



Teacher's Strategy in Improving Reading Comprehension Skills of Arabic Texts at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the teacher's strategy for improving reading comprehension skills of Arabic texts in class v at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic Elementary School) in Cirebon City. This qualitative research uses a descriptive approach. The sources of data or informants in this research are Arabic teachers, fifth-grade students, and school principals. The data were collected through observation, in depth-interviews and documentation. Data analysis starts with data reduction, presentation, and interpretation. The results showed that the Arabic teacher's strategies in improving reading comprehension skills of Arabic texts in class V were as follows: 1. Reading texts Aloud, 2; translating texts, 3. Reviewing translation results, 4, Answering questions, 5. Sharing answers, and 6. Repetition. Arabic text comprehension reading skills in class V are quite good, obtaining an average score that has met the minimum completeness criteria. The teacher and student experienced during the learning process reading comprehension skills in Class V supported by the activity of reading the Holy Qur'an every Monday to Thursday, which is carried out after learning activities, recitation activities at home with a teacher of the Qur'an, the availability of a library at school, and studying with peers. Then some of the difficulties faced are the lack of parental support, the habits of students who often play with gadgets, and the lack of availability of book facilities in the library.

Keywords: *teacher strategy, reading comprehension skills, Arabic text.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan strategi guru dalam meningkatkan keterampilan pemahaman membaca teks bahasa Arab di kelas V di salah satu Madrasah Ibtidaiyah di Kota Cirebon. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif. Sumber data atau informan dalam penelitian ini adalah guru bahasa Arab, siswa kelas V, dan kepala sekolah. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Data yang dianalisis dimulai dari reduksi data, penyajian data, dan interpretasi data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi guru bahasa Arab dalam meningkatkan keterampilan pemahaman membaca teks bahasa Arab di kelas V adalah sebagai berikut; 1. membaca teks dengan keras, 2. menerjemahkan teks, 3. menelaah hasil terjemahan, 4. menjawab pertanyaan, 5. berbagi jawaban, dan 6. pengulangan. Keterampilan membaca pemahaman teks bahasa Arab pada siswa kelas V sudah cukup baik dengan memperoleh nilai rata-rata yang telah memenuhi kriteria ketuntasan minimal. Pengalaman guru dan siswa selama proses pembelajaran keterampilan membaca pemahaman di Kelas V didukung dengan adanya kegiatan membaca Al-Qur'an setiap hari senin sampai dengan Kamis yang dilaksanakan setelah kegiatan pembelajaran, kegiatan pengajian di rumah bersama guru mengaji, dan tersedianya perpustakaan di sekolah, serta belajar bersama teman sebaya. Kemudian beberapa kendala yang dihadapi adalah kurangnya dukungan orang tua, kebiasaan siswa yang sering bermain gadget, dan kurangnya ketersediaan fasilitas buku di perpustakaan.

Kata kunci: *strategi pembelajaran, keterampilan membaca pemahaman, teks*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fairly complex process. According to Al-Alwan (2012), reading is the process of a person not only understanding reading as a direct meaning but also understanding implied ideas contained in the reading. The meaning of reading is also interpreted by Dewitz and Graves (2021) that the reader actively build meaning by following the structure of the text in writing; connecting ideas in the reading activities is important to help students gain access to different types of knowledge, information and ideas. In addition, reading has many benefits for students because it can improve students' social skills and open a new world for them, especially in understanding foreign languages. The problem faced in teaching foreign languages is the lack of vocabulary, which makes it difficult for students to read comprehensively.

Individuals who have developed reading skills necessary to grow self-improvement (Akyol & Boyaci-Altinay, 2019). Many cases are found in learning Arabic in elementary school. Some Arabic teachers in Indonesia have still trapped in the Qawaid wa Tarjamah teaching method, the classical method that emphasizes linguistic formulas and a word-for-word transliteration that relies on rote memorization. This is less relevant to the needs of today's children who have been born as digital natives (Muslimah, 2021). Since strategy use is a key skill in successful reading comprehension, it should be considered in any instructional practice (Friesen & Haigh, 2018; Okkinga, Steensel, Gelderen, Schooten, & Slegers, 2018). The problem in reading Arabic can also be from students who are difficult to condition and do not understand the Arabic vocabulary that is read, so the meaning changes to what it should be (Solkan, 2021).

Reading Comprehension is the ability to read the text for understanding purposes (Spooner, Gathercole, & Baddeley, 2006). Reading comprehension is carried out in school activities because it is very important for academic learning, professional abilities, and lifelong learning (Zare-ee, 2007). Reading comprehension is the main factor possessed by every student. To provide opportunities for growth in understanding of any Arabic subject matter, reading comprehension strategies must be taught to acquire the knowledge needed to meet accountability standards.

