

CONTEXTUAL GUESSING METHOD VERSUS PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STUDENTS' RESPONSE AND DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Students needed to gain comprehension of the material to participate in reading activities. Many students still struggled to read English-language texts, nevertheless. They encountered unfamiliar words regularly. Consequently, contextual guessing and project-based learning emerged as a method that students may use to deduce the text. The goals of this study were to: (1) ascertain how students felt about using the technique to raise their reading comprehension levels; and (3) look into the challenges that students faced when using the technique to understand the text. An explanatory sequential design with mixed methodologies was employed in the study. The instruments included an open-ended interview, a closed-ended questionnaire, and a multiple-choice exam. Thirty-two students from one of the junior high schools in Cimahi served as the research subjects. These two conclusions are the result of this research: The use of the contextual guessing technique and project-based learning had an impact on students' reading comprehension, according to the following findings: (1) the questionnaire data; and (2) the interview data, which indicated that students' positive responses to the use of the contextual guessing technique in teaching reading comprehension were based on two factors: (1) a lack of vocabulary and (2) weak English proficiency.

Keywords: *Contextual guessing technique reading comprehension, project-based learning, text.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the skills in language acquisition that every student has to master since it is an expressive ability that affects the growth of useful skills like speaking and writing. Silberstein (1994) asserts that reading constitutes an active process. It implies that students create assumptions about the subject matter and draw on previous knowledge to get a sneak peek at the content by making connections between the book, individuals, and the wider world.

According to Brown (2007) to make sense of a book, readers should integrate what they already know with what they read. To understand the material, students must focus on the vocabulary, clauses, phrases, sentences, and relations within statements in the text, using all of their cognitive abilities. Numerous elements, such as the reader's

reading goal, language background, cultural context, and prior experiences, affect how they read. Thus, comprehension is crucial to the whole reading activity.

There is a connection between understanding and reading. Reading is comprehension-based; reading without comprehending isn't genuinely reading, as defined by Dallmann et al. (1982). Smith (2004) claims that both comprehension and comprehension are comparable in interactions that are (or are intended to appear) technical and scientific. On the other hand, reading comprehension, according to Linge (2000), is the capacity to connect words to construct sentences and to understand the message that the writer is trying to convey. As a result, reading comprehension is a continual process of concept development. Readers interact with the text as they read it; consequently, they respond inquisitively, make associations, ask questions, and create hypotheses to gain greater comprehension.

Fortunately, reading comprehension challenges have become prevalent among students because English represents a foreign language and is differentiated from native Indonesian by way of grammatical structure. Many students find it challenging to comprehend English-language books. They often get stuck because of a wide range of challenges, namely reluctance, ambiguous terminology, and several other challenges. Students in Indonesia, in particular, are required to be able to read several types of English texts: process, descriptive, recount, narrative, and report, at the junior high school level. This is necessary because comprehension of the text is a prerequisite for reading activities. Students need to be able to read as well as comprehend the contextual meanings of fundamental paragraphs of text that concern social functions, text structure, and linguistic elements, per the 2013 curriculum, which is the syllabus for the ninth-grade junior high school. Susilohadi (2008) identifies a report text as a piece of writing that generally demonstrates or categorizes something. An introduction to the topic is provided at the beginning. Meanwhile, facts (the characteristics, behaviors, and routines of the subject) may be included in the description.

Based on the background of the research above, the research questions are as follows:

1. How are the students' responses to the contextual guessing technique in improving their reading comprehension?
2. What are the students' obstacles in comprehending the text using the contextual guessing technique?

Reading

There are several definitions of reading, depending on who defines it. Numerous reading experts share their opinions and ideas about reading. Aebersold and Field (1997) defined reading as the process by which a person looks at a text and deciphers the textual symbols within. Grabe & Stoller (2002) offer an analogous definition. They defined reading as the ability to infer meaning from printed material and apply appropriate interpretation. Nunan (1998) defined reading as the process of interpreting written symbols, working one's way up from smaller units such as individual letters to larger ones such as words, phrases, and sentences.

