

Word Splash Strategy in Reading Comprehension Class

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Abstract: Today, technology and literacy in the area of education 4.0 has increasingly been used in many language classes. The changes in literacy conception demands the capabilities of teachers and students in utilizing digital tools in the classroom activities. Computer as one of the digital tools offers teachers some new interesting strategies for teaching reading comprehension. Unfortunately, to comprehend a reading text in English is not easy. Many students face some problems in comprehending a text. They need to read many times to comprehend the text. The problem in reading comprehension does not only derive from students, but it is also influenced by teachers' teaching methods or strategies, and the quality of the teachers themselves. Moreover, reading without interest can inhibit readers to comprehend the texts well. Thus, Word Splash strategy is believed as one of the strategies that can decrease the student's problem in comprehending the content of the text and eventually make students love reading.

Keywords: *education 4.0, digital tools, word splash strategy*

Abstrak: Saat ini, teknologi dan literasi di era Pendidikan 4.0 telah digunakan dalam kelas-kelas pembelajaran Bahasa. Perubahan terhadap konsep literasi meminta guru dan siswa untuk memaksimalkan perangkat digital dalam kegiatan kelas. Komputer sebagai salah satu alat yang menawarkan berbagai strategi baru kepada guru untuk mengajarkan pemahaman membaca. Sayangnya, untuk memahami teks bacaan Bahasa Inggris tidaklah mudah. Banyak siswa menghadapi banyak masalah dalam memahami isi bacaan. Mereka perlu membaca teks berulang-ulang demi memahami bacaannya. Masalah dalam memahami bacaan ini tidak hanya dialami oleh siswa saja, namun juga dipengaruhi oleh metode dan strategi mengajar guru, dan kualitas guru tersebut. Terlebih lagi, membaca tanpa diiringi dengan minat, dapat mempengaruhi pemahaman siswa terhadap teks tersebut. Sehingga, Word Splash Strateg dipercaya sebagai salah satu strategi yang dapat mengurasi permasalahan siswa dalam memahami konten bacaan dan membuat siswa menyukai kegiatan membaca.

Kata-kata kunci: *pendidikan 4.0, perangkat digital, word splash strategi*

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Language is used by people to participate in private and public life with their family, community, or nation. According to Siahaan (2008, p.1), language is a unique human inheritance that plays the very important role in human's life, such as in thinking, communicating ideas, and negotiating with others. Language helps people to fulfill their potential, to share their inner selves with others or to act on the world powerfully.

Among other languages used in the world, English is learned by Indonesian students almost at every level of education especially in the era of education 4.0. Diem and Lestari (2016, p. 27) state that English has become even more important in which it is learned by almost everybody living in the 21st century. English language tends to become the language of technology. Some challenges that appear in ELT context at this era demand the capabilities of teachers and students in utilizing digital tools in the classroom activities.

Education 4.0 is a new paradigm in educational context in which it focuses on the innovation and maximizes the use of information, internet, and technology (Anggraeni, 2018, p.12). In other words, era of education 4.0 is highly related to the integration of ICT into the classroom. This requires language teachers to upgrade their knowledge and competence in using some products of technology while teaching English to the learners. Because in the era of education 4.0, educators rely on technology-based tools, resources and applications to drive teaching and learning in non-traditional ways within their classroom (Ahmad, et al., 2019, p.6). In the classroom, technology-based tools such as computer, laptop, or gadget is utilized by language teachers to help students to become literate in English literacy. Simultaneously, the use of information, communication, and technology in the classroom leads the teachers to develop their English literacy and digital literacy as well.

English literacy covers some English language skills such as listening, speaking,

reading and writing. However, since most of scientific and non-scientific books are printed in English, most of students agree that reading has important role in order to know a lot of information written in English texts. According to Cilmi, Kolanovic and Mole (2009, p.16), reading is an active process, where the (during which) readers must work with the text in an effort to explore and construct meaning. But, without getting much exposure to reading materials in class, EFL students are unlikely to make much progress. Ali and Saiden (2015, p.1) also say that reading is an active process which should be acquired at the early learning age. Therefore, students who learn English language need to have good ability in comprehending the texts so that they will be able to absorb information written in English such as fiction and non-fiction texts.

Recount text is one of non-fiction texts. Recount is a text which retells events or experiences in the past (Hyland, 2008, p.5). Recount text retells the author's direct past experiences or just the imagination of the author. Recount text may be in the form of newspaper reports of event, biographies, autobiographies, histories, letters, journals, diaries, and eye-witness accounts of incidents. The aim of recount text is to tell past experiences. In general, a recount text consists of three generic structure namely orientation, event, and reorientation.