A previous study found that certain linguistic aspects of Arabic impact reading processes differently when compared with other languages (Asadi, Khateb, & Shany, 2017). In addition, the findings of the study by (Nasirudin, Baharudin, Yusoff, & Yudof, 2022) showed moderate mastery levels in Arabic text reading skills among the students. Teaching reading comprehension to students is a challenging job. Some Arabic teachers agreed that code-switching could be used as a teaching strategy to facilitate students' understanding of learning materials (Arifa & Ira, 2022). Another study also stated that the SQ4R method could help students at the elementary school level in reading comprehension of Arabic (Basar & Gürbüz, 2017; Erlina, 2018). Teachers must have good skills or competence to advance students' reading comprehension skills. With adequate reading comprehension skills, it will be easier for them to get information from various sources. Based on these problems, there needs to be a strategy or method used by teachers to overcome these problems so that if a teacher can help children's learning difficulties, it will certainly not have a severe impact on students. Therefore, the researcher will research on the Arabic Language Teacher's Strategy in Improving Arabic Text Comprehension Reading Skills and determine the strategies used by language teachers in improving Arabic text comprehension reading skills in class V one of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Cirebon City.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behaviour (Moleong, 2018). Researchers conducted an in-depth analysis by observing phenomena that took place in schools. The school where the research was conducted was Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Cirebon City.

This research lasted five months, from November 2021 to April 2022. The subjects of this research were Arabic teachers, fifth-grade students, and school principals at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Cirebon City. The techniques used by researchers in collecting data are observation, interviews, and documentation. The observation referred to in this study is data collection by conducting observations that include focusing on the object. When conducting observations, researchers used guidelines that contained several indicators of teacher and student activity in the classroom. The teacher indicators that can be observed include (1) the teacher's teaching skills, (2) The strategy used by the teacher in teaching and (3) the motivation carried out by the teacher. Students who study in class are observed with the following indicators: (1) Reading the text with the correct intonation, (2) Determining the meaning of vocabulary, (3) Using vocabulary in the context of sentences, (4) Understanding the main idea of the material read, (5) Distinguishing one-word form with another, (6) Making a sentence with a certain word form.

The data collection technique using the interview method aims to obtain information and information directly from the individuals who are the research subjects. The questions in the interviews conducted by researchers with teachers were about learning in the classroom, the strategies for learning to read, and how teachers experienced students who had difficulty reading Arabic texts. In this study, documentation is used to complete the research data. The researcher collected data on the values of the ability to read Arabic texts, teaching materials, and photos of learning activities. The data analysis technique used in this research is to reduce the findings. The reduced data is displayed in tabular form and then interpreted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Having observations and interviews with Arabic language teachers, students, and school principals can conclude the strategies used by Arabic teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Cirebon City. The results of interviews and observations are explained by the formulation of the problem that has been determined.

Strategies of Arabic Teacher in Improving Reading Comprehension Skills of Arabic Texts

As for the teacher's strategy in improving reading comprehension skills of Arabic texts is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. The Arabic Teacher Strategies in Improving Reading Comprehension Skills

Teacher Strategies	Student Response	Condition
Reading Aloud Text	Student imitate what the teacher reads	-
Translating texts/ Translation Method	Understanding what is read	Provided by teacher or look up translations through the arabic dictionary
Reviewing translation results	Students listen to the teacher's explanation of the content's text	Memorizing important details and information
Answering questions/ evaluation	Answering the question	Question and answer method or assignment
Sharing answers	Students share answers with their classmates	All students know the correct answer (after all have been corrected)
Repitition	Asking question to teacher	Re-explain the content of the text that has not been understood by students

Based on the results of the interviews above, there were six strategies used by Arabic teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Cirebon City. First, reading text aloud provides a direct experience of the reading sound of the Arabic text presented. Reading aloud could attract students' attention and be a good habit for introducing texts in foreign languages. Reading aloud could also improve cognitive abilities, higher vocabulary retention, and students' concentration on the text they read (Islam & Eltilib, 2020). Some studies state that reading aloud can improve reading skills more effectively (Sofyan, 2020). Reading aloud helps the individual to understand the sound of a word and associate it with its connotation because

