

# THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROBLEM BASED LEARNING (PBL) IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AT THE EIGHT GRADE OF SMP SWASTA TAMANSISWA TAPIAN DOLOK

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## ABSTRACT

*This research investigates the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as a method to enhance the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Tamansiswa Tapan Dolok. Reading comprehension is essential for students to develop critical thinking and analytical skills, yet many learners face difficulties in understanding English texts. The research employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design. The sample consisted of 32 students from class VIII-A, selected through purposive sampling. The students were taught using PBL strategies centered around a narrative text—The Legend of Lake Toba. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test scores and analyzed using SPSS. The results showed a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after the implementation of PBL, as indicated by the increase in the mean score from 44.38 (pre-test) to 69.38 (post-test). Statistical tests confirmed the normality and homogeneity of the data, and hypothesis testing indicated a significant effect of PBL on students' reading comprehension. This study concludes that PBL is an effective teaching approach to improve reading comprehension, especially when applied through culturally relevant and engaging texts.*

*Keywords: Problem-Based Learning, Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text, Junior High School, English Language Learning*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### The Background of Research

Reading is one of the four essential language skills in English, along with listening, speaking, and writing. It is a gateway for students to access information, expand their vocabulary, and build critical thinking skills. Reading is not merely a passive activity, but a complex cognitive process that requires decoding, understanding, and interpreting written texts. As stated by Rahman et al. (2021), reading is a cognitive process that involves constructing meaning by interacting with the text and using background knowledge.

Reading comprehension is fundamental to academic success. It allows learners to extract meaning, identify key points, interpret messages, and relate ideas from the texts they read. According to Putri & Kuswando (2022), reading comprehension is a crucial skill in academic contexts because it directly influences students' ability to grasp and retain knowledge. Mastery of this skill enhances students' learning experiences and supports their overall language development.

Based on the researcher's observation during the PLP (Pengenalan Lapangan Persekolahan) at SMP Swasta Tamansiswa Tapan Dolok, it was found that many eighth-grade students still have limited reading comprehension skills in English. Their low interest in reading and lack of effective reading strategies hinder their ability to understand texts. This situation suggests a need for instructional methods that actively engage students and help them enhance their reading comprehension. One effective approach to address this issue is the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This method shifts the learning process to be more student-centered and inquiry-based. According to Nasution & Siregar (2021), PBL is an instructional model that emphasizes student participation in solving real-world problems, thereby fostering critical thinking and deeper understanding. In the context of reading, this model can stimulate students' interest by linking reading materials to authentic problems and encouraging analytical thinking.



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### **The Problem of Research**

Based on the background above, the problem of the research can be stated as follow “How is the significance implementation of Problem Based Learning in enhancing students’ reading comprehension at eight grade students of SMP Tamansiswa Tapian Dolok?”

### **The Objective of Research**

Based on the background above, the objective of research is to find out the significance implementation of Problem Based Learning Based in enhancing students’ reading comprehension at eight grade students of SMP Tamansiswa Tapian Dolok.

## **II. THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Definition of Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and analyze written material. It goes beyond merely recognizing words; it involves grasping the meaning of sentences and connecting ideas together. When reading, an individual needs to engage with the text, making sense of the information and drawing conclusions.

To enhance reading comprehension, a reader should employ various skills. These include identifying the main idea, recognizing supporting details, and making inferences based on the context. Summarizing the content is also crucial, as it involves capturing the key points concisely. This requires active engagement with the text and critical thinking about the information presented. According to Anderson (2020), implementation of summarization helps reinforce understanding and retention of the material.

### **Definition of Mind Mapping Technique**

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a student-centered instructional model that enables learners to acquire knowledge through the process of solving real-life, complex problems. In the context of improving reading comprehension, PBL encourages students to actively explore texts, think critically, and draw conclusions based on the content. According to Ramadhani et al. (2021), PBL is a learning approach that provides students with the opportunity to develop analytical and reflective thinking through engagement with authentic problems, which enhances their cognitive and metacognitive skills.

Kurniasih & Sani (2020) state that PBL begins by presenting contextual problems that stimulate students to read, discuss, and find solutions collaboratively. This model promotes interdisciplinary learning and pushes students to comprehend reading materials more deeply as they relate texts to real-world contexts. In reading lessons, this approach guides students to make meaning actively, rather than passively receive information

## **III. THE METHOD OF RESEARCH**

### **The Research Design**

The researcher employed a quantitative approach in this research, especially pre-experimental design. Creswell (2020) also identifies several types of pre-experimental designs, such as one-shot case studies, one-group pretest-posttest designs, and intact-group comparisons. In this research, the author employs the one-group pretest-posttest design. This study applies a pre-experimental design with a single group, using both pre-test and post-test measures. This research applied a pre-experimental design (one group pre-test and post-test), this design involved one group that is pre-test (O1), expose to treatment (X) and post-test (O2).

