**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MURDER TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS**

Dewi Lilis Saradillah, Sudarkam R Mertosono, Erniwati

**Abstract**

The objective of this research is to find out the effectiveness of MURDER technique for improving the students’ reading comprehension skills of the first grade of MA Al-Muhibbah Soulowe. This research used quasi experimental research design. In selecting the sample, the researcher employed purposive sampling technique. The research samples were class XD as the experimental group and class XA as the control group. The treatment was given to the experimental group only, while the control group was taught using conventional method. The data were collected throught pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was used to measure the prior knowledge of the students while the post-test was used to measure the students improvement in comprehending the reading text after receiving the treatment. The result of the test shows that there is an improvement on the students’ mean score after the treatment. The students’ pre-test mean score is 46 and post-test mean score is 74.25 on experimental group, while the students pre-test mean score is 49.5 and post-test mean score is 63.1 on control group. By using 0.05 level of significance and 42 degree of freedom (df), the researcher found the tcountedvalue (3.984) was greater than ttable (1.997). It means that the researcher hypothesis is accepted. In other words, the application of MURDER technique is effective to teaching reading comprehension skills to the first grade students of MA Al-Muhibbah Soulowe.

Keywords:MURDER technique, Reading Comprehension Skill.

*Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui efektifitas teknik MURDER untuk meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman bacaan siswa kelas satu MA Al-Muhibbah Soulowe. Penelitian ini menggunakan rancangan penelitian eksperimen kuasi. Dalam memilih sampel, peneliti menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Sampel penelitian adalah kelas XD sebagai kelompok eksperimen dan kelas XA sebagai kelompok kontrol. Perlakuan hanya diberikan pada kelompok eksperimen, sedangkan kelompok kontrol diajari menggunakan metode konvensional. Data dikumpulkan melalui pretest dan posttest. Pretest digunakan untuk mengukur pengetahuan sebelumnya tentang siswa sedangkan posttest digunakan untuk mengukur peningkatan siswa dalam memahami teks bacaan setelah menerima perlakuan.* *Hasil uji menunjukkan bahwa ada peningkatan nilai rata-rata siswa setelah perlakuan. Nilai rata-rata pre-test siswa adalah 46 dan nilai rata-rata post-test adalah 74,25 pada kelompok eksperimen, sedangkan nilai rata-rata pre-test siswa adalah 49,5 dan nilai rata-rata post-test adalah 63,1 pada kelompok control. Dengan menggunakan 0.05 tingkat signifikansi dan 42 derajat kebebasan (df), peneliti menemukan nilai t (3,984) lebih besar dari* ttable *(1,997). Artinya, hipotesis peneliti diterima. Dengan kata lain, penerapan teknik MURDER sangat efektif untuk mengajarkan keterampilan pemahaman bacaan kepada siswa kelas satu MA Al-Muhibbah Soulowe.*

*Kata kunci: Teknik MURDER, keterampilan pemahaman membaca.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Reading is one of the basic skills in learning English besides listening, speaking, and writing skills. It is an active process to understand the meaning from a written text in relation to the prior knowledge of the reader. It is also defined as the knowledge, expectations, and strategies to a reader to use it to uncover textual meaning of the text. In other words, reading is the process results from a negotiation of meaning between the text and its reader. Reading is activity to access some information. The understanding of reading material is based on how readers approach it and how the content is handled while being read. Aebersold and Field (1997:15) define reading as “what happens when people look at a text and assign the meaning to the written symbols in that text.” Further, the text and the reader are two physical entities necessary for the reading process to begin. Therefore, there is an interaction between the text and the reader that constitute actual reading.

Taringan (1998:11) argues, “reading is a process done and used by a reader to get massage sent through written media.” It means that through reading, someone will get information or massage needed. We have to know that reading is an active process. Reading requires cooperation between eyes movement, brainwork and senses. Also, it sometimes needs oral cavity if we practice reading aloud.