the teacher pronounces the word in public. Then students associate the spoken sound with the phoneme that precedes it on reputation (Al Tai, 2020). Walczyk and Griffith-Ross (2007) recommend the following alternative strategies to avoid confusion of understanding in teaching foreign languages to students: (1) read slowly: the teacher needs to read slowly based on the difficulty level of the text. Reading slowly can help teachers to prevent potential confusion of students and then improve their reading comprehension; (2) Pause: Pause/Short breaks should be given to improve students' reading comprehension; (3) Look Again: Looking back occurs when students try to take a brief overview and read the previous text again to strengthen reading comprehension; (4) Repeat Text: Repeated reading is done to minimize students' poor comprehension, often used when confusion and increased focus on comprehension are primary; (5) Reading Aloud: This strategy is used for difficult texts or in noisy environments. Also, reading aloud can help students focus when challenged or bored. Therefore, reading aloud could be an effective strategy for improving students' reading abilities.

Second, translating text/ translation method. In this study, the teacher provides long Arabic text translations and allows students to translate vocabulary or short sentences. Translation can describe as a piece of work that is usually more explicit than its source (Kinga, 2001). Previous researchers have widely used the strategy used by this teacher. This can be seen from the results of research conducted by Kurniawan, Miftah, and Qamariah, (2020), which states that translating strategies can improve students' ability to understand foreign language texts and increase students' motivation. This teacher's strategy can improve students' Arabic vocabulary skills so that students can understand Arabic reading comprehension of Arabic texts. In addition to adding insight into their vocabulary, students can also understand Arabic learning materials as a whole.

The translation strategies a sensitive and subtle task of language studies; it involves some serious issues. Another study analyzed the problems that can be encountered when using this strategy. Problems in translation strategy lie in the grammar, words, style, sound, and/or use of the language in question. In this strategy, the teacher provides Arabic text translated into Bahasa. Some methods can be used in carrying out translation strategies in foreign language learning: (1) Word-for-Word Translation: the translation is carried out with this strategy by transferring the meaning of each word from a foreign language into the target language, namely Indonesian. It can be said to translate the words one by one. This method is risky because it can annoy the meaning of the sentence. For this reason, the teacher's consideration of the meaning of the words found in the translation must be considered to fit the context. (2) One-to-One Literal Translation is a wider translation form. In this method, the teacher must also consider the meaning of each word. (3) Literal Translation of Meaning, this is a translation of the meaning as close, accurate and complete as possible. This is sometimes called close or direct translation (Akan, Karim, & Chowdhury, 2019).

Third, review translation results. In this strategy, the teacher explains the meaning of the text that has been translated into the language. Students listen to the teacher's explanation while noting important things. The teacher also asks students to memorize important vocabulary to understand text sentences in Arabic easily. Reading comprehension is a

person's ability to reconstruct messages contained in the text he reads (Dewi, Prawiyogi, & Wahyuni, 2021).

Fourth, Answering questions/ Evaluation. In this strategy, the teacher asks students questions related to the contents of the reading text directly. When some students can answer the teacher's questions, the teacher conducts a follow-up evaluation by giving questions to students. Students are given questions about Arabic reading texts already available in textbooks. Usually, these questions are given by the teacher to be done at home. Another assignment method that can be done in learning reading comprehension is that is carried out by Khasanah and Cahyani (2016) implementing the QAR (Questioning Answer Relationship) strategy with direct instruction from the teacher has a positive effect; in particular, active students do pre-reading, reading, and post-reading as well as motivated to think hard by answering the questions used in QAR strategy. Giving questions in learning can also make students have good reading comprehension skills. This is confirmed by research from Bolos (2012) has reported on basic strategies that facilitate mastery of reading skills. Reading comprehension strategies may include using connections, asking questions, and identifying the importance of comprehension.

Fifth, Sharing Answers. In this strategy, the teacher asks students to share corrected answers with their classmates. Students see each other the results of the answers that the teacher has corrected. According to the Arabic teacher in this study, this method of sharing answers makes it easier for students to know the correct answer from the teacher's correction.

Sixth, Repetition. In every lesson, repetition is something that can improve student understanding. The Arabic teacher repeats or reviews the reading text material given. This aims to deepen students' understanding further or make students who previously did not understand become understood. The strategy teacher was following previous researchers because of the limitations of student memory in capacity and duration so that the information learned could be understood; it was necessary to integrate the information with the reader's prior knowledge or through active and repeated practice of the information into the permanent memory (Liu, 2015).

Skills in Reading Comprehension of Arabic Texts

Based on the results of interviews and tests conducted with Arabic teachers, school principals, and students, the reading comprehension skills of Arabic texts in grade V are described as diagram 1.