The Purpose of Reading

Reading is more than just information collection; it can have several purposes depending on the reader's goals and the circumstances. To classify reading goals, Grabe & Stoller (2002) employ four primary categories. (a) Finding fundamental information

by reading. When it comes to common reading abilities, the majority of respondents stated that searching through a text for a term or particular piece of information entails skimming it. (a) Reading texts to gain knowledge in professional and academic contexts, readers are expected to take in a large amount of information from a text. Usually requiring a slower reading rate than basic reading comprehension, this goal entails rereading and applying reflection strategies to help recall information. (c) Composing, evaluating, and internalizing material through reading These are some instances of typical academic assignments that help with the creation, choice, and assessment of textual data and necessitate the reading comprehension needed to integrate knowledge. (d) reading for general comprehension. It demands a strong ability to build a general meaning representation of the key ideas, automated and incredibly fast word processing, and efficient multitasking under time limitations.

Reading Comprehension

According to Snow (2002), reading comprehension is a multifaceted process that involves a lot of different factors working together. The reader, the text, and the activity are those elements. He views the reader's capabilities, know-how, and life experiences as integral parts of the reader. Any printed or electronic material is what he refers to as the text. On the other hand, the activity covers the goal, steps, and results of any attitude toward reading.

Klingner, Vaughn, and Broadman (2007) further categorize reading comprehension into six groups. These are the readers, their prior knowledge, their reading technique, the text, their enthusiasm for the subject, and their familiarity with different types of texts. When understanding a written text, those categories work together. The readers will have trouble understanding what they are reading if there are interruptions in such interactions. Mohamad (1999) distinguished three primary levels, or strands, of comprehension. They are as follows: (a). Literal comprehension: At this level, understanding is straightforward. The instructor can assign the task of locating concepts and details that the text makes clear to the students. Referential or interpretive comprehension: Students read for meanings that go deeper at this level. Their ability to read intently and evaluate what they have read is a prerequisite. Instructors may assign homework that requires students to organize the concepts or subjects covered in the text, explain the author's motivation for creating the piece, summarize the primary idea when it is not stated clearly, and draw conclusions from their reading. (b) Critical reading: Students can only critically evaluate an author's ideas and facts once they have a firm understanding of them. At this level, students can demonstrate their skills in (a) distinguishing between facts and opinions; (b) recognizing persuasive claims; and (c) determining the veracity of the information provided in the text. As kids improve as readers, they advance through these stages. They immediately grasped the words to start. They then begin to consider the meaning that lies beneath those words. Ultimately, kids develop into more proficient readers who can analyze and comprehend the text's key and true points.

Reading Comprehension Strategies

Mikulecky & Jeffries (1998) assert that there are numerous methods for comprehending. The methods for comprehending are listed in the following order: (i) Beforehand. Scan titles, photo captions, and section headings to understand the structure and content of a reading selection. (ii) skimming as well as scanning. Skim the

text swiftly to determine its main idea, organization, and whether any predictions are supported or not. (iii) Assuming things Utilize your prior knowledge of the subject and the concepts in the text as cues to understand unfamiliar words and comprehend the written or discussed content. They can read more because they don't have to stop as often. (iv). giving in again. The process of restating a passage's main ideas at a drastically reduced length is known as summarizing. It is an essential reading skill because it ensures the reader that they have comprehended the content.

Contextual Guessing and Project-Based Learning

Contextual guessing is the process of using context to determine a word's meaning when reading a text. According to Denton et al. (2007), contextual guessing can give pupils an idea of what an unknown word might signify. The clues are located in and around the unknown word, either in the sentence itself or in the sentences that come before and after it. As a result, this method can aid students in understanding what they read.

