

Students' Perception of Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) on Reading Comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang

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Abstract

Assisting students to have good reading comprehension is essential to be accomplished during learning. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) comes as the most used strategy to promote students' literacy and build their reading comprehension based on the pre-observation in junior high schools in Karangasem Regency. This study aimed to investigate students' perception of using SSR to enhance students' reading comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang. The design of the study was mixed-method. The setting of this study is SMPN 1 Abang, located in Abang district, Karangasem regency, Bali province. This study used a questionnaire as the instrument of this study. The type of questionnaire used is a mail survey, specifically the questionnaire created in scale items by using Likert-type questions. As the study results, the mean score was categorized as very high because it was 4.50 and the interval was $4.00 < M < 5.00$. In other words, the student's perception of using SSR to enhance students' reading comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang showed very positive qualifications. Thus, it implies that SSR is helpful to improve students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: *students' perception, SSR, reading comprehension,*

Introduction

As one of the basic skills in English, reading is seen as the underlying skill that could assist students in building their vocabulary and create a continuing language learning (Hornery et al., 2014). It has been considered as an indisputable part of students' academic achievement, which involves a complex process of comprehending a text for a variety of purposes and a wide range of contexts (Snowling et al., 2009; Perfetti et al., 2008). Comprehending a text does not merely mean recognizing and understanding every word in the text. It involves a process where students are able to build up a mental representation of what is discussed in the text as a result of the integration of information that has been read (Das et al., 2009). This makes reading becomes a skill that has always been emphasized in language learning, particularly in English learning.

Students who fail to learn reading during their primary grades will be lack in the ability to read well (Shanahan et al., 2010). This will lead them to develop poor self-esteem, lack of

motivation in learning, and various academic problems which drive them away from the expected learning objectives (Shanahan et al., 2010; Kerthyayana Manuaba, 2017). Therefore, assisting students to have a good reading comprehension is an important goal to be achieved during the process of learning. By having reading comprehension, students are able to obtain information and comprehend concepts, enhance their general English skills, and develop new ideas and experiences (Stahl, 2004). There are some strategies used related to enhance students' reading comprehension, and one of those skills is through Sustained Silent Reading (SSR).

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) comes as the most used strategy to promote students' literacy and build their reading comprehension based on the pre-observation in junior high schools in Karangasem Regency. SSR assigns students to read a text by themselves silently for a certain period to encouraged them to read with interest as it is the topic they like and find pleasure in (Meyers, 1998). Through SSR, students are expected to have motivation in reading and a continuous reading culture to advance their comprehension ability and other language skills. According to the pre-observation conducted in several junior high schools in Karangasem Regency, Bali, the teachers used Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) in promoting in the classroom and during the learning process. In this case, SSR is a teaching strategy that assigns students to read a self-chosen text silently for a certain period (Campbell, 1989). The idea of SSR is based on the fact that self-selected reading materials tend to encourage students to read with interest as it is the topic that they like and find pleasure in, which will further build their motivation in reading and a continuous reading culture that could improve their reading comprehension and other language skills. Moreover, some sources argued that SSR has demonstrated improvement in motivation and attitude to read as well as better improvement in English proficiency (Lin et al., 2012; Kaur et al., 2010; Sadoski, 1980).

Garan and DeVoogd (2008) suggest that SSR comes in many variations of implementation, but the pure one is basically a time devoted reading where students choose the books or texts by themselves without any assessment, skill work, monitoring, or instruction from the teachers. Several teachers use SSR by determining the book type and the number of books the other also apply assessments, make a reading checklist to track the students' reading activity, initiate a discussion about the books or texts that they have read (Eddy, 2018; Lin et al., 2012; Siah & Kwok, 2010). Despite the differences in the teachers' involvement in the implementation, SSR is implemented by giving students at least 15 to 30 minutes to read a book of their choice (Savasci & Akyel, 2018; Chua, 2008).

Generally, Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) comes as the most used strategy to promote students' literacy and build their reading comprehension based on the pre-observation in junior high schools in Karangasem Regency. Manurung et al. (2020) suggests that SSR assigns students to read a self-selected text silently for a certain period of time so that they are encouraged to read with interest as it is the topic that they like and find pleasure in. Through SSR, students are expected to have motivation in reading and a continuous reading culture that could improve their reading comprehension and other language skills. However, the result of SSR implementation in Indonesia, especially in Karagasem regency, haven't found yet. This caused by the teacher who did not provide data related to the students' perception related to the use of SSR in Junior High

Schools in Karangasem Regency, which categorized into successful implementation or not. Thus, this study is necessary to be conducted to investigate students' perception of SSR as the strategy to encourage reading and support literacy activity in junior high schools. Considering the importance of reading and the relation of SSR towards students' reading comprehension, this study aims at analyzing students' perception of using SSR to enhance students' reading comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang.

