

## **Using Text Paraphrasing Strategy to Improve Student's Reading Comprehension at Eight Class of SMP Negeri 1 Panca Rijang**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to find out how well the Text Paraphrasing Strategy works to enhance eighth-grade students' reading comprehension at SMP Negeri 1 Panca Rijang. Using a mixed-method approach, the study combined qualitative and quantitative data. Pre-test and post-test tools were used in a quasi-experimental design with two groups: a control group that got traditional education and an experimental group that was taught the paraphrasing technique. With an average gain of 2.58 points as opposed to 0.36 in the control group, the results showed a considerable improvement in the experimental group's reading comprehension scores. The experimental group's final scores showed that many students made a substantial improvement. Additionally, most students felt more confident and involved in reading activities, and they had a positive opinion of the technique, according to qualitative data from surveys. These findings imply that the Text Paraphrasing Strategy is a useful teaching method for improving reading comprehension and may help junior high school EFL students.

**Keywords:** Paraphrasing Strategy; Reading Comprehension; EFL Students

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reading comprehension is a critical skill in the educational process, particularly for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). It involves not just decoding words, but also understanding, interpreting, and analyzing the text in a meaningful way. Despite the importance of reading comprehension, many students continue to face challenges in fully grasping the content they read, which affects their academic performance. One way to address these challenges is through the use of various

reading strategies that enhance comprehension skills. Among these, paraphrasing is considered one of the most effective strategies to improve reading comprehension.

Paraphrasing, or rewording text in one's own words while maintaining the original meaning, has been shown to help students engage with the text more deeply. This strategy encourages students to process the material actively, which in turn leads to better retention and understanding. According to Kletzien (2009), paraphrasing allows readers to connect new information with their existing knowledge, thus strengthening their comprehension of the material. Additionally, paraphrasing fosters the development of critical thinking and language proficiency, both of which are crucial for mastering a second language.

Despite its recognized benefits, the application of paraphrasing strategies in the classroom has been limited, especially in secondary schools. Teachers often rely on traditional methods of teaching reading comprehension, such as direct translation or simple memorization, which may not engage students or promote deeper understanding. This research seeks to explore how the paraphrasing strategy can be applied to enhance the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Panca Rijang.

The focus of this study is on the use of the text paraphrasing strategy to improve students' reading comprehension skills. Previous studies have shown that paraphrasing not only boosts comprehension but also increases students' confidence and engagement with the reading material. However, limited research has been conducted on its effectiveness in the context of Indonesian secondary schools, particularly in rural areas like Panca Rijang. This gap presents an opportunity to assess the applicability of paraphrasing as a teaching strategy in a local EFL context. This research aims to fill this gap by investigating whether the implementation of the text paraphrasing strategy can significantly improve the reading comprehension of students in SMP Negeri 1 Panca Rijang. The study also examines the level of interest students have in using the paraphrasing strategy to handle reading passages and their overall perception of its effectiveness. By addressing these aspects, the research aims to provide valuable insights into how paraphrasing can be used to enhance reading instruction in Indonesian schools.

In this study, a mixed-methods approach will be used, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The quantitative data will be collected through pre- and post-test assessments to measure improvements in reading comprehension, while the qualitative data will be gathered through student questionnaires to evaluate their interest and perceptions of the paraphrasing strategy. The results of this study will contribute to the growing body of research on effective reading strategies in EFL education and may provide useful recommendations for teachers and educators in similar settings.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading comprehension is an essential skill for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). According to Nuttall (1982), reading comprehension involves the ability to derive meaning from written material, which includes not only decoding the text but also engaging with it in a way that enables students to interpret, analyze, and evaluate information. The process of comprehension is complex, requiring readers to activate prior knowledge, recognize the structure of the text, and make inferences beyond the literal meaning. This is especially challenging for EFL students, who often struggle to understand texts due to limited vocabulary and language proficiency. To address this, various strategies have been developed to improve reading comprehension, one of the most effective being paraphrasing.

