The Implementation of THIEVES Strategy in Teaching Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text

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Abstract
This study aimed to investigate whether the THIEVES strategy is effective or not in teaching reading comprehension of the descriptive text to students in the eighth grade at SMP Negeri 2 Ketungau Tengah, Sintang, Kalimantan Barat. It also investigates how effective it is. This study is a one-group pre-test and post-test design. In this study, the total population is 36 students, 18 from VIII A and 18 from VIII B. The researchers used random cluster sampling to select 18 students from class VIII A as the research sample. The researchers also collected and analyzed pre-test and post-test data using a t-test. The average pre-test score was 52.5, while the average post-test score was 62.5. The result of the t-test was 4.41, as shown by the data. Based on the above data analysis, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted because the t-test was higher than the t-table (4.41>1.740). Therefore, it indicated that the THIEVES strategy is effective in teaching reading comprehension. In addition, the effect size was 1.19, indicating a strong effect (>1.00). In conclusion, implementing the THIEVES strategy in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text to the eight grade students in the school is highly effective.

Keywords
Reading comprehension
THIEVES strategy
Pre-experimental
The Implementation of Thieves Strategy in Teaching Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text

Introduction

As one of the fundamental language skills, reading plays a crucial role in broadening one's knowledge and understanding. In line with that, Asmarni (2022) states that reading can help students achieve positive results in their social and academic lives. Moreover, reading is the skill to comprehend and analyze material from books or texts with a depth of understanding (Grabe and Stoller., 2019). In a similar context, Aswir et al. (2021) state that reading is a method of interpreting the context of a text. It emphasizes that when people read a text, understanding what is inside is more important than just reading it. Reading and comprehension are inextricably linked based on the statement above. Furthermore, the act of generating a text's interpretation through the giving and receiving of conceptions between the reader and the letter's specific message is reading comprehension (Koonce., 2018). It entails deliberate thinking, initiating numerous different cognitive abilities, and the development of particular knowledge of the text-reader interaction.

Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that teaching reading comprehension is essential for students' academic lives. Furthermore, based on the researchers's preliminary observation at SMP Negeri 2 Ketungau Tengah, Sintang, Kalimantan Barat, it revealed that they still use the rereading strategy in teaching reading comprehension. As the school is in a rural area, SMP Negeri 2 Ketungau Tengah has limited access to learning resources, and the rereading strategy can be beneficial as it allows students to work with the available texts more intensively, extracting deeper meaning and understanding from them. However, this strategy has some weaknesses, such as time consuming. The researchers found that rereading a text several times takes significantly more time than reading it once, which is a problem for teaching and learning activities with limited time. Due to the time-consuming, the teacher might find it challenging to complete the planned learning activity within a single class period.

The researchers also found that sometimes in rereading strategy, students might simply memorize the content without truly understanding the concepts. For example, when the teacher teaches a historical text using the rereading strategy and instructs the students to reread it, focusing on specific details, dates, and names of historical figures, they confidently recall and memorize the facts, dates, and names. However, when it comes to deeper questions such as "What were the causes that led to these historical events, and what were their long-term consequences?" students found it challenging to identify the underlying causes and analyze the long-term consequences of the events.

Therefore, based on the above mentioned problem, the researchers suggested an alternative reading comprehension strategy, such as the THIEVES strategy. It is the acronym for Title, Headings, Introduction, Every First Sentence, Visuals/Vocabulary, End-of-chapter questions, and Summary. Additionally, Manz (2002), who proposed this strategy, defines THIEVES as a reading strategy that uses an acronym that is
simple to remember to establish the goal of reading. Thus, before reading the entire
text, students use this strategy to steal knowledge from each acronym. This strategy
also gives students a defined reading goal and aids them in understanding the text's
contents by directing them to its most essential points (Afriani et al., 2022; Larasati
et al., 2023; Novia, F., & Nery 2019).

Some prior studies by other researchers emphasize the effectiveness of the
THIEVES strategy in improving student reading comprehension. The first is the
research conducted by Khataee (2019). In her study of 63 advanced learners from
an Iranian English language school in an urban area, she found a statistically
significant difference between the control and experimental groups' results. Thus, it
appears that THIEVES can assist students in overcoming their comprehension
difficulties. As a result of her findings, she concluded that employing THIEVES aids
understanding, particularly of expository texts.