Unfortunately, to comprehend English recount texts is not easy. Many students have some problems to comprehend the recount text given by their teacher. Mustofa, Susilawati, and Rosnija (2013, p.3) found that most of the students have difficulties in acquiring general information in orientation, finding detail and specific information in series of events and finding author opinion in reorientation. They need to read the text many times to comprehend its content. The problem in reading comprehension does not only derive from students, but it is also influenced by teachers' teaching methods or strategies, and the quality of the teachers themselves. Moreover, reading without

interest can inhibit readers to comprehend the texts well. In other words, the students will comprehend the text, find information enjoyably, and they will not get bored while they are learning English if the material is interesting to read. Hence, to make English be interesting for the students, the Splash strategy is recommended to use.

Word Splash is a learning tool that stimulates thinking around a topic. It is a collection of words around a topic where it is arranged in a handout (Begum, 2018, p.2331). Before learners read the whole content of the reading passage, they are directed to have some predictions dealing with the topic. The learner's prior knowledge about the topic is stimulated through collection of words. In line with this notion, Setiyawan and Amumpuni (2018, p.18) explain that Word Splash allows students to activate their prior knowledge and discuss key vocabulary term all at once. In other words, this strategy is typically used as a preview activity to generate learner's interest toward the topic. This strategy helps the learners to predict what the text is about before reading and gives them a chance to relate the new words or concepts to the main topic of reading.

Siregar (2013, p.14) says that the advantages of using Word Splash strategy are to encourage and develop prediction skills and to set the scene. It develops the learners' sense of discovery, leads them to focus on topic or issue, and it is beneficial for group or pair sharing. By having the words displayed in the classroom from the beginning, students become interested and curious to know about the words meaning. They should read the words and guess what they mean. This prediction allows their brains to begin to make connections with the new words.

Based on Sitorus (2013, p. 23-24), the procedures of implementing Word Splash strategy are as follow.

"1) Introduce 10-12 or more unusual or unfamiliar words from the text, arrange the words around the Word Splash, 2) Ask the students to read the key word of the text, 3) Ask the students to work in groups, 4) Asks the students to make prediction on how the word may connect to each other and predict the topic of the text based on the key vocabularies, 5) The students write their prediction into complete sentence, 6) The teacher gives the text to students, 7) The students read the text, 8) The students check how close their prediction was, and 9) Ask the students to revise their prediction based on the text that has been read."

However, in arranging the words around the Word Splash, the teacher can modify the written form of the key words. The key words can be written in one color or colorfully and displayed to the classroom in the form of power point slide. Therefore, the key words should be prepared by the teacher before coming to the reading class. Example of Word Splash is presented in picture below.



Figure 1. Example of Word Splash

After showing the Word splash above, the Word splash chart can be given to the learners to provide a clear explanation with few example words as shown in the following picture.

No.	Word Splash Chart (Lounge, crept, fumbling, eventually, devour, tiptoed, butcher, insolence, packed, slapped, strolling, confronted)
1.	Main Word: Lounge Related Words: Sitting room, living room, drawing room Write the sentences for the main words and its related words in the space given below: ----- ----- ----- -----
2.	Main Word: Eventually Related Words: Finally, in the end, immediately Write the sentences for the main words and its related words in the space given below: ----- ----- ----- -----

Figure 2. Word Splash Chart

As a whole, this study was then held to find out whether or not Word Splash strategy could improve the students' reading comprehension toward some recount texts.

METHOD

A method used in this study was an experimental method in term of a quasi-experimental research design. According to White and Sabarwal (2014, p. 1), a quasi-experimental design identifies a comparison group that is as close as possible to the treatment group in terms of initial (pre-intervention) characteristics. Two classes are involved, namely the experimental and control classes, both of which were given pretest and posttest.

The eight classes of the eighth grade students of SMP PGRI Pdamaran with the total number of 279 students were involved as the population of this study. Moreover, the sample is a representative part of a population and taken from the population. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Purposive sampling is a nonrandom sampling technique where researchers ask people with special characteristics to participate in research (Jonhson and Christensen, 2012, p. 231). Hence, the sample of this study must fulfill the criteria such as both groups (experimental and control groups) should have the same average score of English; 70, have the same total number of students, and be taught by the same teacher of English. As the result, two classes that met the criteria were class VIII.3 as the experimental group and class VIII.4 as the control group.

Each group consisted of 34 students.

To collect the data, a written test in the form of 50 items of multiple choice questions was used as the instrument. The test was administered to measure student's reading comprehension achievement. After having tried out to the non-sample students (class VIII.2) containing 35 students, the test was considered valid and reliable. Then, it was given to both experimental and control groups in pretest and posttest.

In addition, to analyze the data gained from the test, t-test analysis using SPSS version 22 at the 5% significance level was conducted to determine whether or not Word Splash strategy could improve the students' achievement in comprehending a recount text.