Paraphrasing, as described by Kletzien (2009), is the ability to restate a text in one's own words while preserving the original meaning. This strategy encourages active engagement with the text, as students must fully understand the content before they can reword it. Paraphrasing not only enhances comprehension by requiring students to process the material deeply, but it also promotes critical thinking and vocabulary development. By paraphrasing, students can break down complex information into simpler forms, which aids in retention and application of knowledge. As Fisk and Hurst (2003) argue, paraphrasing helps students identify the main ideas and supporting details of a text, fostering a deeper understanding of the material.

Numerous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of paraphrasing in improving reading comprehension. Katims and Harris (1997) found that paraphrasing had a significant positive impact on the reading comprehension of middle school students, including those with learning disabilities. Their research suggests that paraphrasing allows students to organize their thoughts more coherently, making it easier to recall and discuss what they have read. Similarly, research by Schumaker et al. (1984) indicates that paraphrasing helps students retain key information from texts, improving their ability to summarize and synthesize content.

The process of paraphrasing has also been shown to benefit students beyond comprehension. According to Hurst and Fisk (2003), paraphrasing develops students' ability to engage with texts from multiple perspectives. This engagement fosters metacognitive skills, allowing students to monitor their understanding and adjust their strategies as needed. Additionally, paraphrasing can improve students' writing abilities, as it encourages them to use their own words, enhancing both fluency and accuracy in language use.

In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), paraphrasing is particularly beneficial as it helps students process texts more effectively. Paraphrasing is not only a comprehension strategy but also a technique that helps students internalize vocabulary and sentence structures. In fact, paraphrasing tasks often require students to manipulate language, which provides an opportunity to strengthen their

grasp of grammar and syntax. According to Gunning (1996), paraphrasing allows students to practice and reinforce language skills by converting the original text into simpler or more accessible language without losing the meaning.

Furthermore, paraphrasing has been found to foster higher levels of student engagement. A study by Blume (2010) revealed that students who were taught using paraphrasing strategies showed greater involvement in reading activities and felt more confident in their ability to understand texts. This increased engagement can be attributed to the fact that paraphrasing requires students to be more active in their reading process, making them more invested in the material. This can be particularly important in the classroom setting, where students' interest and motivation often play a key role in their academic success.

The role of paraphrasing in improving student motivation and engagement is also supported by the findings of Dewitz and Dewitz (2003), who suggest that individualized comprehension instruction significantly impacts students' attitudes toward reading. By allowing students to interact with texts in a meaningful way, paraphrasing promotes a sense of autonomy and mastery, which boosts their confidence in their ability to comprehend and retain information. In turn, this heightened sense of achievement may encourage students to continue using paraphrasing strategies in other subjects, as indicated by the findings of this study, where students expressed interest in applying the technique outside of English lessons. Paraphrasing is a powerful tool for improving reading comprehension, particularly for EFL students. Through active engagement with texts, paraphrasing helps students process and internalize information, strengthens their vocabulary and language skills, and fosters greater confidence and motivation. Previous studies have shown that paraphrasing not only enhances comprehension but also promotes critical thinking, metacognitive awareness, and student engagement. As such, it is a valuable strategy that teachers should incorporate into their instructional practices to support student learning and success in reading.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Sample**

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the Text Paraphrasing Strategy in improving reading comprehension. The quantitative aspect focused on evaluating students' reading comprehension scores before and after the implementation of the strategy, while the qualitative aspect explored students' perceptions of the strategy through a questionnaire. The research participants consisted of 23 eighth-grade students from SMP Negeri 1 Panca Rijang. These students were divided into two groups: the experimental group, comprising 12 students who received instruction using the text paraphrasing strategy, and the control group, consisting of 11 students who were taught using

conventional reading comprehension techniques. This design allowed for a comparison of the paraphrasing strategy with traditional teaching methods.