Several studies related to the topic of SSR have been conducted previously, such as from Nurjanah et al. (2020), Rosdiana (2017), Suharlik (2017), Permatasari & Amir (2014), Singh, David, & Chuah (2012), and Garan & Devoogd (2018). From those studies, 4 of them are quantitative research, and two of them are qualitative research. In this case, analyzing students' perceptions is important to be addressed in order to find a better solution for better implementation in the future. The novelty of this study was the study object as it focuses on analyzing how SSR is perceived and examine more on the advantages found from the implementation of SSR for students' reading comprehension. In this case, this study used the combination between quantitative through questionnaire and qualitative through interview guise, which can be called as mixed-method research. Besides, this study also occurred in online teaching and learning, due to the situation of Pandemic Covid-19. Furthermore, this study can be essentially helpful as teachers can recognize the good and bad sides from SSR, so that students' reading comprehension can be developed better.

Method

This study was intended to investigate students' perception of the use of SSR to enhance reading comprehension, this study was conducted by using a mixed-method. The setting of this study was at SMPN 1 Abang, located in Abang district, Karangasem regency, Bali province. SMPN 1 Abang was selected as the study setting because it implements Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) during the online teaching and learning situation. The study population was 8th grade students in SMPN 1 Abang. In determining the sample of this study, the researcher used probability sampling by using a simple random sampling technique. Regarding to the use of simple random sampling, the total population is 339 students, the researcher used almost half of the population (175 students) which taken from the students who filled the questionnaire. This study used a questionnaire as the instrument of this study. The type of questionnaire used is mail survey, precisely the question of a questionnaire created in the form of scale items by using Likert-type questions. Therefore, to develop indicators of scale items, this research used 2 dimensions. The grand theory used in this research is a theory from Manurung et al. (2020) and Virdani (2020), with the basic theory of perception by Robbins & Judge (2017). The questionnaire contained some questions which must be answered by 8th grade students in SMPN 1 Abang. The researcher used the validity level from Candiasa (2010) to validate the questionnaire.

After determining the level of content validity, then the step of checking content validity continued into the cross-tabulation step based on the expert judgment process. Based on the content validity process conducted from two experts, both experts agree that 15 items are relevant. According to the Gregory content analysis formula, the value of content validity is 1.00 and categorized as very high. It implies that the questionnaire is valid.

After conducting content validity, the result of the blueprint was continued to measure the empirical validity and reliability by administering try-out tests beyond the sample classes. The try-out test of this research was done at SMPN 1 Abang in 8C Class, in which 32 students were asked to answer the questionnaire. There were two kinds of procedures used to measure the quality of the test, namely empirical validity and reliability.

To determine empirical validity of the instrument, Pearson Product Moment was conducted. It was calculated by using SPSS. It was found that there were no invalid items in the questionnaire since the results of Pearson Correlation of all items were above 0.4. The details of the empirical validity are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Details of Empirical Validity Items

No.	Item	Score	Validity Status
1.	Q1	0.809	Valid
2.	Q2	0.618	Valid
3.	Q3	0.618	Valid
4.	Q4	0.618	Valid
5.	Q5	0.791	Valid
6.	Q6	0.823	Valid
7.	Q7	0.809	Valid
8.	Q8	0.791	Valid
9.	Q9	0.749	Valid
10.	Q10	0.791	Valid
11.	Q11	0.654	Valid
12.	Q12	0.791	Valid
13.	Q13	0.823	Valid
14.	Q14	0.823	Valid
15.	Q15	0.823	Valid

The data in Table 1 shows that from 15 items of questions (Q1-Q15), all of the items are valid since the score is above the score standard. The reliability measurement of the questionnaire was done by using the Alpha-Cronbach formula. It based on the consideration that the Alpha-Cronbach formula could be used to analyse the reliability dichotomously scored items. The tool used to analyse is SPSS 25. If the Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α) had been calculated, the coefficient of reliability was compared to the standard reliability coefficient. Based on the statistic calculation from SPSS 25, it was found that the reliability of the students' questionnaire consisting of 15 items was considered reliable with very high reliability as the Cronbach's coefficient was 0.946. In this case, the coefficient 0.946 is in the range of 0.80 – 1.00, which can be categorized into very high reliability.

Findings & Discussions

The research was carried out by filling out a questionnaire first, which consisted of 15 items. The data collection was obtained from the questionnaires filled out by students. There were

175 students from a total of 339 students in 8th grade students in SMPN 1 Abang involved as the participants to fill the questionnaire of this study. This descriptive statistical analysis was measured using SPSS 22.0 because the data were analyzed to find the central tendency measurement (mean) and dispersion measurement (standard deviation and variance). The descriptive statistics are presented in this section. It is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics	Q_AVERAGE
Mean	4,50
Mode	5
Std. Deviation	0,58
Variance	0,33
Minimum	3
Maximum	5
Sum	789,4

The table described the average of descriptive statistical data gained by the students from filling out the questionnaire. The overall score was achieved after calculating all the questions per item. The table shown above presents that the mean score was 4.50, Mode was 5, the standard deviation was 0.58, the variance was 0.33, the minimum score was 3, the maximum score was 5 and the average of the sum was 789.4. In this case, the standard deviation and variance score was above 0.05 (standard deviation: 0.58 and variance: 0.33). Thus, it can be inferred that the descriptive statistics of the data were described normally and above the standard score. The mean score showed in table 5 was 4.50. Regarding the calculation above, the mean score categorization is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. The Categorization of Mean Score