Here, paired samples was used to see the difference within both groups and independent samples t-test was used to see the difference between the groups. The results of analyses were then used to prove the hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of statistical analyses using SPSS version 22 answered the research question, that was, Word Splash strategy could improve the students' reading achievement in comprehending recount text. This could be seen from the results of paired samples and independent samples t-test analyses in both experimental and control groups. By applying paired samples t-test, it was found that in the experimental group, the mean of posttest scores (75.65) was higher

than the mean of pretest scores (67.76). The mean difference between the pretest and posttest in the experimental group was 7.88, the standard deviation was 4.67 and the standard error mean was 0.80, t -obtained was 9.84 at the significant level p was less than 0.05 in two tailed testing with degree of freedom (df) of 33. This revealed the fact that there was an improvement in students' reading comprehension achievement after being treated using Word Splash strategy.

The students in the experimental group were able to comprehend the recount texts given during the treatment, as the result they could answer the questions correctly based on the text. Word Splash strategy encouraged them to be cooperative and active reader. By using Word Splash strategy, the students could brainstorm the key ideas, examples, and overall organization of the texts in their long-term memory; therefore, they were confident to answer the questions. As Sitorus (2013, p.24-25) stated that the advantages of using Word Splash strategy is that students are more active in learning reading because in Word Splash procedures the students read, comprehend the key words of reading, then the students predict the meaning of the text by using the key word are given and write it. In addition, Word Splash gave students easy ways to comprehend the text by finding the difficult words and main idea in every passage, generate question, review the important ideas of the text and work cooperatively in groups. Moreover, Word Splash strategy gave them experiences on learning with the technological tools such as computer or laptop. The enjoyable learning activities lead students to activate and stimulate their brain to think critically. Besides, the implementation of Word Splash strategy impacts on the student's awareness to improve their knowledge and competence not only in English literacy but also digital literacy.

On the other hand, the results in control group showed that the mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores was 6.42 (70.24 – 63.82), the standard deviation was 6.81, the standard error mean was 1.16, t -obtained was 5.48, at the significant level $p < 0.05$ in two tailed testing with df of 33. It meant that the students' scores in reading comprehension of the control group were also improved. The students who were taught using conventional method had improved

their reading comprehension achievement because they were adjusted to studying reading using conventional method. They could be active and discipline in learning, and all of the students in the control group understood what the teacher said. Therefore, the students could organize the key ideas, discuss the difficult words of their reading texts and answer the question. However, the improvement of scores in the control group was not really significant. Therefore, the traditional teaching strategy was no longer fit the needs of students in the era of education 4.0.

The independent samples t -test was used to find out whether or not there was a significant difference in students' reading comprehension achievement between the experimental and control groups. Then, the result of posttest in the experimental group was compared to those in the control group. It was found that the mean difference between experimental and control group was 1.47 (7.89–6.42) at the significant level $p < 0.05$ in two tailed testing with df of 66, t -obtained was 2.83, and the critical value of t -table was 1.99. Since t -obtained (2.83) was higher than t -table (1.99) and p_{value} (0.006) was less than α_{value} (0.05), it showed that null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. This result answered the research question eventually. It meant that there was a significant difference in students' reading comprehension achievement between the students who were taught using Word Splash strategy and that of those who were not. In brief, Word Splash strategy could improve students' reading comprehension achievement and was more effective to use for teaching reading comprehension to the eighth-grade students of SMP PGRI Pedamaran than the activities done in control group.

The students who were taught using Word Splash strategy were aroused to be more interested in reading the text and they had improved their reading comprehension achievement. It made them be discipline including in answering the questions. By using Word Splash strategy, the students learned how to make a prediction, shared their idea, cherished the other idea and reviewed the important ideas from the text that had been read. Furthermore, Word Splash stimulated students' creative thinking around a topic. It could be used as a priming activity

or a wrap up activity because it was fun and easy. The teacher could present Words Splash in a variety of ways, including it could help all of the students to find new unit vocabulary to show in front of class. In addition, this strategy gave students a chance to relate the new words or concepts to the main topic of reading.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results and discussions above, it could be concluded that Word Splash strategy could be applied in reading comprehension class of the eighth-grade students at SMP PGRI Pedamaran. The research question was answered. In other words, there was a significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the students who were taught using Word Splash strategy and that of those who were not. Word Splash could train the students to comprehend the text by finding the difficult words and main idea in every passage, generate question, review the important ideas of the text and work cooperatively in groups. Further, the implementation of Word Splash strategy directed the students and teacher to be well-prepared with the use of some various products of technology that offered diverse teaching and learning experiences.

Thus, here are some suggestions or recommendations to ensure that the further researches have to be done with the teachers' and students' readiness in relation to the integration of technology and literacy into the classroom. First, the teacher should be creative in selecting various kinds of interesting strategies for teaching reading that utilize technology. Teacher should always try to make studying English be interesting, especially reading comprehension by actively involving the students in the classroom in the activities and creating comfort and interesting teaching and learning situation. One of the alternative strategies was Word Splash strategy. Second, the teacher should encourage the students to read more especially in English in order to develop their English vocabulary as well as their reading skill. Third, students should always increase their knowledge about English especially reading aspects, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation etc. Then, students must have their own dictionary because it could help them while facing difficult words. Next, students should be active reader, read

more kinds of English texts to improve their reading comprehension achievement.

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