### **Instrument and Procedures**

The instruments used in this study were pre-test and post-test assessments and a questionnaire. The reading comprehension tests included reading passages followed by multiple-choice and open-ended questions that measured students' abilities to identify main ideas, supporting details, and comprehend the text overall. The pre-test was administered before the intervention to establish baseline reading comprehension levels, while the post-test was conducted after the intervention to assess any improvements. In addition to the tests, a questionnaire was distributed to the experimental group to collect qualitative data on students' perceptions of the paraphrasing strategy. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale, aiming to evaluate students' interest, confidence, and satisfaction with the strategy as a learning tool.

The research procedure began with the administration of the pre-test to both the experimental and control groups. Afterward, the experimental group received specific instruction on the paraphrasing strategy, which involved teaching students how to read a passage, identify the main points, and rewrite the text using their own words. The instruction was delivered over several sessions, starting with simpler texts and gradually advancing to more complex materials. The teacher modeled the paraphrasing process, followed by group and individual practice, with consistent feedback provided to help students refine their skills. Meanwhile, the control group continued with standard reading comprehension lessons, focusing on vocabulary exercises, word recognition, and general reading strategies without paraphrasing. Upon completing the instructional sessions, both groups took the post-test to measure any differences in reading comprehension performance. Additionally, the experimental group completed the questionnaire to express their views on the paraphrasing method.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis for the quantitative part of the study involved comparing the pre-test and post-test scores for both the experimental and control groups using a paired t-test to determine whether the observed improvements were statistically significant. For the qualitative part, the questionnaire responses from the experimental group were analyzed descriptively to identify common themes related to students' perceptions, engagement, and attitudes toward the paraphrasing strategy. The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses were then integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the text paraphrasing strategy impacted students' reading comprehension and learning experience.

## RESULT AND DISUSSION

The results of this study aim to assess the impact of the Text Paraphrasing Strategy on the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Panca Rijang. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test assessments administered to both the experimental and control groups. The pre-test results served as a baseline for measuring the students' initial comprehension levels, while the post-test results provided insight into the students' improvement after the intervention.

The experimental group, which received instruction using the paraphrasing strategy, showed a significant improvement in their reading comprehension scores compared to the control group, which received traditional instruction. The average pre-test score for the experimental group was 5.75, while the post-test score increased to 8.33, reflecting a gain of 2.58 points. In contrast, the control group showed a minimal improvement, with an average pre-test score of 5.91 and a post-test score of 6.27, resulting in a gain of only 0.36 points.

The significant difference in the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups suggests that the paraphrasing strategy had a positive effect on students' reading comprehension. The improvement in the experimental group can be attributed to the active engagement with the text that paraphrasing encourages. By rewording the text in their own words, students were able to process the material more deeply, leading to better retention and understanding of the content.

The data also show that most students in the experimental group demonstrated significant improvement. The percentage of students achieving a substantial increase in their scores (a gain of 2.5 points or more) was higher in the experimental group compared to the control group. The questionnaire results from the experimental group further corroborate the positive impact of the paraphrasing strategy. According to the responses, 83% of students agreed that paraphrasing helped them better understand the texts, and 75% reported feeling more confident in answering comprehension questions.

*Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Pre-test Mean</b>	<b>Post-test Mean</b>	<b>Gain</b>
Experimental Group	5.75	8.33	2.58
Control Group	5.91	6.27	0.36

The pre-test and post-test results for the experimental group showed that the paraphrasing strategy significantly enhanced students' ability to comprehend reading materials. Furthermore, the qualitative data gathered from the questionnaire revealed that most students found the paraphrasing strategy enjoyable and helpful, indicating that the strategy not only improved their comprehension but also engaged them more effectively in the reading process.

The results of this study indicate that the Text Paraphrasing Strategy had a significant impact on improving reading comprehension among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Panca Rijang. The experimental group, which received paraphrasing instruction, demonstrated a notable improvement in their post-test scores compared to the control group. This finding supports the hypothesis that paraphrasing is an effective strategy for enhancing reading comprehension.

