well as communicative reading activities has proven to be effective in improving reading comprehension of grade 10 students at Dez de Dezembro High School, Comoro, Dili, Timor-Leste. The results showed a significant increase in students' reading comprehension scores from pre-test to post-test in both cycles, with a greater increase in the Second Cycle. The average post-test score in the Second Cycle reached 76.50, compared to 60.50 in the First Cycle. This improvement shows that the graphic organizer strategy helps students in organizing information visually, making it easier for them to understand complex texts.

In addition, skimming and scanning strategies allow students to find important information quickly, while communicative reading activities encourage discussion and collaboration between students, which in turn improves their understanding of the reading material. This approach not only improves reading comprehension, but also makes reading activities more interactive and engaging, as well as increases students' focus and active participation in lessons. Students are more involved in the learning process because they not only read passively but also actively participate in group discussions and activities. This increases learning motivation and makes learning more enjoyable.

By using graphic organizers, students can focus more on important information and ignore irrelevant details. Skimming and scanning strategies help them to stay focused on the reading goal, while communicative reading activities encourage active participation and collaboration, which is essential for effective learning. These findings have important implications for teaching practice, suggesting that the integration of graphic organizers with effective reading strategies can significantly improve students' reading comprehension.

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