### **The Location of Research**

The location of this research took place at SMP swasta Tamansiswa Tapian Dolok Gg. Masjid, Dolok Ulu, Kecamatan Tapian Dolok, Kabupaten Simalungun, Sumatera Utara.

### **Source of the Data**

The source of data in this research is the eighth grade of SMP Swasta Tamansiswa Tapian Dolok. In this research, the researcher chose a quantitative approach consisting of pretest and posttest.

### **The Technique of Collecting Data**

Data was collected through a reading comprehension test consisting of 10 multiple-choice questions. The tests were administered as a pre-test before treatment and a post-test afterward. Each



question assessed indicators such as identifying main ideas, vocabulary, inferences, and supporting details.

#### **The Technique of Analyzing Data**

The data of students' score for pre test and post test was analyzed by using SPSS version 26.00. The researcher will show and explain about data frequency, statistical table, test normality, test of homogeneity and test of hypothesis. From the result of the data processing, to prove whether there was any significance different between students' ability on reading or not by using Problem Based Learning (PBL). Before starting the treatment, the researcher administered a pre-test to adequately assess the students' reading comprehension. This pre-test was developed to assess many facets of their reading comprehension, such as grammar, coherence, and vocabulary. After the treatment, the researcher conducted a post-test to test the improvement of students' reading comprehension using mind mapping in learning technique.

### **IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA**

#### **Data Analysis**

The research showed that prior to using Problem Based Learning (PBL), students' mean summary for pre-test data was 1,420 with a mean score of 44.38, and post-test data was 2,220 with a mean score of 69.38. The standard deviation results indicated a significant difference and proved that the experimental class pre-test was 15.645 and post-test was 14.354. The researcher found that the t-test value = 12.637 is greater than the t-table value = 2.042 at the significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$  and degree of freedom (df) = 30. Since t-count > t-table, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted. It means that there is a significant difference in students' reading abilities after treatment using Problem Based Learning (PBL). In other words, the use of Problem Based Learning (PBL) has a significant positive implementation on students' reading comprehension at eight grade of SMP Swasta Tamansiswa Tapan Dolok.

### **V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

#### **Conclusion**

The collected data from both pre-test and post-test were analyzed using SPSS version 25.00. The results showed a significant enhancement in students' reading comprehension. The pre-test average score was 44.38, while the post-test average score increased to 69.38. This indicates a notable progress in students' understanding of narrative texts after applying the PBL approach. The result of the normality test confirmed that the data were normally distributed, and the homogeneity test showed that the variances between the groups were homogeneous (significance value > 0.05). Therefore, hypothesis testing was conducted using parametric statistics, specifically the t-test. The hypothesis test result showed that the t-count value (12.637) was greater than the t-table value (2.042), with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This means that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted. In conclusion, the use of Problem Based Learning (PBL) gave a significant positive enhance on students' reading comprehension. Students became more active, engaged, and confident in discussing and understanding the text. Through collaboration and critical thinking, they were able to enhance their reading comprehension skills. Therefore, the researcher strongly believes that Problem Based Learning (PBL) is an appropriate and effective technique for enhancing students' reading comprehension and should be considered for broader implementation in English learning at junior high school level.

#### **Suggestion**

Based on the conclusions drawn from this research, the researcher would like to offer several suggestions for future practice and research

1. For English teachers

Teachers are encouraged to implement Problem Based Learning (PBL) as an alternative teaching strategy to enhance students' reading comprehension. This method promotes student engagement, critical thinking, and collaborative learning, which are essential components in understanding reading texts, especially narrative texts

2. For students



Students are encouraged to be more active and cooperative during group discussions and problem-solving activities. They should take full advantage of the PBL approach by sharing their ideas, asking questions, and reflecting on the problems discussed to enhance their reading and thinking skills.

3. For schools

Schools should support the use of innovative learning methods such as PBL by providing training for teachers, adequate resources, and a supportive classroom environment. This will ensure that learning becomes more student-centered and meaningful.

4. For future researchers

Future researchers are suggested to conduct further studies on PBL or other learning models using a larger sample size or in different skill areas such as writing, speaking, or listening. They may also consider comparing PBL with other methods to explore its implementation more comprehensively.

By following these suggestions, it is hoped that the quality of English learning, particularly in reading comprehension, will continue to enhance and contribute positively to students' academic achievement.

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