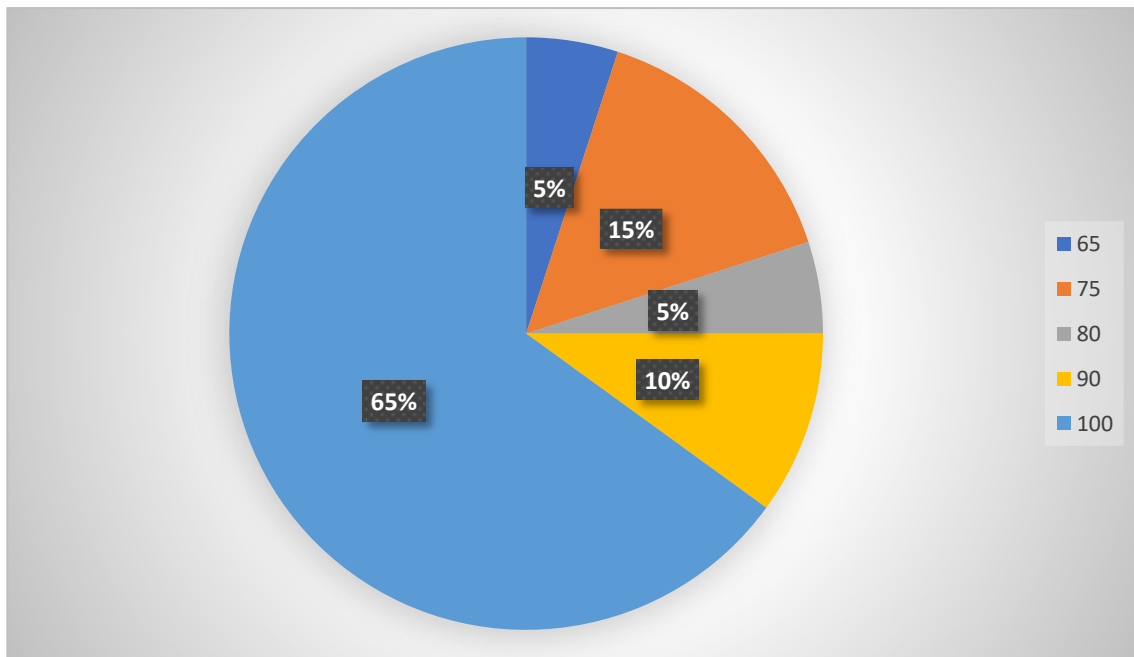


Diagram 1. Student Reading Comprehension

The picture above illustrates students' reading comprehension test results with the "Living Room and School Library" text. It can be seen that 5% of students score 65 and 80 on the reading comprehension test, meaning there is only one student who scores 65 and 80. Then there are 10% of students who get a score of 90, which means there are only two students get a score of 90. Furthermore, there are 15% of students who got a score of 75, which means there are three students who got a score of 75. The most results are from 13 students; namely, 65% of students got a score of 100 out of 19 students.

From what has been said above, it is known that the skills of fifth-grade students in reading comprehension of Arabic texts are quite good. As stated by the headmaster and Arabic teacher. The fifth-grade students also said how the process of teaching and learning activities was explained and that the learning was quite good where the material was delivered well; the teacher's attitude was friendly and did not seem angry, thus making the fifth-grade students easy to understand the material. When a learning process goes well, the strategies, methods, media, and techniques used when teaching will also impact the student's success.

Supporting Factors and Inhibiting Factors in improving reading comprehension skills of Arabic text

Based on the results of interviews conducted with Arabic teachers, fifth- grade students and school principals as follows:

1. Supporting factors

What is a supporting factor for teachers in improving students' reading comprehension skills in Arabic texts is that apart from being supported by the ability of the teacher to process, divide time, choose the right strategy and deliver material in class, there are also routine activities that are always carried out as a supporting factor. Arabic teacher said:

"The supporting factor is that we have activities or reciting programs (tadarus) together and I always associate it with Arabic language material, so indirectly these activities really help children in their reading. In addition to school, at home the children often do it with the Koran teacher. And I always say you have to be diligent in reading it both at school and at home, so that after both are applied, Alhamdulillah it works. In addition, there are several other supporting factors such as libraries, magazines, etc. Peers are also a supporter in this regard, for example, I always tell children to assess their friends' assignments, so there is a will of its own."

The headmaster expressed the same thing regarding the supporting factors, namely as follows:

"Things that support Arabic learning are libraries, then newspapers, magazines, from which children can be more diligent in reading".