The other previous study was conducted by Asmarni et al. (2022). In their Classroom
Action Research of SMPN 13 North Bengkulu, a suburban area, they found the
percentage of students EFL ninth graders' who met the success criteria increased
from 8% to 80% at the end. Therefore, they concluded that using the THIEVES
strategy helped students comprehend what they were reading, especially narrative
and report text.

In the meantime, according to the 2013 curriculum, students in Indonesian schools,
particularly at the secondary level, are taught various types of texts, including
narrative, descriptive, recount, and procedure texts (Siahaan, 2013). Each type of
text has its own set of characteristics and linguistic elements (Kirana et al., 2018).
Furthermore, the researchers choose descriptive text as students need to master it.
In line with that, Wati et al. (2018) describe a descriptive text as a text that uses a
series of essential words to describe an object, giving the reader the impression of
seeing, hearing, feeling, and enjoying it. Nurfidoh and Kareviati (2021) also stated
that the descriptive text is a text that is separated into two sections, the first is the
identification, and the second is the description. The author will describe people,
locations, animals, or objects in the first section of a descriptive text. Then the second
section will describe something, such as an animal, object, location, or people, by
detailing its features connected to what the author mentioned. In the same context,
Royani and Sadiah (2019) stated that descriptive text has its own characteristics or
linguistic elements. The first one is the adjectives to give further information about
the noun, for example, a beautiful girl. The next is using a specific participant that
contains a specific object, uncommon, and one-of-a-kind (only one), for example, my
cat, my father, and the Prambanan Temple. Furthermore, last but not least, it is the
simple present tense because it states the fact about the object depicted, and the
sentence pattern utilized is simply present. For example, my mother cooks the bread
in the kitchen.

Based on the previous study mentioned, the researchers aimed to complete the
previous study and enrich similar studies' findings. The difference between previous
studies and the researchers is the kind of text, research subject location, and the
level of students' grades. In previous studies, the type of text used was expository,
narrative, and report texts. However, in this study, the researchers used a descriptive
text in the context of the historic building. The subject location is also different from
the previous study, as this study conducted in SMP Negeri 2 Ketungau Tengah,
which is located in a rural village. Furthermore, research about the THIEVES strategy
has never been conducted within this school. Furthermore, the grade of students
also distinguishes this study from earlier studies. Because in this study, researchers conducted research on eighth-grade students.

Based on the preceding explanation above, the researchers conducted a study titled "The Implementation of THIEVES Strategy in Teaching Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text". Furthermore, based on the research background above, this research has the following purposes: (1) To find out whether the implementation of the THIEVES strategy is effective in teaching reading comprehension of the descriptive text to students in the eighth grade at SMP Negeri 2, Ketungau Tengah, in the academic year 2022/2023 or not; and (2) To find out how effective is the implementation of the THIEVES strategy in teaching reading comprehension of the descriptive text to the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Ketungau Tengah in the academic year 2022/2023.

**Method**

The researchers employed a pre-experimental design in this study. According to Ary et al. (2019), pre-experimental design is research in which subjects are not randomly assigned to groups or other procedures to control for extraneous variables are used. The focus of pre-experimental designs is on investigating a specific or single group that receives the experimental intervention (Leavy, 2017). The researchers applied a pre-experimental design because this study aims to determine the impact of a change in the presence of treatment. This study used a type one group pre-test post-test design, in which participants took a pre-test before receiving the experimental treatment. After the treatment, a post-test is conducted to see how well the participant has improved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test test</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The population in this study is the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 2 Ketungau Tengah, Sintang, Kalimantan Barat in the Academic Year 2022/2023, which consists of 36 students from two classes. The researchers used a probability sampling technique based on the number of populations in this study. Probability sampling is the type of sampling where any element will have an equal chance of being chosen (Ary et al., 2019). It means that the possibility of each individual in the population being included occurs by probability and is achieved through sample choice. Furthermore, in this sample, the researchers determined the sample using type cluster random sampling. Mackey and Gass (2022) state that cluster random sampling is a choice of groups instead of persons as the study's subjects. In this case, the researchers chooses one class at random from two classes. Therefore, the cluster class in the research was VIIIA, consisting of 18 students, with nine males and nine females.

