

Improving Reading Comprehension of the Eleventh Grade Students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu Through the Use of Preview, Ask Question, Read and Summarize (PARS) Strategy

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Article History:

Received:

(28-05-2025)

Revised:

(22-06-2025)

Accepted:

(28-06-2025)

Keywords:

Improving; PARS
Strategy; Reading
Comprehension

ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to determine whether the use of the PARS (Preview, Ask Question, Read, Summarize) strategy could improve reading comprehension among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 4 Palu. A quasi-experimental design was used with a sample selected through available sampling. Class XI H served as the experimental group and Class XI F as the control group. Class XI H was chosen for treatment due to its lower English proficiency based on pre-test results. The research instrument was a reading test consisting of multiple-choice, essay, and true/false questions, administered as both pre-test and post-test. The mean pre-test scores were 46.04 for the experimental class and 47.46 for the control class. After treatment, the experimental group's mean post-test score rose to 75.72, while the control group's was 65.69. Statistical analysis showed that the t-counted value (1.99) exceeded the t-table value (1.67), indicating a significant improvement. The findings suggest that the PARS strategy effectively enhances students' reading comprehension. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to implement this strategy to promote student engagement and understanding, particularly in content-heavy subjects, by guiding learners through an active and structured reading process.

How to Cite:

Renaldi, L. M., Rofiqoh, R. Wahyudin, W., & Kamaruddin, A. (2025). Improving Reading Comprehension of the Eleventh Grade Students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu Through the Use of Preview, Ask Question, Read and Summarize (PARS) Strategy. *Datokarama English Education Journal*, 6(1), 51-59. <https://doi.org/10.24239/dee.v6i1.112>

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a form of communication between the writer and the reader. It involves more than simply recognizing written words it requires understanding the meaning behind them to grasp the message the writer intends to convey. This communicative process occurs when readers successfully interpret the content, which includes facts, ideas, and emotions presented in the text. To read effectively, one must be able to comprehend the meaning of what is read, a skill

referred to as reading comprehension. This aligns with Wahyono and Puspitasari (2015), who emphasize that reading is a vital language skill for acquiring information and reference materials that support learning.

Reading comprehension involves extracting information from a text and constructing meaning through the use of the reader's prior knowledge. It is a complex cognitive process, as it requires constant interaction between the reader's thoughts and the writer's ideas. To fully understand a text, readers must not only have a strong grasp of the language but also possess cognitive and intellectual skills.

In English language education, reading plays a critical role, whether taught as a second or foreign language. It is one of the core language skills alongside listening, speaking, and writing that students are expected to master. Reading also tends to be one of the most frequent academic activities students engage in, both during and beyond classroom hours. Through reading, students can gain new knowledge, expand their perspectives, and develop their interests.

However, many students face challenges in reading comprehension due to various factors. One major issue is limited vocabulary, which makes it difficult to understand the meaning of texts. Another common problem is a lack of background knowledge about the topic, which affects their ability to understand the content. Additionally, students often struggle with identifying the elements of narrative texts.

To overcome these challenges, it is necessary to apply an effective strategy that supports students in developing their reading skills and becoming more active readers. The PARS strategy which stands for Preview, Ask Question, Read, and Summarize offers a structured approach that addresses these needs. It aligns with the four key stages of the reading process: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. According to Rosmayanti et al. (2021), students reported feeling more motivated during reading activities when they used the PARS strategy, particularly because it encouraged discussion and collaboration.

In this study, the researcher chose to use the PARS strategy because it provides a broad range of engaging topics that help students become more active and interested in reading. Therefore, the research was conducted under the title: *"Improving Reading Comprehension of the Eleventh Grade Students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu Through the Use of Preview, Ask Question, Read, and Summarize (PARS) Strategy."*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Skill

Reading is an activity through which a reader interprets and understands messages conveyed by the writer using written language (Tarigan, 2008). According to Grabe and Stoller (2011, p.17), reading involves the ability to derive meaning from printed text and interpret it appropriately. In other words, reading

is not merely the act of recognizing words but also involves processing and constructing meaning to acquire information.

Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2002) explain that students are often introduced to new vocabulary and grammar through various short texts such as dialogues, descriptions, instructions, or stories. These texts are frequently accompanied by illustrations to enhance understanding. Reading not only supports language development but also teaches students how to learn independently. Moreover, many of the strategies used in teaching listening can also be effectively applied to teaching reading, especially in helping students activate prior knowledge and engage with the content.

Perfetti (2007) defines reading skill as an individual's performance on reading assessments. He identifies three key components that must be developed to improve reading ability: vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Based on assessment results, students can be categorized according to their proficiency levels, which then guides educators in providing suitable instruction. Skilled readers engage in various cognitive processes, such as predicting text structure, identifying key information, organizing and summarizing ideas mentally, monitoring comprehension, resolving misunderstandings, and aligning their interpretation with the reading goals.

