

Paragraph shrinking as a strategy to improve reading comprehension

Zulfadli A. Aziz¹, Sofyan A. Gani², Zurina Zora³

¹English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Syiah
Kuala, Aceh Indonesia

zulfadli.aziz@unsyiah.ac.id

²English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Syiah
Kuala, Aceh Indonesia

sofyangani@yahoo.com

³English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Syiah
Kuala, Aceh Indonesia

zurinazora@gmail.com

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.26418/jeltim.v4i2.58432>

Abstract

This research was carried out to discover the effectiveness of using the paragraph shrinking strategy in improving students' reading comprehension, specifically in understanding general information, detailed information, reference, and vocabulary. The method of this was quasi-experimental design research. The population of this research was 224 students in the first grade of a junior high school. The results showed that students' average scores on general information increased from 410 in the pretest to 565 in the posttest. Likewise, their score of detailed information increased from 430 in the pretest became 605 in the posttest. Then, the students' reference average score increased from 590 in the pretest become 610 in the posttest. Last, their vocabulary average score increased from 600 in the pretest to 630 in the posttest. Based on the results of the t-test, the df value was 29, and the deT value was 16.370. Based on the SPSS output of the table, the Sig. (2-tailed) had a p-value = 0.00, meaning that the p-value was <0.05. The researchers found that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. In conclusion, there is a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after learning using the paragraph shrinking strategy.

Keywords: paragraph shrinking strategy; reading; reading comprehension

How to cite this paper: Aziz, Z.A., Gani, S.A., & Zora, Z. (2022). Paragraph shrinking as a strategy to improve reading comprehension. *Journal of English*

Language Teaching Innovations and Materials (Jeltim), 4(2), 191-212. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.26418/jeltim.v4i2.58432>

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.26418/jeltim.v4i2.58432>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

In learning English, reading is one of the essential skills students need to learn and master. Learning how to read is something crucial for students because reading is a prominent aspect of written communication which is commonly used as formal communication (Ayu, 2021). As a process of interpreting information offered in a written form by making sense of words, phrases, and connected material (Siregar et al., 2019), students are expected to understand and get the meaning behind a text. By understanding the written text, students can obtain information and get broader knowledge in the practice of reading (Dhillon et al., 2020).

Reading is very important to students in schools, from elementary schools to senior high schools and vocational high schools. As it is stated in the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture Decree No. 65 Year 2013 (Kemendikbud, 2013), the aim of reading in the curriculum is to make students able to comprehend the meaning of written language, both interpersonal and transactional. Students are directed to understand many kinds of texts such as recount, descriptive, and narrative. They are also expected to gain knowledge and information from the texts.

A student is considered successful in passing the English subject if they can achieve the minimum standard criteria score determined by the school. At the Junior High School level, the students should usually reach the minimum score of 75 to pass the English subject. It was found during the preliminary study that many students got difficulties achieving the minimum standard criteria to score even though they had been taught all materials provided in the curriculum within the appropriate time limit. The students face difficulties in understanding general information, detailed information, reference, and vocabulary.

Based on the preliminary study carried out by the researchers at a state junior high school in the Aceh Province, it was found that the process of teaching and learning English was still taught traditionally, where the teachers became the main source and center of the class. Sometimes, the students were asked to read aloud and repeat the text one by one and to translate it into the Indonesian language. Then, the teachers explained the grammar rules. It could be observed that the students did not enjoy the learning process and they got difficulties understanding general information, detailed information, reference, and vocabulary.

Paragraph shrinking strategy may solve the problems stated above as it involves sifting through the information, identifying what is important, then

synthesizing and restating that information. Harris and Graham (2015) stated that paragraph shrinking is a simple strategy used to identify the main idea of a paragraph or short section of a text. This is an effective strategy to train students to comprehend a text (Preast et al., 2019). Some studies have also shown the effectiveness and significant effect of using the paragraph shrinking strategy in improving students' reading skills (see, for example, Ridianto, 2018; Mardhaty, 2018; Sagita, 2021). This present research, therefore, is intended to see the effectiveness of the paragraph shrinking strategy, specifically in understanding general information, detailed information, reference, and vocabulary in reading skills. The researchers are answering the question of whether the class treated with the paragraph shrinking strategy gained higher scores on students' reading comprehension in understanding general information, detailed information, reference, and vocabulary compared with that which is not taught by using the strategy.

Reading is related to daily life. People need to read many kinds of written materials, such as academic books, newspapers, and magazines, which can enrich their experience and knowledge (Herman et al., 2020). It means that reading is beneficial for providing more understanding in learning and plays a significant role in life by allowing us to keep up with current knowledge. Reading is a complex process that involves instruction between the reader, language, and ideas of the text. It suggests that reading is a good way to catch all of the directions between the readers with the text.

Reading comprehension is a process of transferring knowledge through the ability of mind to think and understand the information. Comprehension means understanding, reading without understanding or comprehending is empty (Damanik & Herman, 2021). Klingner et al. (2015) says reading comprehension is a multifaceted, extremely complicated process that incorporates interactions between readers and the information they bring to the text (prior knowledge, application of strategies), as well as factors specific to the text itself (interest in the text, understanding of text types). Reading comprehension is the process of receiving information between the readers and the text when the readers understand the information that is asserted in the text by relating it with readers' knowledge. The readers understand the information that they get, the situation that they face, and the fact that they face based on the knowledge that readers have known (Nurdianti et al., 2019). Therefore, students should improve their reading comprehension skills to be successful in the learning process.