No	Criteria	Categorization	Qualification
1	$MI + 1.5 SDI \leq M \leq MI + 3.0 SDI$	Very High	Very positive
2	$MI + 0.5 SDI \leq M < MI + 1.5 SDI$	High	Positive
3	$MI - 0.5 SDI \leq M < MI + 0.5 SDI$	Average	Neutral
4	$MI - 1.5 SDI \leq M < MI - 0.5 SDI$	Low	Negative
5	$Mi - 3.0 SDi \leq \bar{X} < MI - 1.5 SDI$	Very Low	Very Negative

The mean score classification is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The Categorization of Mean Score with Interval

No	Criteria	Interval	Categorization	Qualification
1	$MI + 1.5 SDI \leq M \leq MI + 3.0 SDI$	$4.00 \leq M < 5.00$	Very High	Very positive
2	$MI + 0.5 SDI \leq M < MI + 1.5 SDI$	$3.00 \leq M < 4.00$	High	Positive
3	$MI - 0.5 SDI \leq M < MI + 0.5 SDI$	$2.00 \leq M < 3.00$	Average	Neutral
4	$MI - 1.5 SDI \leq M < MI - 0.5 SDI$	$1.00 \leq M < 2.00$	Low	Negative
5	$MI - 3.0 SDI \leq M < MI - 1.5 SDI$	$00.00 \leq M < 1.00$	Very Low	Very Negative

Based on Table 4, the mean score is categorized as very high because it is 4.50 and the interval is $4.00 \leq M < 5.00$. In other words, the students showed very high categorization and very positive qualification of students' perception on the use of SSR to enhance students' reading comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang. In this case, it can be interpreted that SSR is a suitable strategy for enhancing students' reading comprehension, since the students' showed very positive perception related to the use of SSR for their reading comprehension. The very positive perception found means that the students strongly agree that the implementation of SSR could helped them in enhancing their reading comprehension, especially in reading English text.

Based on the aforementioned results that the students showed very high categorization and very positive qualification of students' perception on the use of SSR to enhance students' reading comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang, it can be interpreted that student showed very good perception related to the use of SSR for their reading comprehension. It is supported by Birmingham (2001), who argues that SSR is a reading strategy that gives the students silent and continuous reading time. Moreover, SSR can be effective if the teacher provides time for students to do daily reading, promote reading for various purposes, and use creative ways to respond to literature (Permatasari & Amir, 2014; Birmingham, 2001; Campbell, 1989). In addition, Singh, David, & Chuah (2012) state that SSR offers several advantages for reading: It encourages students' enthusiasts to understand the meaning of the text. It also creates meaningful reading habit since SSR develop students' enjoyment in reading the text.

As one of the reading strategies, sustained silent reading can measure students' reading fluency and comprehension. Besides, the teachers can also know the reading interest of their students (Suharlik, 2017). Students have time for themselves to read silently and to sustain themselves for at least 15 minutes. It hopes that students will become hooked on reading habits for a lifetime not only in the class during English class time but also when they are outside class, and in their free time, they will love reading (Krashen & Mason, 2017; Berkey, 2012; Sadoski, 1980). SSR also can be applied by using various reading source that students' want. They can choose books, magazines, etc, that they are interested in, and they are shown how to create time for reading then they will read more (Manurung et al., 2020; Pilgreen, 2000).

In relation to its implementation, SSR is a reading strategy which is flexible to be implemented. SSR can be implemented by monitoring the type and the number of books that the students have read while the other also administer assessments, track the students' reading through reading checklists, and encourage a discussion about the books or texts that they have read (Kaur et al., 2010). As the other benefits of this strategy, there are some goals of SSR mentioned by Virdani (2019), such as: a) to help students develop a good habit of reading, b) students interact directly with the content of reading, can understand the contents of the discourse that is read appropriately, c) Increase concentration in reading in the heart, d) the student can read the text of the text and be able to deduce the content according to your own words, e) the ability of students to understand English in the form of text is increasing, f) improve their English proficiency in the long run. Furthermore, Bacus et al. (2014) state that the SSR can activate that potential because of the comprehensive input provided by SRR. Thus, nurturing language acquisition through SSR can help the students comprehending the language, particularly the language used in daily context. According to above explanation, it can be inferred that the students strongly agree that SSR could helped them in comprehending English text and understanding the main information of the text. It can be seen based on the results' this study regarding to the students' perception of SSR that showed very good perception.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the result of the study, the student's perception of using SSR to enhance students' reading comprehension in SMPN 1 Abang showed very positive qualifications, which implies that SSR is helpful to improve students' reading comprehension. Thus, Sustained Silent Reading strategy is suggested to be implemented at the Junior High School level because it can help the students practice and improve their concentration. It also helps develop students' understanding of the text and being good readers.

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