The provision of magazines, newspapers and Arabic reading books provided by the school reflects that the environment can help students learn a foreign language. According to research that has been done, the environment can affect the acceleration or success of learning Arabic (Ritonga, Nurdianto, & Rahmawati, 2022; Salam, Asrori, Mudinillah, & Ibrahim, 2022). Then this is in line expressed by the fifth-grade students whom the author has interviewed; the answer is as follows:

"I think it is very good, so it is easy to understand", another student answered "I think it is easy to understand, if you explain, you can relax and don't get angry".

The conclusion from the explanation above is that the supporting factors in improving reading comprehension skills of Arabic texts are the activities of reading the Qur'an together at school or home with the Koran teacher; besides that, there are libraries, newspapers, magazines, and peers are always supportive. Then there is a willingness oneself to learn. Then there is a willingness from oneself to learn. This is done so that children can further improve their skills in learning Arabic.

As explained above, this Al-Quran reading activity (*tadarus*) is carried out from Monday to Thursday. Sometimes, students are also helped by having a Koran teacher at home, so students are accustomed to it. From these activities, the teacher also relates it to learning Arabic so that material can also be conveyed. This habituation also produces positive results for the students themselves. Habituation is an activity that is carried out continuously in a child's daily life so that it becomes a good habit. This habit includes moral development, religious values, morals, socio-emotional development and independence. Positive habits from an early age are very positive in the future (Zuhri, 2013).

In addition, there are other factors, namely the willingness of the students themselves; some students do feel that learning Arabic is easy to understand, so it is easy to digest, supported by the teacher's relaxed attitude and does not seem angry. Then peers who are always supportive when doing practice questions, helping each other, and correcting each other's assignments, of course, with the direction of the teacher. According to Wilson in Agustiningtyas and Surjanti (2021), students with colleagues who can achieve higher learning outcomes tend to affect the academic performance of other individuals in the group. Furthermore, Santrock in Agustiningtyas and Surjanti (2021) suggests that a group of peers can have a positive or negative effect depending on the

goal. In this case, peers are very influential in positive things in helping his fellow friends who are having difficulties. This research is also in line with what has been done that there is a significance between reading comprehension ability and peers' help (Sinaga & Herman, 2020). Other important factors include school facilities, such as books that can support students' reading activities in the library. Moreover, there are also newspapers or magazines.

2. Inhibiting factors

Based on the results of interviews with Arabic teachers and school principals, the inhibiting factors are as follows:

"The problem is that children who are not fluent in reading, how will they understand if they are not fluent in reading. Second, the tendency of children to play with gadgets, the condition of students' parents who sometimes do not support them so that children play more. Then there are facilities and infrastructure that are not supportive, because first the library and the title of the book still do not meet the standards, then the library room is also not equipped with various supporting facilities, so we are going forward with a class library."

It can be concluded that there are several inhibiting factors, including the surrounding environment, such as parents of students who do not understand Arabic, facilities and infrastructure, and students' tendency to use gadgets.

Of the several inhibiting factors, there must be a solution to overcome these problems. The teacher himself certainly has an important role, and the solution made by the teacher is to provide follow-up giving assignments at home and prioritize the class library.

As explained above, the surrounding environment (parents) with a lack of knowledge of Arabic makes it difficult for parents to help their children when there is homework (homework). Then the students tend to play with gadgets to make it more fun. Then the library, whose rooms are also not filled with various supporting facilities—furthermore, by the class library. According to Lamb and Arnold in Putri (2008), the factors influencing reading are (1) Physiological Factors. Physiological factors concern physical health and neurological development; (2) Intellectual Factors. Intellectual related to intelligence is the ability to think which consists of a basic understanding of the given situation and respond appropriately; (3) Environmental Factors. Environmental factors include the background and experience of students at home and the socio-economic status of students' families; (4) Psychological Factors. Psychological factors include (a) motivation, (b) interest, and (c) social, emotional, and adjustment maturity. This is in line with the results of observations and interviews author got while in the field.

CONCLUSION

According to the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that teacher strategies for improving reading comprehension skills were Reading Aloud the text, translating the text, reviewing the text, answering questions, sharing answers, and repetition. The reading comprehension skills of fifth graders of Arabic text are quite good. The factors that support the success of the teachers in teaching understanding of reading Arabic texts are Al-Qur'an reading activities, students' willingness to try to read Arabic texts, studying with

peers, and library facilities owned by the school. However, the inhibiting factors for students' success in reading comprehension are lack of parental support, student habits that often play gadgets, and lack of availability of book facilities in the library.

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