Teachers play a very important role in students' ability to learn to read. Teachers should encourage students to understand and comprehend what they read through reading comprehension. Reading is not only a source of information and an enjoyable activity but also a tool to extend one's knowledge of the language. Reading is very necessary to widen the mind and gain an understanding of a foreign culture.

To make the students easy to understand the texts, teachers should use appropriate strategies in teaching reading. Besides the appropriate strategy, the teachers should also consider the principle of teaching reading which should relate to the student's prior knowledge (Ridianto, 2018). Teachers must consider several principles when teaching reading. They may follow these guiding concepts when instructing students in reading. Harmer (2015) proposes five principles for teaching reading. The first principle, reading is not considered a passive skill since teachers need to be knowledgeable about words, images, and arguments. The second principle is that students must be interested in what they are reading. It implies that students who don't interact with the text will not be interested in it. They must therefore be interested in what they are reading, and the teacher must facilitate that. The following principle states that students should be encouraged to respond to a reading text substance rather than merely the language. It is crucial to allow students to respond to the significance of the reading text message. Prediction is the next reading principle. Prediction is a key component of reading, and this is thought that using predictions can help students to comprehend the material. The last principle is that good teacher exploit reading text to the full. They integrate the reading text into interesting class sequences.

Certain issues arise throughout the teaching and learning of reading from both students and teachers. The issue stems not just from the students but also from the teachers. The teachers employ the same method in every class meeting making students bored with the material as a result of this. The teachers continue to employ a repetitious method, and it results in students getting low motivation because their teacher lacks an efficient approach for piquing their interest in learning, and studying English becomes tedious. The student will be motivated to study if they are prepared to do so. Along with preparation, strong resolve is needed to conquer challenges and problems. The student's ability to establish a good attitude will be helped by readiness. Because interruptions impair learning, attentiveness is necessary for comprehending the subject (Wahyuni, 2019).

Paragraph shrinking can be considered by teachers to use in teaching reading effectively as it may raise students' awareness of reading as a skill that requires active engagement. By teaching reading strategies explicitly, teachers help students develop both their ability and confidence to handle communication situations they come across outside of the classroom. Harris and Graham (2015) stated that paragraph shrinking is a simple strategy for identifying the main idea of a paragraph or short section of text. It requires reading additional text, paragraph by paragraph, and identifying the main idea. Ridianto (2018) also adds that the paragraph shrinking strategy is one of strategy in teaching reading that trains the students' ability to comprehend the paragraph in a text.

The paragraph shrinking strategy is aimed at improving students' comprehension by identifying the main idea of the text. When students read the text, they stop at the end of each paragraph to figure out the main idea of the

section they have just read (Melekoğlu, 2019). In this strategy, students are instructed to read the text and summarize a paragraph after reading for 5 minutes. Students should know the "who or what" the paragraph is about, then tell the most important thing about "who or what". At the end of each paragraph, students say the main idea in 10 words or less (Harris & Graham, 2015). Teachers should consider applying the paragraph shrinking strategy as it is said to be one of the effective strategies in improving students' reading comprehension.

METHOD

This recent study employed experimental research. The researchers took two classes from seventh-grade students of class VII A as the experimental group and VII F as a control group. The research started by conducting the pretest for both experimental and controlled classes. The experimental class was taught by using the paragraph shrinking strategy, while the controlled class was taught without using the strategy. In the last session, the researchers conducted the posttest for the two classes to get the data on the outcome.

The population of this research was all the students in the first grade of a state Junior High School in Lhokseumawe, the Aceh Province, which consisted of seven classes with a total number of 224 students. In selecting the sample, the researchers employed simple random sampling. In this study, the researchers selected the samples by doing the lottery method. Since the lottery method is quite burdensome if it is done by hand, the lottery method is done by using a random picker on a website to save time and be more effective and efficient. As the result, there were two classes chosen to be experimental and control classes. One class was an experimental group where class VII A was chosen with 30 students involved in the research. Another class was class VII F with 30 students in the control class.

The instruments used for this study were tests that involved pretest and posttest that consist of 20 multiple choice questions per test in concern of all reading comprehension; general information, detailed information, reference, and vocabulary. The students were given the test twice, before and after the treatment. In other words, the pretest was conducted before the treatment and the posttest was done after the treatment.

In this study, a set of multiple-choice items was used for both the pretest and posttest. These types of questions are based on the comprehension of reading aspects. The students would be given 100 points if they could answer all questions. Since there were 20 questions, thus the students would get 5 points for every correct answer. The 5 points came from 100 divided by 20. Then, these 5 points would be multiplied by the total of students' correct answers. For example, if a student could answer 12 questions correctly, the score would be the result of 12 multiplied by 5 points. Thus, the student who got a score of 60 on the test, and

he/she is considered to fail the test since his/her score did not reach the school-given criteria of assessment which is 75.

In the data analyzing process, the researchers used the IBM SPSS v.20 application to determine the information. The t-test formula was employed to analyze the data. The difference between the students' pretest and posttest scores in the experimental class and control class was also determined using the t-test. Before performing the t-test, the researchers calculated the normality and homogeneity test.

FINDINGS

The result data of students' reading comprehension achievement were obtained through the pretest and posttest from both the experimental class and control classes. The following table is the tabulation of the pretest and posttest of the experimental class.

Table 1. The Results of Pretest and Posttest Scores of Experimental Class

Pretest and Posttest Score of Experimental Class		
Aspects of Reading	Pretest	Posttest
General Information	410	565
Detailed Information	430	605
Reference	590	610
Vocabulary	600	630

Table 1 above shows that there are four skills that the researchers focus on to improve reading comprehension by implementing the paragraph shrinking strategy, namely general information, detailed information, reference, and vocabulary. There is a significant difference in the general information column, where the student's pretest score is only 410 but has increased to 565. Likewise, with detailed information, 430 becomes 605. Figure 1 below presents the results of the previous table tabulation.