Reading comprehension is the ability of someone to draw or to obtain the information in a text and are able to interpret it correctly. Comprehension is the mind act or power of understanding (Hornby,1987:174). Therefore reading comprehension means understanding what has been read. It is an active process that depends not only on comprehension skill, but also on the readers’ experiences and prior knowledge. In line with Hornby, Grellet (1998:182) states, “Reading comprehension means understanding a written text to extract the required information from it as efficiently as possible.” He emphasizes the importance of obtaining the required information in reading.

Graham (2007:8) states, “Reading comprehension involves much more then readers responses to text. It is a multi-component, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text as well as variable related to the text itself.” Besides, reading in this study refers to comprehensive reading at the process of understanding written text by which knowledge is the basic element for the comprehension. It is related to what they do not know about information to they have already known.

Looking upon the above definition of reading skills, the researcher comes to conclusion that reading skills is an active and communicative process. It is also an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. It is a means of communication between the reader and the writer. The process involves the reader, the text, the interaction between reader and text. The text presents letter, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategy to determine the meaning.

As learning reading skills cannot be apart from comprehension, reading comprehension becomes the goal of teaching and learning reading at schools as mentioned in school-based curriculum 2013 that one of the basic competencies of the senior high-school students have to master is comprehension on various types of texts, such as narrative, procedure, factual report, descriptive, and hortatory exposition. Furthermore, the instructional objectives of teaching reading are emphasized on the following skills, such as getting general information about the text, identify the main idea explicitly and implicitly, get detail information about the text and infer words, phrases and sentences meaning based on the context.

Descriptive text describes a particular person, place, and the thing in detail. A writer of this text helps the readers use the senses of feeling, seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting to experience what the writer experiences. Description helps the reader more clearly understand the people, places, and things about which the writer is writing. It is the most common form of writing. The writer will focus her research on writing a descriptive text. Therefore, it will be discussed more detail below. Descriptive paragraph is often used to describe what a person looks and acts like. A descriptive paragraph has sentences that work together to present a single, description of a person, a place, a thing, an event, or an idea. The purpose of descriptive paragraph is to give information. A descriptive text has the generic structure they are identification and description of part, character or quality. Besides that, it also has the language features; those are using simple present tense, using action verb, using adverb, and using special technical terms. This kind of text can be found in the media such as newspaper, magazines, books, encyclopedias, scientist, historical text, and most other forms of written communication. In descriptive text, the important thing for the reader is to be able to see in their mind the place being described. In describing a place, firstly someone has to describe the part of the place, and the steps to describe another part of the place.

However, students may get difficulty in mastering the skills because reading comprehension involves a process in which the students simultaneously extracts and constructs meaning through interaction and involvement with written text. To prove the assumption, the researcher observed the teaching and learning process at the first year of Madrasah Aliyah Almuhibbah Soulowe in May 2016. The result shows that the students got difficulty both in finding main idea of the text and answering the comprehension questions. Summarily, the students had difficulties in comprehending the text.

To solve the problem, the researcher used Mood, Understand, Recall, Detect, Elaborate, and Review (MURDER) Technique. This technique can help the learner take new information and give indication to the students what information from a lesson will be important. The *Mood* aspect of MURDER technique encourages the students to relax and focus on the task. *Understand* helps the students to follow the author’s main train to understand in detail. *Recall* helps the students to rehearse the material, to identify the main ideas of ach paragraph, to transform the material into an oral mode and into the students own words. The *Detect* aspect encourages the students to make summary as accurately as possible by detecting any errors or omissions. *Elaborate* guides the students to make the information in the summary more memorable. The last is *Review* aspect that helps the students to produce the super summary of the entire passage. Considering those aspects above, the researcher believes that MURDER Technique can improve reading comprehension skills of the students.

According to DaSilva (2006), the “M” in MURDER stand for “mood”, the first step in which the individual should attempt to find a time and place that set a positive mood. This will allow the individual to study more effectively, because an individual will usually not be able to read effectively if he or she is in an environment that is distracting or just generally irritating. The “U” in MURDER stand for “understand”, which the individual marks any information in the text that he or she does not understand by circling it, highlighting it, or simply drawing a question mark next to it. The “R” in MURDER stands for “recall” which the individual should attempt to paraphrase and note everything that he or she leaned from the section that he or she just went over. The “D” in MURDER stand for “digest/detect”, suggests that the individual should go back over each topic that he or she marked earlier and reread that material in an attempt to understand that material better. The “E” in MURDER stand for “expand/elaborate”, suggests that the individual should go back and start asking and attempting to answer questions about the specific topics that he or she still does not understand even after completing the digest step. The “R” in MURDER stands for “review” all of the material that the individual actually does understand in order to refresh material in the individual’s mind.