For data collection, information was collected using a test. Furthermore, there are two types of tests in experimental research, a pre-test and a post-test. In addition, the instrument that the researchers employed in this study is a reading test. Therefore, there are descriptive texts with 20 multiple-choice questions in the reading test. In addition, to answer the first research question, the data will be calculated through the t-test to generate a t-value. However, the mean difference
(MD) will be computed before the t-test to calculate the data. Furthermore, the effect size was calculated to answer the second research question. The specific formulas are listed below:

**T-test formula**

\[ t = \frac{D}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2}{N} - \frac{(\sum D)^2}{N(N-1)}}} \]

**Effect size formula**

\[ d = \frac{\overline{X}_2 - \overline{X}_1}{SD_d} \]

**Results**

Following the completion of the research, the researchers gathered data using a written test in order to answer the research questions. However, a variety of steps in the process were used to data analysis the data. The first step is to determine the average score for the pre-test and post-test. Furthermore, the detail of students' scores is shown in the following chart.

**Figure 1. Students’ Pre-Test scores**

Based on the data above, it was found that the total score of students in the pre-test was 945. Next, the total score was divided by the total number of students that are 18 students. Then, it was discovered that the mean score was 52.5.
The students' combined score on the post-test was 1215, according to the data chart above. The mean score was determined by dividing the total score by the total number of 18 students. The outcomes revealed that the average score for the post-test was 67.5.

The t-test formula was used to analyze the t-test on the students' scores. However, to calculate the t-test, the researchers must first compute the mean different scores. The detailed computation is presented in the table below.

Table 2. Mean Different Calculation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>D^2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X1</td>
<td>X2</td>
<td>(X2 - X1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>1215</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the table above, it was discovered that the total different score ($\sum D$) was 270. After that, the calculation of the difference score squared, then summed ($\sum D^2$) was 6750. Furthermore, the difference score summed and then squared ($\left(\sum D\right)^2$) was found to be 72900. Additionally, the mean different score ($\bar{D}$) was 15. It is based on the total different scores divided by the number of students (N). To obtain the final t-test result, these scores were entered into the t-test formula.

The t-test of the treatment obtained a value of 4.41, according to the computation of the t-test. The t-table with significant (a) was 0.05, and the level of confident 95% was found to be 1.740 with the degree of freedom (df) = 17, estimated from the formula df = N−1 = 18−1 = 17. The data revealed that the t-test had a higher score (4.41>1.740) than the t-table. It meant that the test's outcome was better after the test than it was before.

To answer the second research question, the researchers calculated the effect size. Based on the computation of the effect size formula listed, the effect size was 1.19. Cohen et al. (2018) identifies a strong effect as one with an effect size greater than one (>1). Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of the THIEVES strategy had a strong effect, and it indicated that the THIEVES strategy is highly effective in teaching reading comprehension of the descriptive text to eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Ketungau Tengah in the Academic Year 2022/2023.

**Discussion**

Based on the findings, it has been proven that the implementation of the THIEVES strategy had a strong effect on teaching reading comprehension of the descriptive text. It reconfirms the previous research by Khataee (2019) who concluded that using the THIEVES strategy for reading expository texts impacts the reading comprehension of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. It is also supports Asmarni et al. (2022), who found that using the THIEVES strategy helped students comprehend what they read, especially narrative and report text. The positive outcomes of using THIEVES emphasize its value as an impactful tool to facilitate students' active participation and improve their reading comprehension skills.

In other words, the THIEVES strategy has contributed a positive effect on students' reading comprehension skills. This effect was attributed to the fact that this strategy gives students a defined reading goal and aids them in understanding the text's contents by directing them to its most essential points. In most particular, it is efficient in helping them understand what they are reading because they know the main idea and information of the text.

**Conclusion**

To sum up, there are two main points of conclusion that can be drawn. The first is that the implementation of the THIEVES strategy is effective in teaching reading comprehension of the descriptive text to eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Ketungau Tengah, Sintang, Kalimantan Barat. The second, the effect size shows the
category of a strong effect (1.19>1), meaning that the implementation of the THIEVES strategy is strongly or highly effective in teaching reading comprehension of the descriptive text to eighth-grade students of the school.

Acknowledgment

The writers then wishes to express the deepest gratitude to English Language Education Study Program, Language and Art Education Department, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak. Additionally, it is an honor to acknowledge the invaluable assistance and contributions extended by all lecturers, the institution, family, and friends who have played diverse roles and contributed in various ways as this article is processed until it becomes complete writing.

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