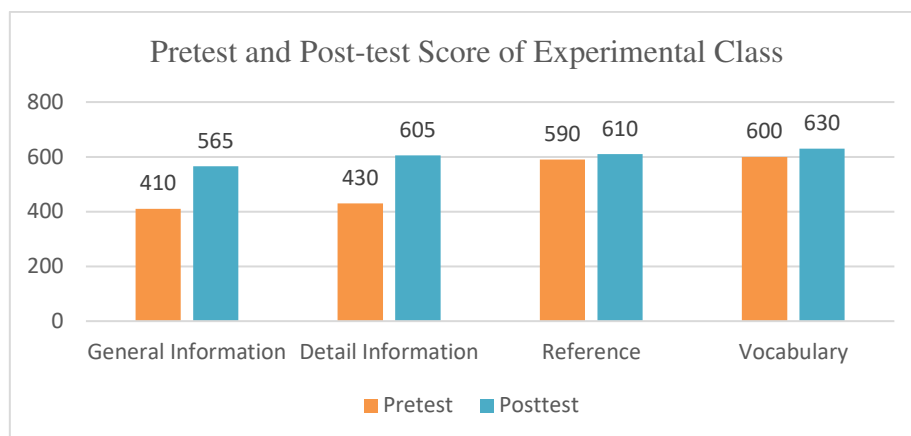


Figure 1. The Results of Pretest and Posttest in Experimental Class

As shown in Figure 1, the results of the pretest and posttest scores are slightly different. The striking difference is seen in the students' comprehension in understanding general information and detailed information. In the other two aspects, reference and vocabulary, students in this experimental class only experienced a slight increase. This shows that only a few students have the difficulty in understanding these two aspects of reading.

The pretest was given in both classes before doing the treatment. This test was intended to measure the students' reading comprehension before being treated by using the paragraph shrinking strategy. There were 30 students participated in the experimental class.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Pretest Scores (Experimental Class)

Score Interval	Experimental Class	
	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
50-55	1	3.3
60-65	16	53.4
70-75	10	33.3
80-85	3	10
90-95	-	-
100	-	-
<i>SUM</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>100</i>

Based on the table above, it is obvious that more students are in the range or score interval below the minimum standard of completeness criteria, which is below a score of 75. There is even one student (3.3%) in the range of 50. There are 16 (53.4%) students who are in the interval 60-65, 10 (33.3%) students in the interval 70-75, and only 3 (10%) students who are in the range 80-85.

The paragraph shrinking strategy was applied in the process of teaching and learning reading of the descriptive text as a treatment. The treatments required five sessions, then the remaining sessions were presented for pretest and posttest. The treatment was done in 90 minutes in each meeting. The focused skill was to improve reading comprehension when the students read descriptive texts, especially in understanding general information, detailed information, reference, and vocabulary.

Students were taught to read a paragraph and the teacher performed the procedures of the paragraph shrinking Strategy as follows; (1) Select the required reading and introduce it to the class. (2) Assign students to pairs in the classroom by determining which ones need assistance with particular skills and which ones are most suited to teach those skills to others. (3) Demonstrate the process to students to make sure they know how to use the strategy. (4) Have the teacher-assigned couple alternate between being the "Coach" and the "Player" roles. (5) Request that no one read the text aloud for the entire five minutes. Students should pause after each paragraph to recite the key ideas from the text, the main idea, the most crucial detail regarding who or what was mentioned in the paragraph, and the who or what of the paragraph. (6) As they take turns reading, ask students to summarize the major point in no more than 10 words. This can help to check their understanding. (7) Award each pair points when the above goals of the strategy are met.

Posttest was given for both classes after the treatment. The posttest was given to find out the result achievement of the students in learning reading comprehension by using the paragraph shrinking strategy. The posttest had the same number of questions as the pretest. Therefore, both of pretest and posttest had the same difficulty level.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Posttest Scores (Experimental Class)

Score Interval	Experimental Class	
	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
60-65	-	-
70-75	-	-
80-85	8	26.67
90-95	17	56.67
100	5	16.67
<i>SUM</i>	30	100

Table 3 above shows that there are no more students who got scores in the range of 60-65 or 70-75. This shows an increase in students' scores. The highest number of students' scores is in the range of values of 90-95, with a total of 17 students. Furthermore, eight students are in the 80-85 value range (16%). Finally,

in the posttest conducted in the experimental class, there were five (10%) students scored 100. Meanwhile, the results for the controlled class can be seen below.

The following table and figure are the data from the control class, class VII F. There were 30 students involved in this activity. The scores of the students can be seen in Table 4 below. The table shows that students' scores in understanding general information, detailed information, and reference improve significantly except on vocabulary which is slightly improved. The student's pretest score on detailed information is only 410 but has increased to 585. Likewise, general information from 455 becomes 550. Moreover, reference from 555 becomes 590 and vocabulary from 545 to 565. Figure 2 below displays the description of the calculation.

Table 4. The Results of Pretest and Posttest Scores of Controlled Class

Pretest and Posttest Score of Controlled Class		
Aspects of Reading	Pretest	Posttest
General Information	455	550
Detail Information	410	585
Reference	555	590
Vocabulary	545	565

Figure 2 below shows the comparison between pretest and posttest scores. It can be concluded that students' significant achievements are in two aspects of reading, which are general and detailed information. The other two aspects of reading just have low improvement.