Each reader has their own approach to reading that suits their learning style. Therefore, it is important for educators to equip students with the necessary strategies to support effective reading comprehension. Brown (2004, pp. 187–188) categorizes reading skills into two major types: micro-skills and macro-skills. Micro-skills involve the reader's ability to recognize graphemes, orthographic patterns, and linguistic signals, which are essential at the word and sentence levels. Macro-skills, on the other hand, require the reader to use discourse knowledge, understand communicative purposes, make inferences, and apply strategies such as scanning and skimming. These macro-skills play a critical role in enabling readers to fully comprehend a text.

Reading Comprehension

Comprehension is the foundational aspect of the reading process and is essential for achieving the purpose of reading. According to Bernhardt et al. (2003, p. 14), *comprehension is an interactive process involved in constructing meaning*. This suggests that successful comprehension occurs when readers actively engage with the text to uncover the meaning that aligns with the writer's intended message.

Moreover, reading comprehension requires active interaction between the reader and the writer within a meaningful context. It is not just about decoding words but also about interpreting the author's intent and message. Several factors influence a reader's comprehension, including:

- a) The prior knowledge and experience the reader brings to the reading task
- b) The way the text is written and structured by the author

- c) The learning context, which includes the reader's purpose and the environment in which reading occurs
- d) The strategies the reader intentionally applies to understand the text

In addition, Grabe and Stoller (2011, p. 17) define reading comprehension *as the ability to understand information from a written text and interpret it accurately*. This means readers must not only grasp the literal content but also infer and integrate information from the context. Reading comprehension, therefore, is a cognitive process that involves critical thinking, interpretation, and drawing connections from one's experience. It goes beyond understanding individual words or sentences to forming a coherent understanding of the entire message conveyed by the text.

Preview, Ask Question, Read and Summarize (PARS) Strategy

The PARS strategy is one approach that can support students in developing their reading comprehension. It consists of four key steps: Preview, Ask Question, Read, and Summarize. Each step plays a critical role in helping students engage actively with a text.

In the Preview stage, students skim the text to get a general overview. Skimming involves quickly moving the eyes across the page to identify main ideas and key terms. The goal is to grasp the topic and general structure before reading in detail. Spears (2006, pp. 3–4) outlines three phases of reading: (1) Preparation, where the reader reviews the text to understand its structure; (2) First reading, where the text is read without interruption while noting unfamiliar words and confusing parts; and (3) Second reading, which involves reading more carefully, making connections, questioning the author's ideas, and anticipating future discussions or assessments. This sequence closely aligns with the Preview stage of the PARS strategy, emphasizing the importance of initial exposure to the text before deeper engagement.

The second step, Ask Question, involves formulating questions before reading. Teachers can guide students by helping them focus on specific parts of the text or encouraging them to connect the reading to prior knowledge. Blachowicz (2008, p. 79) emphasizes that effective questioning strategies are essential for developing and evaluating students' comprehension. Similarly, Palincsar and Brown (1984) found that using directed and self-generated questions during instruction fosters independent and strategic reading.

The third step, Read, encourages students to read with purpose, using the questions they created to guide their focus. While reading, students attempt to find answers and make sense of the content. According to Blachowicz (2008, p. 34), this reflective process deepens comprehension as students apply new knowledge and identify where their questions are addressed within the text.

In the final step, Summarize, students review the main ideas of the reading and confirm their understanding by answering the questions they had formulated. Summarization involves compiling notes and identifying the central

themes or arguments presented by the writer. Blachowicz (2008, p. 34) also explains that good readers summarize and synthesize information after reading by considering plot, central ideas, and the author's intent, which helps them create a cohesive understanding that goes beyond isolated details.

In essence, the PARS strategy offers a structured process for students to better understand the meaning of a text. It simplifies reading by helping students grasp the content and remember key information. This strategy is particularly beneficial for students who struggle with reading, as it supports both comprehension and retention through step-by-step guidance.

Previous Research On PARS

Several researchers have explored the effectiveness of the PARS (Preview, Ask Question, Read, Summarize) strategy in enhancing students' reading comprehension. Ibrahim (2023) emphasized the importance of teacher innovation, noting that although PARS was relatively new to students, it successfully encouraged active engagement by guiding learners to preview key text elements and generate questions before reading, which led to improved comprehension. Similarly, Anggraini (2023) investigated the use of PARS in teaching recount texts to tenth-grade students and found a significant improvement in reading scores after using the strategy. However, no significant difference was observed between the experimental and control groups in the final results.

In a vocational context, Pradipta and Wahyudin (2023) found that PARS led to a substantial increase in students' reading scores, rising from 48.7 to 82.93, with statistical analysis confirming its effectiveness. Kamaria (2018) also reported positive results among second-grade students at MTs Guppi Kalimbua, with the majority achieving "Good" or higher classifications after treatment using PARS. Lastly, Hariyanto (2014) found that PARS improved reading comprehension, especially among students who had a positive attitude toward reading, demonstrating that both strategy and student mindset play key roles in reading success.

METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design, which involves the use of statistical analysis to determine outcomes. This design is characterized by formal, systematic measurement and the application of quantitative methods. The primary aim of this research was to investigate whether there was a significant difference in students' reading comprehension between those taught using the PARS strategy and those taught through conventional teacher explanation, as measured through pre-test and post-test scores. In this study, the PARS strategy served as the independent variable, while reading comprehension was the dependent variable. Quasi-experimental research, as a form of quantitative study, is used to explore causal relationships or explain why

certain educational outcomes occur. The experimental group was class XI H, and the control group was class XI F, with both groups participating in pre-tests and post-tests.

The sample for this study was selected using the available sampling technique, which considers accessibility and student readiness. Based on the English teacher's input regarding students' proficiency levels, class XI H was chosen as the experimental group due to their relatively lower English skills, while class XI F was assigned as the control group. The selected sample represented a subset of the population, allowing the researcher to generalize the findings.

To gather data, the researcher used a reading comprehension test developed specifically for this study. The test included 30 items: 10 multiple-choice questions, 10 true-or-false items, and 10 essay questions. A pre-test was administered before the treatment, and a post-test followed the implementation of the PARS strategy to assess its impact. To analyze the results, the researcher calculated the mean scores using a formula proposed by Arikunto (2006, p. 313).

To ensure fair and consistent evaluation, a scoring rubric was applied. Each correct response in the multiple-choice and true-or-false sections earned one point. For the essay items, a rubric assessed comprehension accuracy, clarity of explanation, and relevance to the text, assigning scores from 0 to 3 per item. This rubric helped maintain objectivity and reliability in scoring student responses.

Data collection was carried out over seven weeks, including seven sessions that covered the pre-test, several treatment sessions using the PARS strategy, and the post-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study investigates the effectiveness of the PARS strategy (Preview, Ask Question, Read, Summarize) in enhancing the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 4 Palu. The research consisted of two primary phases: a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test, conducted before the application of the PARS strategy, aimed to measure students' baseline reading comprehension. The average pre-test score for the experimental class was 46.05, with scores ranging from 17.14 to 62.85. The control group's average was 47.02, with scores between 11.42 and 61.42, indicating that both groups started with relatively similar comprehension levels.

Following the implementation of the PARS strategy, post-test results showed a notable improvement in the experimental group's performance. Their scores ranged from 61.42 to 91.42, with an average of 75.71. Although the control group also experienced some progress, achieving a mean score of 68.12, the improvement in the experimental group was significantly greater.

Statistical analysis using a t-test revealed a t-counted value of 1.99, which exceeded the t-table value of 1.67. This result indicates a statistically significant

difference between the groups, suggesting that students taught using the PARS strategy demonstrated better reading comprehension outcomes compared to those who received conventional instruction.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the PARS strategy in improving reading comprehension among eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 4 Palu. The implementation spanned four instructional sessions, followed by a post-test to measure student progress. Initially, students experienced difficulty in understanding the texts, which appeared to be linked to limited vocabulary and the absence of a structured reading approach. However, as the PARS strategy was gradually introduced, students became more engaged particularly during the “Ask” and “Summarize” phases where they were encouraged to question the content and reflect on their understanding.

By the second and third meetings, students demonstrated significant improvement in predicting content, identifying key ideas, and actively participating in discussions. The structured sequence of PARS enabled students to read with greater intention and develop deeper comprehension. This progress was reflected in the final post-test, where the average score increased to 75.71, confirming the strategy’s effectiveness.

These findings are consistent with prior research. Kamaria (2018) reported that PARS fosters student independence and promotes active classroom interaction. Anggraini (2023) found that the strategy enhances students' ability to focus on key points and link prior knowledge with new information. Ibrahim (2023) highlighted the strategy’s impact on analytical thinking, particularly in understanding vocabulary and textual context. Additionally, Pradipta and Wahyudin (2023) observed significant score improvements among vocational students after using PARS, and Hariyanto (2014) emphasized that students with positive reading attitudes benefited more from the structured approach.

The findings of this research not only reinforce those previous studies but also suggest that the PARS strategy effectively supports students in becoming more confident, reflective, and engaged readers.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the PARS strategy is effective in enhancing the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 4 Palu. The experimental group’s average post-test score of 75.71 was notably higher than the control group’s score of 68.12. This difference was supported by statistical analysis, with the t-count value (1.99) surpassing the t-table value (1.67), thereby validating the research hypothesis.

The application of the PARS strategy contributed to students becoming more attentive, active, and autonomous in their reading. It shifted reading from a passive activity to a more dynamic and purposeful process, which proved

especially useful when dealing with lengthy or complex texts. Based on these findings, it is recommended that English teachers integrate the PARS strategy into their reading instruction to improve students' comprehension and foster greater classroom engagement.

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