**METHOD OF RESEARCH**

In this research, the researcher used quasi experimental research design in order to figure out the effectiveness of MURDER technique for improving reading comprehension skills of the students. Two groups were involved in this research; they were experimental and control group. The researcher administered the pre-test to measure the students reading comprehension skills before the treatment was given. Then, she taught the students in the experimental group using MURDER Technique, while the students in the control group were taught using conventional method as follows. The students at first were provided with a text to read. After reading the text, they assigned to answer the comprehensions questions. Their answers were discussing with the class. After the treatment was delivered, the researcher gave the post-test to measure the effect of MURDER technique on students’ reading comprehension skills in the experimental group.

A population was a group of people, things or events. As Gay (1996:112) states, “population is the group of interest to researcher, the group to which she or he would like result of the study to general.” The researcher took the first year students of MA Almuhibbah Solouwe as the population of this research. There were five parallel classes of the first year; they were class XA, XB, XC, and XD. Each class consisted of 20 up to 28 students.

Sample was important and needed in doing a research. Gay (1996:111) states, “Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected.”To decide the research sample, the researcher used purposive sampling technique. There were two classes involved; they were XD as an experimental group and XA as a control one. Class XD was chosen as the experimental group because the students of this class were less interested in reading English text. When the researcher observed the teaching and learning process in the classroom, she found that the response of students in class XD was poor compared to students of class XA. Thus, by applying MURDER Technique to Class XD, the effectiveness of the technique was highly visible.

With the reference to the title of the research, the researcher employed two variables; they were independent and dependent variable. According to Cresswell (2009:50), “Independent variables are those that (probably) cause, influence, or affect outcomes. Dependent variables are those that depend on the independent variables; they are the outcomes or results of the influence of the independent variables.” Other names for dependent variables are criterion, outcome, and effect variables. Therefore, the independent variable was the use of MURDER technique, and dependent variable was the students reading comprehension skills.

To collect the data, the researcher used test as an instrument of the research. The test consisted of pre-test and post-test, which was given to both experimental and control groups. The pre-test was administered before the delivery of the treatment to assess the students’ prior skills in reading comprehension. Meanwhile, the post-test was given after the delivery of the treatment to determine whether or not the use of MURDER technique was effective for improving the students reading comprehension.

As the main instrument to collect data and to measure the students reading comprehension skills, the researcher designed the test both the pre-test and the post-test in form of selection type of test (true/false). The test consisting of 20 items was literal questions. The topic of the reading passage provided to the students was different but the level of difficulty remained the same. To score the students’ answers in the test, the researcher applied the following scoring systems adopted from School-based Curriculum 2006. The Maximum score of the test is 20. If the students answere correctly the students’ score was 1, while 0 was for wrong answer.

**FINDINGS**

The researcher used test as the instrument of the research in collecting the data. It means the collecting data of the research was in form of numeric data. There were two kinds of tests in this research. They were pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was administered before the researcher applied treatment to know the students ability in writing. The post-test was administered after she applied the treatment. The result of each test was compared to measure whether MURDER technique has effect to improve reading comprehension skill of the first grade students of MA or not. The results of the test are expressed as follows:

**Table 1.** Experimental Group’s Score on Pretest and Posttest.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Initials | Maximum | Standard Score | |
| Score | Pretest | Posttest |
| 1 | AHZ | 20 | 30 | 55 |
| 2 | ARK | 20 | 55 | 75 |
| 3 | AYL | 20 | 75 | 80 |
| 4 | DDR | 20 | 45 | 80 |
| 5 | DON | 20 | 35 | 80 |
| 6 | IJS | 20 | 30 | 65 |
| 7 | IRF | 20 | 50 | 75 |
| 8 | JMD | 20 | 45 | 75 |
| 9 | MFS | 20 | 50 | 70 |
| 10 | MFK | 20 | 50 | 65 |
| 11 | MRD | 20 | 45 | 65 |
| 12 | NMS | 20 | 55 | 70 |
| 13 | NGR | 20 | 55 | 80 |
| 14 | NRM | 20 | 30 | 70 |
| 15 | RSD | 20 | 35 | 80 |
| 16 | SRR | 20 | 45 | 80 |
| 17 | YLA | 20 | 50 | 85 |
| 18 | ZLS | 20 | 45 | 80 |
| 19 | ZLZ | 20 | 50 | 75 |
| 20 | ZKF | 20 | 45 | 80 |
| Total Score | | | 920 | 1485 |

Based on the table above, it was found that the highest score obtained by students in the experimental group on the pre-test was 75, the lowest score was 30 and the mean score is 46. To decide the number of students passed this pre-test, the writer applied the minimum passing score of 75 as a comparable figure. It was the same score used at MA Almuhibba Soulouwe. The result showed that only one student passed the pre-test. In other words, of 20 students took the pre-test, 19 students failed to reach the minimum passing standard of 75. Meanwhile, the highest score obtained by students in the experimental group on the post-test was 85, the lowest score was 55 and the mean score is 74.25. As thirteen students gained higher score than minimum passing standard of 75, they were said to be successfull on the post-test. While, the rest seven students got lower score, or failed the test.

**Table 2.** Control Group’s Score on Pretest and Posttest

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Initials | Maximum | Standard Score | |
| Score | Pretest | Posttest |
| 1 | AGS | 20 | 45 | 65 |
| 2 | ANN | 20 | 40 | 55 |
| 3 | ALW | 20 | 55 | 65 |
| 4 | ADR | 20 | 60 | 65 |
| 5 | ANS | 20 | 50 | 50 |
| 6 | AAP | 20 | 50 | 75 |
| 7 | ATK | 20 | 50 | 65 |
| 8 | APA | 20 | 45 | 65 |
| 9 | DVN | 20 | 40 | 50 |
| 10 | DSK | 20 | 45 | 50 |
| 11 | EMY | 20 | 50 | 65 |
| 12 | FRD | 20 | 50 | 55 |
| 13 | IWS | 20 | 40 | 65 |
| 14 | LLA | 20 | 50 | 60 |
| 15 | LSN | 20 | 50 | 65 |
| 16 | NAS | 20 | 45 | 60 |
| 17 | NML | 20 | 50 | 70 |
| 18 | SRN | 20 | 55 | 70 |
| 19 | SHD | 20 | 55 | 65 |
| 20 | STN | 20 | 50 | 70 |
| 21 | SFY | 20 | 45 | 60 |
| 22 | SRY | 20 | 55 | 65 |
| 23 | VAD | 20 | 50 | 65 |
| 24 | ZHR | 20 | 65 | 75 |
| Total Score | | | 1190 | 1515 |

The table above indicated that the highest score obtained by students in the control group on pre-test was 65, the lowest score was 40 and the mean score is 49.5. Using the same minimum passing standard of 75, she deduced that no students passed the pre-test. Meanwhile, the higest score achieved by the students in the control group on the post-test was 75, the lowest score was 55 and the mean score was 63.1. Two students obtained the same score with the minimum passing standard of 75. Meanwhile, the remaining eighteen students obtained score below the minimum passing standard of 75. In other words, two students of the control class passed the post-test, whist eighteen students did not pass the test.

After obtaining the data of both experimental group and control group in pretest and posttest, the researcher continued to count the mean deviation and score deviation .The experimental group’s deviation on the pretest and posttest; the highest deviation (d) score is 45 and the lowest deviation is 5. The highest square deviation (d2) is 2025 and the lowest square deviation is 25. Meanwhile, the highest deviation of control group is 25. The square deviation is 625. After getting the deviation and square deviation of control and experimental group, the research calculated the mean deviation of both the group by using the formula. Thus, the mean deviation of the experimental group is 29.25,whilst the mean deviation of the control group is 13.5. After finding out the mean deviation score of the experimental and control group, the researcher computed the standard deviation of both groups. The standard deviation of experimental group is 1636 and crontrol group is 924.