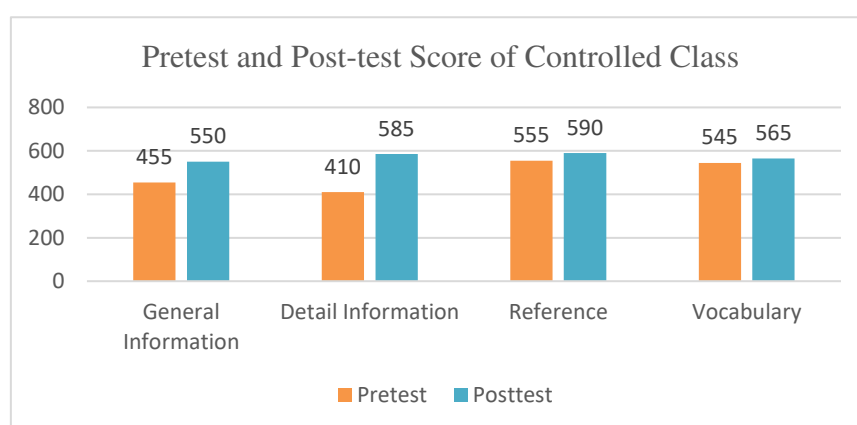


Figure 2. The Results of Pretest and Posttest in Controlled Class

The pretest results of the score interval of the control class (VII F) are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Pretest Score (Controlled Class)

Score Interval	Controlled Class	
	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
50-55	2	7
60-65	18	60
70-75	7	23
80-85	3	10
90-95	-	-
100	-	-
SUM	30	100

Based on the table above, 30 students had done the pretest in a controlled class. It can be seen that there are 2 two students (7%) who are in the lowest score, 50-55, 18 students (60%) who are under the minimum criteria of the score, 7 students (23%) who are in the range of 70-75, and only three students (10%) get a score between 80-85.

The results distribution of the frequency of students' scores in the posttest for the control class can be seen in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of Posttest Score (Controlled Class)

Score Interval	Controlled Class	
	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
60-65	-	-
70-75	2	6.67
80-85	12	40
90-95	14	46.67
100	2	6.67
SUM	30	100

The table above shows that there is none of the students in the range 60-65 are still under the minimum criteria of the standard score, 75. Furthermore, there are two students (6.67%) who are in the interval 70-75. Of the rest of the students, 12 (40%) are in the range of 80-85, 14 students were in the range of 90-95 (46.67%), and only two students got a maximum score of 100 (6.67%).

The achievement of each aspect of reading became the main focus of the research, including general information, detailed information, reference, and vocabulary. The results of the N Gain Score in each aspect of reading skills. The result of both classes is separated into two parts in the tables. There are

Table 7. Results of N Gain in Each Aspect of Reading

Aspects of Reading	Experimental Class			Controlled Class		
	Pretest	Posttest	N Gain	Pretest	Posttest	N Gain
General Information	410	565	155	455	550	95
Detailed Information	430	605	175	410	585	175
Reference	590	610	20	555	590	35
Vocabulary	600	630	30	545	565	20
SUM	Σ			Σ		
	2030	2410	380	1965	2290	325
X	Average			Average		
	507.5	602.5	95	491.25	572.5	81.25

achievements of the experimental and controlled groups. The sum and mean of both the pretest and posttest are also included in Table 7 above.

Results of the Improvement in Understanding General Information

One of the four reading aspects focused on general information. The researchers had expected that students' scores in this aspect could be increased. This aspect was indeed the highest improvement compared to other aspects of reading.

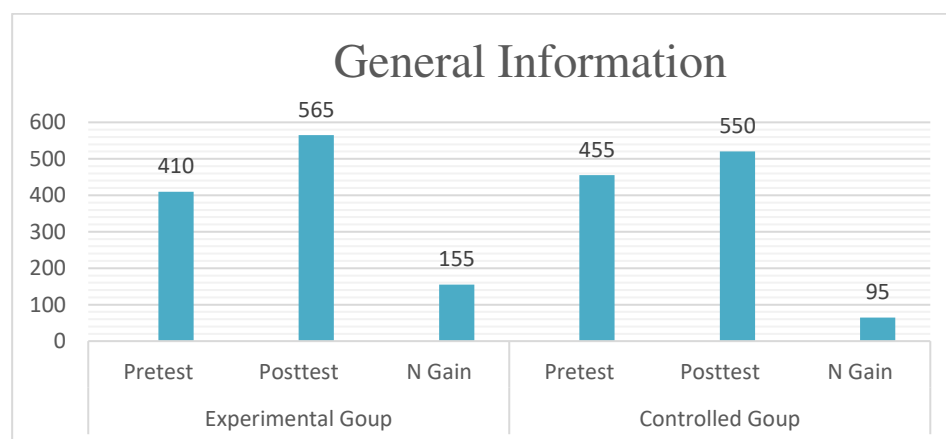


Figure 3. The Improvement in Understanding General Information

It is shown that the students of both classes improve their ability to understand general information. Before the treatment of the paragraph shrinking Strategy, students of the experimental class get a total score of 410 and it

improves to 565 with an N Gain of 155. While the control class got a total score of 455 and improved to 550 with N Gain 95.

Results of the Improvement in Understanding Detailed Information

Detailed information is the second aspect of reading that need to improve. Besides understanding general information, students also had to understand some specific points noted in the text. This aspect is the second-highest subskill to improve. It can be seen in Figure 4 below.