The significant improvement in the experimental group's scores can be attributed to the active nature of the paraphrasing process. As Kletzien (2009) suggests, paraphrasing encourages students to engage with the text more deeply by requiring them to rewrite the material in their own words. This active engagement helps students internalize the information, making it easier to recall and understand. Furthermore, by focusing on the main ideas and supporting details during paraphrasing, students are able to synthesize the information in a more meaningful way, which enhances their overall comprehension.

The minimal improvement observed in the control group's scores suggests that traditional reading instruction, which focused on word recognition and general comprehension strategies, may not be as effective in fostering deep understanding of the material. This finding is consistent with previous research by Fisk and Hurst (2003), who argue that paraphrasing is a more interactive and effective method for developing reading comprehension skills, as it involves multiple cognitive processes, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In addition to improving reading comprehension, the paraphrasing strategy also had a positive effect on student motivation and confidence. The questionnaire results revealed that a majority of students in the experimental group felt more confident in answering comprehension questions after using paraphrasing. This increased confidence may be attributed to the fact that paraphrasing allows students to break down complex ideas into simpler, more understandable terms, making them feel more capable of engaging with the text. As noted by Dewitz and Dewitz (2003), providing students with individualized comprehension strategies like paraphrasing can lead to greater motivation and self-efficacy in reading.

Another important finding from this study is the high level of interest that students showed in using the paraphrasing strategy for other subjects. Approximately 67% of students expressed interest in applying the paraphrasing technique in subjects other than English. This reflects the versatility of paraphrasing as a cognitive strategy that can be used across different disciplines to improve understanding and retention of information. As Parker et al. (2002) suggest, reading comprehension strategies, when adapted to students' needs, can enhance their overall academic performance and foster a positive attitude toward learning.

Despite the positive outcomes, it is important to note that the students' grammatical accuracy in paraphrasing remained a challenge. While the experimental group

demonstrated significant improvement in their reading comprehension, some students struggled with the linguistic aspects of paraphrasing, such as sentence structure and word choice. This finding highlights the need for further instruction and practice in grammar and syntax to ensure that students not only understand the content but are also able to express it accurately in their own words.

The results of this study also suggest that paraphrasing may be particularly beneficial for EFL students, who often face difficulties in comprehending texts due to limited vocabulary and language proficiency. By practicing paraphrasing, students are encouraged to expand their vocabulary and improve their sentence construction, which are key skills for successful language acquisition. As Gunning (1996) argues, paraphrasing helps students develop their language skills by encouraging them to think critically about the text and express their understanding in a coherent manner. The findings of this study support the effectiveness of the Text Paraphrasing Strategy in improving reading comprehension among eighth-grade students. The strategy not only enhanced students' ability to understand and recall the material but also increased their confidence and engagement with the reading process. These findings suggest that paraphrasing should be incorporated into reading instruction to help students develop stronger comprehension skills and become more active, confident learners.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the Text Paraphrasing Strategy in improving the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Panca Rijang. The results demonstrate that the paraphrasing strategy significantly enhanced students' reading comprehension compared to traditional reading instruction. The experimental group, which was taught using the paraphrasing technique, showed a notable improvement in their post-test scores, reflecting the positive impact of this strategy on their ability to understand and retain the material. In addition to improving comprehension, the study also found that the paraphrasing strategy boosted students' confidence and motivation. A majority of students in the experimental group reported feeling more confident in answering comprehension questions and expressed interest in using the strategy in other subjects. This highlights the versatility of paraphrasing as a cognitive strategy that can benefit students beyond just reading comprehension in English, contributing to their overall academic success. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the Text Paraphrasing Strategy is an effective tool for improving reading comprehension, particularly in EFL classrooms. The study suggests that educators should consider integrating paraphrasing into their teaching methods to foster deeper engagement with texts and promote critical thinking skills. Future research could explore the long-term effects of paraphrasing and its application in different educational contexts to further validate its benefits.



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