After having the standard deviation of experimental group and control group, the researcher calculated the standard error of differences of both groups by using the formula purposed by Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Razavieth (2010:108-109). The computation shows that the standard error of differences of both groups is 3.89. Based on the value, the researcher counted the t-value to test the hypothesis. The value of t-counted  = 3.99 is obtained. Since degree of freedom of 42 (nx+ ny-2= 20 + 24 – 2 ) was not available on the t-table, the researcher counted the degree of freedom using interpolation formula and she got the value of t-table = 1.997.

Referring to the t-table value above, the researcher tested the hypothesis of the research by comparing the values of tcounted and ttable. Based on that result, the researcher concluded that hypothesis of this research is accepted because the value of tcounted is higher than the value of ttable.. It means that the application of MURDER technique can improve the students’ reading comprehension skills of the first grade students of MA Almuhibbah Soulowe.

**DISCUSSION**

This research started with the researcher’s pre-assumption that reading comprehension skills of the first grade students of MA Almuhibbah Soulowe was low. The pre-assumption was taken after she observed the teaching and learning process in the classroom of the intended grade. She found that the students got difficulty in understanding the reading passage. Therefore, she purposed to improve the students’ reading comprehension skills through MURDER technique. In other words, this research aimed at finding out the effect of MURDER technique on reading comprehension skills of first grade students of MA Almuhibbah Soulowe.

In order to prove the researcher’s pre-assumption about the low level of reading comprehension skills of the first grade students of MA Almuhibbah Soulowe, she conducted a pre-test to experimental group and control group. The result of the pre-test indicated that from minimum passing standard of 75 used at MA Almuhibbah Soulowe, only one student of both groups achieved the standard. To solve the problem, the researcher delivered six times treatment to the experimental group. The following were the steps of teaching using MURDER technique as well as the students’ progress each meeting.

To start the class for the first treatment, the researcher divided the students into a group of five. Then she invited students to sing a song together. They sang a song ‘My Love’ by Westlife. They were very happy singing the song. Next, she explained the working of MURDER technique followed by the explanation of descriptive text and its example. Then she asked the students some questions related to the topic discussed. She assigned them to read and discuss the text to find out the main idea. Not all students in the groups participated actively in the discussion. They neither read the text nor shared ideas with their group members. As a result, they took a long time to accomplish the group discussion. Having discussed with their group members, the students were asked to present the result while other groups detected their mistakes. At last, the researcher assigned them to elaborate the answers of each group. For individual assignment, the students were assigned to make a summary by answering the reading comprehension questions. To make clear of what the students were going to do in the individual assignment, the researcher provided them an example. The students took a long time to accomplish the task and the result really was unsatisfied her.

The researcher began the second meeting by putting students in a group of five. Then, she played Simon Says Game. The students were very enthusiastic playing the game. Having aroused the students’ mood with the game, the researcher asked some questions related to the topic discussed. She continued the treatment by assigning each group to read a text to get the main idea. Just like in the first meeting, some students were still not concerned with group work. After discussing in groups, they presented the result of their group discussion, while other groups detected their mistakes. When a group presented the result of their group discussion, other groups were busy talking or discussing with their group members. They seemed to ignore the presentation. Next, they had to elaborate the groups’ answers. Finally, the students individually made a summary of the text from answering the comprehension questions. They kept spending a long time to finish the task. Some students even cheated their friends answers.

In the third meeting, the researcher at first divided the students into a group of five. For relaxing the students’ mind, she invited the students to sing a song ‘I Have a Dream’. The song undoubtedly succeeded in attracting students attention. They sang enthusiastically. Because the students were in a good mood, they were very excited to answer the preview questions. By working together with their group members, the students read the passage to find the main idea. Still, some students did not get involved in the group discussion. Each group presented the result of their group discussion while other groups detected the mistakes. Then, they were assigned to elaborate the answers of the groups. At last, the students summarized the passage individually by answering the comprehension questions. They took some time in answering the questions. When they were unsure of the answers, they would ask their friends.