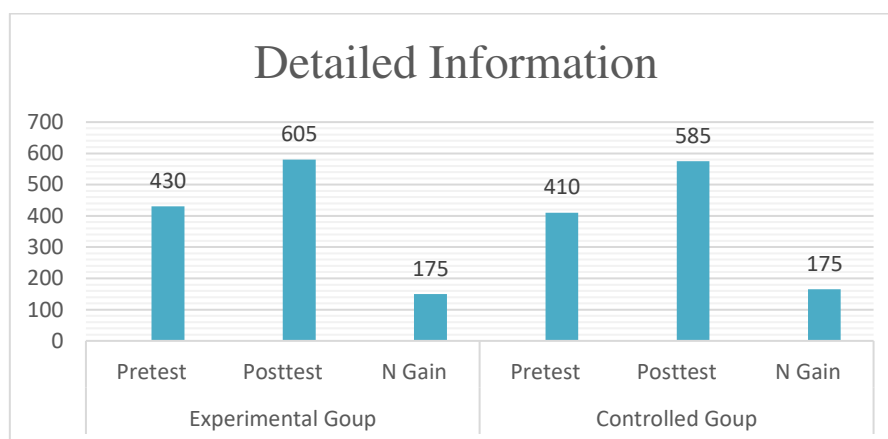


Figure 4. The Improvement in Understanding Detail Information

The figure above showed the improvements in pretest and posttest scores in both classes. In the experimental class, the sum of the pretest is 430 while the posttest is 605 with N Gain 175. In the control class, the total score of the pretest is 410, while the posttest is 585 with N Gain 175.

Results of the Improvement in Understanding Reference

The third aspect seen to be improved is students' understanding of reference words. The score increased after the paragraph shrinking strategy treatment. It can be seen in figure 5 below.

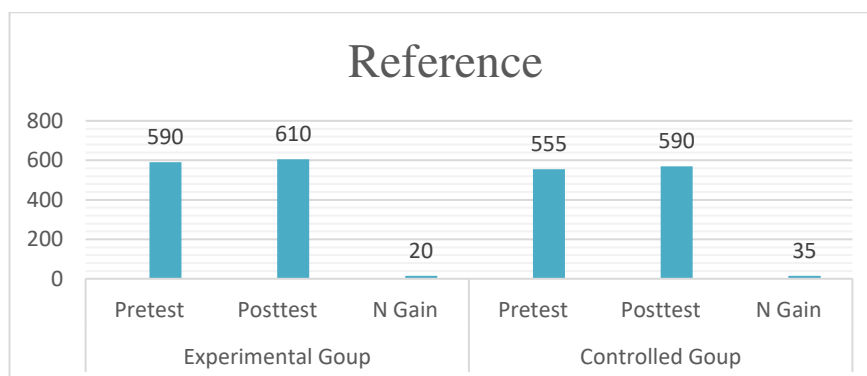


Figure 5. Improvement in Understanding Reference

Figure 5 above shows that there are slight improvements in pretest and posttest scores in understanding reference. In the experimental class, the total of the pretest is 590 while the posttest is 610 with N Gain 20. In the controlled class, the total score of the pretest is 555 while the posttest is 590, with an N Gain of 35.

Results of the Improvement in Understanding Vocabulary

The last aspect which becomes one of the objectives of the research that is expected to be increased is students' reading comprehension in understanding vocabulary. It is seen to increase after the treatment of the paragraph shrinking strategy. Figure 6 below describes the data in charts.

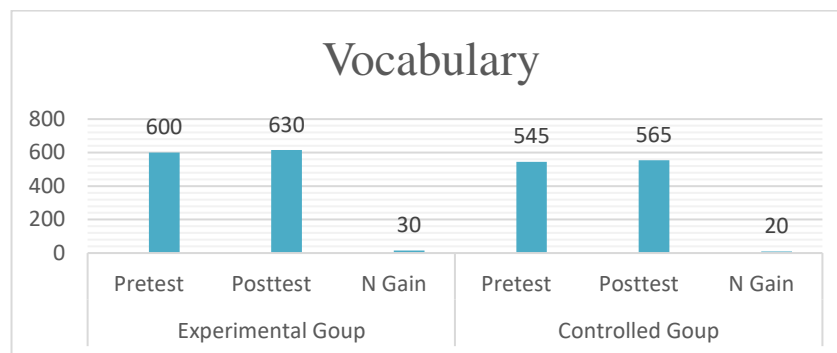


Figure 6. Improvement in Understanding Vocabulary

The scores of pretests and posttest in vocabulary are increased. In the experimental class, the total pretest is 600 while the posttest is 630 with N Gain 30. In the control class, the total score of pretests is 545 while the posttest is 565 with N Gain 20.

In analyzing the data, the researchers used the t-test formula. Furthermore, this research employs the t-test to show the difference in achievement in the experimental class and control class between the students' pretest and posttest scores. Before testing the t-test, the researchers calculated the normality and homogeneity test so that all the processes ran successfully and the researcher can prove the hypotheses. To see the descriptive statistics of both scores, Table 8 is provided underneath.

Table 8 shows the total participant of the process of pretest and posttest data collection, 30 students in the experimental class and 30 students in the control class. The minimum score gained in the pretest of the experimental class is 55 while the highest score is 85. The mean of this category is 67.67 with sd 7.2. However, the posttest of the experimental class shows improvement where the minimum score increases to 80 and the maximum score is 100 with a mean score of 93.33 and sd 8.6. The control class shows a significant difference where the pretest minimum score is 50 and the maximum is 85 with a mean of 65.5 and

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Scores

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest Experimental	30	55	85	67.67	7.279
Posttest Experimental	30	85	100	93.33	8.622
Pretest Controlled	30	50	80	65.50	8.007
Posttest Controlled	30	75	100	87.33	8.987
Valid N (Listwise)	30				

the sd is 8. On the contrary, the posttest shows better improvement where the minimum score becomes 75 and the maximum score is 100, the mean score is 87.33 and the sd is 8.9.

The researchers then calculated the data to get the normality test by employing SPSS Version 16.0, the data was analyzed by using Kolmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk. The researcher used Shapiro-Wilk as the normality test formula because the sample is 30, which is below 50. This test is used to determine whether the distribution of the data from the sample is normal. If the

Table 9. Test of Normality

Tests of Normality							
Class		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Results of Students' Learning Achievement	Pretest Experimental Class	0.210	30	0.002	0.909	3	0.014
						0	
	Posttest Experimental Class	0.220	30	0.006	0.906	3	0.050
						0	
	Pretest Controlled Class	0.226	30	0.007	0.895	3	0.007
						0	
	Posttest Controlled Class	0.218	30	0.080	0.910	3	0.063
						0	

significant value of the normality test is greater than 0.05, the data is normal. On the other hand, if it is below 0.05, the data is significantly far from a normal distribution. Therefore, H_0 is accepted if the significant value of the Shapiro-Wilk Test is higher than the significant value α (0.05). The result of the normality test is shown in Table 9 above.

Table 9 above shows that the significance values of Shapiro-Wilk from both experimental and control classes are above 0.05. The significance value from Kolmogorov-Smirnov of the posttest experimental class is $0.220 > 0.05$ while the control class is $0.218 > 0.05$. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk of the experimental class are 0.909 while the control class is 0.910. The significance value of both classes is higher than 0.05. It can be concluded in this part that the residual value is normally distributed. So this research has good regression because it has a normal distribution value.

The Levene statistic test was used to calculate the homogeneity test. This test determines if two or more populations (or subgroups of a population) have the same distribution of a single categorical variable. Table 10 presents the result of the homogeneity test as follows:

Table 10. Test of Homogeneity			
Homogeneity Test of Variances			
Results of Students' Learning Achievement			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.250	3	116	0.298

The above table reveals that the significance of the results of students' learning achievement is higher than the significant value ($0.298 > 0.05$). This means the H_0 was accepted, and the sample of the experimental class and

Table 11. Paired Sample Statistics					
Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest Experimental	67.67	30	7.279	1.329
	Posttest Experimental	93.33	30	5.622	1.102
Pair 2	Pretest Controlled	65.50	30	7.807	1.425
	Posttest Controlled	85.33	30	8.087	1.566
Paired Samples Correlations					
			N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pretest Experimental & Posttest Experimental		30	0.246	0.196
Pair 2	Pretest Controlled & Posttest Controlled		30	0.298	0.655

controlled class are homogenous. The data of this research were examined by using a two-tailed test of importance using SPSS through the Independent-Samples test. The calculation results demonstrate the p-value or sig (2-tailed) is higher than sig $\alpha = 0.05$ (5 per cent); this implies that it accepts the null hypothesis.

It can be seen in Table 11 that the average posttest score is higher than the pretest score. This can be seen from the posttest mean score of the experimental class is 93.33 while the mean value of the students' pretest was 67.67. Furthermore, the correlation value between the students' pretest and posttest scores was 0.246. This shows that there is a positive correlation between the two tests. Table 12 shows the results of the Paired Samples test.

Table 12. Paired Sample Differences

Paired Samples Test								
Paired Differences						T	df	Sig.
	Mean	Std.	Std.	95% Confidence				(2-
		Deviation	Error	Interval of the				tailed
			Mean	Difference				)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	24	8.030	1.466	-26.998	-21.002	16.370	29	0.001

Table 12 shows the df value is 29 and the deT value is 16.370. Based on the SPSS output of the table, the Sig. (2-tailed) has a p-value = 0.01, meaning that the p-value is <0.05 . There is a significant average difference between the pretest and posttest values. Both scores have a good but weak correlation. On average, the posttest scores were 24 points higher than the students' pretest scores. Paired t-test is a hypothesis test carried out to determine whether the mean of the same sample group has a significant difference or not.

This test employed the Normalized Gain Formula (N-Gain) to see the effectiveness of the paragraph shrinking strategy in improving students' reading comprehension of descriptive text. The researchers first calculated the N Gain Score by using SPSS to do the T-test Formula and to compare the score between Experimental Class (X) and Control Class (Y). The results of the test can be seen in Table 13 underneath. It is shown in the table that the result of the mean score of the experimental group is 82.53, which is considered as effective. The mean score of the control group is 65.27, which is considered in the range of less effective. It can be concluded that paragraph shrinking Strategy is effective in improving students' reading comprehension in the experimental class.

To test the hypothesis, the researcher follows this formula; H_0 (null hypothesis) is rejected if $p < \alpha$ by 95% significant degree of 5% (0.05); sig. 2 tailed is lower than alpha. Based on the results of the t-test, the df value is 29, and the deT value is 16.370. Based on the SPSS output of the table, the Sig. (2-tailed) has a p-value = 0.00, meaning that the p-value is <0.05 . On average, the posttest scores were 25.6 points higher than the students' pretest scores.

In conclusion, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. It means that there is a significant improvement in the students' reading comprehension score, specifically in understanding general information, detailed information, reference, and vocabulary.