Like in the previous meetings, the researcher began the fourth meeting with the group division. Each group consisted of five students. She played a game ‘Silent and Applause’ to boost students mood in learning. The next steps were not different from those in the previous meetings. However, during this meeting the students started showing different behavior toward the learning. They began actively sharing their ideas with their peers during the discussions. Probably they were getting used to the procedures, and that made them more relax. They were more silent during working on the individual assignment, too, and the result was getting better.

In the fifth meeting the researcher stimulate the students’ minds with some questions. She divided the students into a group of five and together they sang a song “Umberella”. Not only did the pre-activity successfully change the students mood to be less tense, but also it gave them a spirit to work in groups. Since each group member got actively involved in group discussion, they were getting easily to finish the task provided. Also, during the group presentation all students carefully listened and detected the mistakes of other groups. Moreover, when answering the comprehension questions to make a summary, they wisely spent their time. In addition, the students’ summary was much better.

To begin the process of teaching and learning in the last treatment, the researcher some preview questions. The students answered the questions enthusiastically. They even looked forward to putting in group works. They sang a song “We Will Not Go Down” and they were very happy. When the students worked in groups, they seriously discussed the tasks given among their group members. Seemingly they did not want to waste time. They worked hard to make sure the result of the group discussion get done on time. They, so to speak, have mastered the stages of MURDER technique; therefore, without being asked they knew what to do and what was expected of them in the discussion. Even so, they really enjoyed the process. Hard work and togetherness among groups members brought impact on students’ reading comprehension. The students were more active compared to the first meetings. They were already able to find the main idea of the text, detect the mistakes and make a summary.

Having delivered six times treatment to the students of the experimental group, the researcher administered a post-test to both groups to determine the impact of the treatment delivered on students’ reading comprehension skills of the experimental group. The result showed that both groups achieved different progress. 13 out of 20 students in the experimental group got score ≥75. On the contrary, two students of the control group obtained ≥75. Consequently, the mean score of the experimental group on the post-test (74.25) was higher than that of the control group (63.1). Thus, the hypothesis of this research was accepted. In other words, the application of MURDER technique was effective for improving reading comprehension skills of the first grade students of MA Almuhibbah Soulowe. Murder technique made teaching and learing process more interesting and meaningful. The students was easier to find the main idea of the text because they can shared with their patner of the group or other groups.

**CONCLUSION**

Referring to the result of data analysis, the researcher concludes that the application of MURDER technique gives positive effect on the students’ reading comprehension skills. The value of t-counted (), which is greater than the value of t-table (1.997) affirms the effect. In other words, reading comprehension achievement of the first grade students of Madrasah Aliyah Almuhibbah Soulowe who are taught using MURDER technique is better than those who are not instructed using MURDER Technique. This technique can successfully improve the students reading comprehension skills for some reasons. First, it is a student-centered. Second, it boosts the students mood to learn through songs or games. Third, it promotes cooperative learning, in which each member of the group shares the same responsibility in completing the task given. Fourth, through this technique the students can learn all language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and language components (structure, spelling and pronunciation).

**REFERENCES**

Ary, D.J, Sorensen, L.C & Razavieth, A. (2010). *Introduction to Research in Education.* Canada: Nelson Education, Ltd.

Aebersold, J.A. & Field, M.L. (1997)*. From Reader to Reading Teacher*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approach (3rd ed.).* Colombus, Ohio: Pearson Educational, Inc.

DaSilva, A.C. (2006). *Cooperative Learning and Second Language* *Teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gay, L. R. (1996). *Educational Research.* USA; Prentice Hall.

Graham, S. (2007). *Teaching* *Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Difficulties.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Grellet, F. (1998). Developing Reading Skills : *A Practical Guide to Reading Comprehension Exercises.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hornby, A.S. (1987). *Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Taringan, H.G. (1998). *Metodologi Pengajaran Bahasa.* Jakarta: Depdikbud.