Table 13. N Gain Percent

Descriptives				
Group		Statistic	Std. Error	
N Gain Percent	Experimental class	Mean	79.505	3.38534
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	67.5823	
		5% Trimmed Mean	82.5391	
		Median	76.1424	
		Variance	74.5467	
		Std. Deviation	353.822	
		Minimum	18.646	
		Maximum	47.86	
		Range	100.00	
		Interquartile Range	66.67	
		Skewness	24.78	
		Kurtosis	-.336	.427
	Controlled class	Mean	-.451	.833
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	76.415	4.66647
		5% Trimmed Mean	46.9829	
		Median	65.2797	
		Variance	56.8937	
		Std. Deviation	61.2670	
		Minimum	653.298	
		Maximum	25.6732	
		Range	0.00	
		Interquartile Range	88.91	
		Skewness	88.91	
		Kurtosis	73.68	
			-.773	.427
			-.166	.833

It has shown that the paragraph shrinking strategy is more effective in improving the students' reading comprehension at the school where this experiment was administered. The reason could be simplicity. The paragraph shrinking strategy is a simple strategy to engage students in paired reading and discussion of any text. It was developed as one of the Peer Assisted Learning

Strategies (PALS). Students have a better understanding of reading than they did previously. This demonstrates that the paragraph shrinking Strategy can assist students in practicing reading through a variety of enjoyable activities. Furthermore, this strategy can be used by the English teacher to manage the reading class and avoid teacher dominance during the lesson. This suggests that the English teacher should provide students with more opportunities to practice English in their strategies. This means that the teacher must be creative when selecting and devising activities to aid the teaching-learning process.

The result of this study is in line with the results of research conducted by Ridianto (2018), who found that it was significantly effective in improving students; reading comprehension by using the paragraph shrinking strategy. Even though the aspects of reading being improved are different, there are also similarities between this research. The similarity of both studies is in the effectiveness of the research, which can be seen in the classroom engagement that took place during the study. The atmosphere of the classroom was very good and the students felt happy in the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, the strategy can help students become more motivated in the reading activity (Fuchs et al., 2020). This is also in line with the statement of Mardhaty (2018) and Santhanalakshmi and Naomi (2021), saying that the paragraph shrinking strategy can improve students; reading comprehension and make the students motivated to learn reading. Paragraph shrinking is a suitable method to teach reading comprehension since it provides opportunities for students; initiation, for face-to-face, give and take, for practice in the negotiation of meaning for extended conversation exchanges. Garcia-Melgar et al. (2021) specifically mention that this method provides academic support for students in a way that students are responsive to each other's mistakes and know how and when those mistakes occur. This reciprocal peer-tutoring learning strategy makes meaningful changes for students with disruptive behavior and a lack of reading commitment (Sinclair et al., 2019). Students with reading difficulties also experience greater fluency (Maki et al., 2021).

Sagita (2021) also found the same results from the implementation of paragraph shrinking in her research. She researched eighth-grade students at a junior high school. She focused on the effectiveness of the paragraph shrinking Strategy in teaching reading, especially in understanding the main idea of the text. After conducting the research and giving the treatment to the students, the mean score of students; reading comprehension who taught by using the paragraph shrinking strategy rises. The improvement of students; scores is the same as the results of this research, especially in the specific aspect of reading; the main idea which is related to general information and detailed information. However, she implemented the strategy in the eighth grade of junior high school while this study was conducted in the seventh grade. In addition, by making the process of summarizing explicit, the paragraph shrinking strategy benefits all students, it helped students in grasping and understanding each paragraph of

the text they read (Lisan, 2022; Sulistami et al., 2018). The paragraph Shrinking strategy provides students with an easy activity of instructions for identifying the main idea. In conclusion, it can be proven that paragraph shrinking Strategy can help students in improving their reading comprehension skills. Ritter et al. (2020) believes that the strategy provides positive intervention with positive outcomes.

This has been revealed that the paragraph shrinking strategy is effective for students who have difficulties with working memory because it includes brief pieces of text. This strategy helps students who frequently struggle to identify the connections between ideas. paragraph shrinking Strategy also can help students who lose track of what they have read before. They can study a short piece, retain it in their memory, and then go on to the next section by decreasing the paragraphs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research finding of data, it was concluded that the students were having some problems with reading comprehension before being taught by using the paragraph shrinking strategy. Some of the students had difficulties understanding general information, detailed information, reference word, and vocabulary. Before giving the treatment, the mean score of the experimental class is 67.67 at the pretest, while the score for the reading aspect was 410 for general information, detail information 430, and reference words 590, and 600 for vocabulary. After conducting the research and giving the treatment to the students, the mean score of students' reading comprehension who are taught by using the paragraph shrinking strategy has increased to 93.33 at the posttest, with 565 for general information, detail information 605, reference 610, and 630 for vocabulary.

There is a significant effect between students' ability in reading comprehension taught by using the paragraph shrinking strategy and those who are taught without using the paragraph shrinking strategy. The significant difference between the score of posttests in the controlled class is 85.33, and the posttest score of the experimental class is 93.33. It is also supported by the result of the t-test, where the df value is 29 and the deT value is 16.370. The Sig. (2-tailed) has a p-value of 0.00, indicating that the p-value is <0.05. The researcher sums up that the null hypotheses (H_0) are rejected. It can be seen that students' ability in reading comprehension taught by using paragraph shrinking strategy is better than students' ability in reading comprehension taught without using paragraph shrinking strategy.

REFERENCES

- Ayu, M. (2021). Applying text feature walks strategy in higher education to improve students' reading comprehension. *Journal of English Teaching*, 7(3), 354- 365. <https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v7i3.3077>

- Damanik, A. S., & Herman, H. (2021). Improving students' reading comprehension through Question Answer Relationship Strategy (QARS). *Inovish Journal*, 6(1), 84-101. Retrieved August 18, 2022, from <http://ejournal.polbeng.ac.id/index.php/IJ/article/view/1949>
- Dhillon, B. P. S., Herman, H., & Syafryadin, S. (2020). The effect of skimming method to improve students' ability in reading comprehension on narrative text. *Linguists: Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 6(1), 77-88. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29300/ling.v6i1.2991>
- Fuchs, D., Cho, E., Toste, J. R., Fuchs, L. S., Gilbert, J. K., McMaster, K. L., Svenson, E., & Thompson, A. (2020). A quasiexperimental evaluation of two versions of first-grade PALS: One with and one without repeated reading. *Exceptional Children* 87(2), 141-162. DOI: 10.1177/0014402920921828.
- Garcia-Melgar, A., East, J., & Meyers, N. (2021). Peer assisted academic support: A comparison of mentors' and mentees' experiences of a drop-in programme. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 45(9), 1163-1176, DOI: 10.1080/0309877X.2020.1851665.
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The practice of English language teaching*. Pearson.
- Harris, K. R., & Graham, S. (2015). *Teaching reading comprehension to students with learning difficulties*. The Guilford Press.
- Herman, H., Ivantara, E. P., & Manalu, D. B. (2020). The effect of using cooperative script on student's reading comprehension at grade eleventh of SMA Negeri 2 Pematangsiantar. *Acitya: Journal of Teaching and Education*, 2(2), 82-94. <https://doi.org/10.30650/ajte.v2i2.1361>
- Kemendikbud. (2013). Permendikbud Nomor 65 Tahun 2013. *Tentang Standar Proses*. Kemendikbud.
- Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., & Boardman, A. (2015). *Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Difficulties*, 2/E. Guilford Publications.
- Lisan, K. H. (2022). The role of peer-assisted learning strategies (pals) in enhancing students' reading skills for second language acquisition. *Edu-Ling: Journal of English Education and Linguistics*, 5(2), 132-137. Retrieved September 15, from <https://journals.unihaz.ac.id/index.php/edu-ling>
- Maki, K. E., Ittner, I., Sandra, M. P., Burns, M. K., Helman, L., & McComas, J. J. (2021). Effects of an abbreviated class-wide reading intervention for students in third grade. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 26, 359-367. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-020-00343-4>.
- Mardhaty, M. (2018). Improving reading comprehension of grade XI students at SMA Negeri 7 Palu through paragraph shrinking strategy. *E-Journal of English Language Teaching Society (ELTS)*. 6(3). 3-5. Retrieved October 16,

- 2022, from
<http://jurnal.untad.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/ELTS/article/view/11520/8854>
- Melekoğlu, M. A. (2019). Evidence-based fluency interventions for elementary students with learning disabilities. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 6(5), 411-423. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3404991>
- Nurdianti, S., Rosita, R., & Fadloeli, O. (2019). Improving students' reading comprehension through reciprocal teaching strategy on narrative text. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 2(2), 131-139. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22460/project.v2i2.p131-139>
- Preast, J. L., Burns, M. K., Brann, K. L., Taylor, C. N., & Aguilar, L. (2019). Class-wide partner reading intervention for science comprehension. *School Psychology Forum*, 13(1), 29-40. Retrieved August 16, 2022, from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1217288>.
- Ridianto, (2018). Teaching reading by using paragraph shrinking strategy. *Jurnal Educative: Journal of Educational Studies*, 3(2), 177-180. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30983/educative.v3i2.546>
- Ritter, C., Morrison, J. Q., & Sherman, K. (2020). Differential effects of self-graphing on self-monitoring of early literacy outcomes in kindergarten students. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 1-19. DOI:10.1007/s10864-020-09390-6c.
- Sagita, I. (2021). The effectiveness of paragraph shrinking technique in teaching reading to junior high school. *Journal of English Development*, 1(02), 14-22. <https://doi.org/10.25217/jed.v1i02.1665>
- Santhanalakshmi & Naomi, V. (2021). Impact of Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) for learning enhancement of students at secondary level. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education*, 12(10), 7333-7336. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17762/turcomat.v12i10.5625>.
- Sinclair, A. C., Gesel, S. A., & Lemons, C. J. (2019). The effects of peer-assisted learning on disruptive behavior and academic engagement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 21(4), 238-248. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300719851227>.
- Siregar, N. O., Afriazi, R., & Arasuli, A. (2019). The correlation between reading strategies and reading comprehension achievement of the sixth semester in English Education Study Program of Bengkulu University. *JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy)*, 3(2), 122-132. Retrieved September 19, 2022, from <https://jurnal.unigal.ac.id/index.php/jall/index>
- Sulistami, P., Pahamzah, J., Baratayaomi, W., & Syafriza, S. (2018). Improving students' reading comprehension by using Peer Assisted Learning

Strategies (PALS) in EFL contexts. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 2(2), 52–59. DOI:10.23887/ijll.v2i2.16093.

Wahyuni, S. (2019). *The student's difficulties in reading comprehension at second grade at Islamic Senior High School Laboratorium Jambi*. Thesis. English Education Program Faculty of Education and Teacher Training Islamic University of Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi.

Authors' Brief CV

Zulfadli A. Aziz graduated from Syiah Kuala University (B.A in English Education), the University of New South Wales (MA in Applied Linguistics), and the University of Adelaide (PhD in Linguistics). He is currently teaching Linguistics at Syiah Kuala University. His research interests cover linguistic studies in general and sociolinguistic issues in particular.

Sofyan A. Gani is an English lecturer in English Education Department, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. He obtained his undergraduate degree (S1) from Syiah Kuala University, his master's degree from the University of Wales, and his doctoral degree (S3) from the State University of Jakarta.

Zurina Zora is a student of the Graduate Study Program of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Syiah Kuala University, Aceh, Indonesia. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in English Education Program at Almuslim University, Bireuen, Indonesia. Her research interest is in the field of English Language Teaching.