Contextual guessing, according to Haastrup (1989) is a crucial strategy when dictionaries or human support are unavailable. Furthermore, Knight (1994) asserts that while consulting a dictionary might improve the precision and comprehensibility of new word definitions, it diminishes students' reading comprehension skills. Consequently, some educators advise students to infer a word's meaning from its context rather than relying solely on dictionaries. Reader-related variables and text-related variables are the two key elements determining guessing ability, according to Kaivanpanah & Alavi (2008). Mastery of vocabulary, comprehension of grammar and linguistic skills, attention to detail, cognitive and mental work, and reader traits are all variables associated with readers. The factors associated with the text are word features, text features, contextual cues, and topic familiarity. Contextual guessing, in summary, seems to be a helpful strategy for helping readers grasp words they are unfamiliar with. However, the efficacy of contextual guessing varies depending on the reader's ability and the features of the text being read.

Teachers must understand how to effectively instruct students in guessing. Clarke & Nation (1980) propose the following steps as an approach for teaching guessing from context: (a). Ask students to identify the part of speech of the target word. (b) Request that they concentrate on the word's context within a clause or a sentence. (c). Urge them to consider a larger context when focusing. (d). Ask them to infer the term's meaning from its part of speech; if the word contains a prefix, root, or suffix, it might provide some indication. (e). Request that pupils verify the meaning. To find out if the guesses fit the text, place them in the passage.

Many writers have proposed various context cues that can be used to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words in context. Nist and Mohr (2002), for instance, present four categories of context clues: general phrase sense, synonyms, antonyms, and illustrations. Blanchard & Root (2006) add two additional kinds: definitions and word pieces (word formation). The following are the six categories of context clues: (1) The sentence clarifies the meaning of a word or phrase. The essential terms include: mean, be referred to as, can be defined as, and the verb to be (is, am, are, was, and were). Example: My friend believes she is more important than everyone else and is highly conceited. (2) The authors may give one or more examples. The essential terms for providing examples include: to illustrate, for example, for instance, like, and so forth.

As an illustration, consider fantastical animals like unicorns and dragons. (3) Synonym: a term having a comparable meaning. For instance, he exudes such conceit or arrogance. (4) An antonym is a term that has the opposite meaning. The essential terms are: however, on the other hand, albeit, by contrast, in contrast, but instead (of). Example: Jen has empathy, but her brother doesn't. (5) Sentence in its entirety: To understand unknown terms, readers must draw on existing information or experience. Example: Our hair will look unkempt due to the strong wind. (6) Word structure, or word formation: Readers can deconstruct a word into its constituent components and connect them to other terms we are familiar with. Prefixes, roots, and suffixes are crucial. Example: According to the teacher, my response was untrue. The prefix "in-" denotes negation or absence.

Meanwhile, Under the project-based learning paradigm, students engage in lengthy projects that call for further research into a subject or question to develop and apply new skills. With project-based learning, students work together to accomplish predetermined learning goals by using actual language. Project-based learning, according to Ramadhani & Ngadiso (2022), enables students to research a subject by finishing a project or producing a product. Project-based learning, according to Aminah (2021), encourages students to stay motivated and engaged and create goals to attain better grades in productive skills courses. The researcher recommends a project-based learning strategy that motivates students to conduct research in light of the aforementioned viewpoints. Students can learn through posing queries, having discussions, formulating plans, and working with others to solve problems.

Advantages and Disadvantages Between Contextual Guessing and Project-Based Learning

The following are some advantages of the contextual guessing strategy, according to Gultom et al. (2023): (1) Guessing words from context is one of the most popular techniques. Training students to infer meaning from context is effective in four areas: (1) making students feel more comfortable expressing their opinions; (2) encouraging them to focus on the text they are reading rather than consulting dictionaries; and (4) fostering the development of critical thinking skills in the students. In addition, they also mention the advantages of contextual guessing as in lengthy sentences, learners will not be able to employ guessing from context; also, this strategy is inadequate for beginners since they do not have enough vocabulary to guess. Laufer and Sim (1985) corroborate it, stating that vocabulary size is a significant aspect that might adversely affect contextual guessing since learners with a restricted vocabulary are unable to make efficient use of it.

Enhancing motivation, sharpening problem-solving abilities, fostering greater teamwork, and enhancing resource management are some benefits of project-based learning. The benefits of project-based learning support students' development of accountability, goal-setting, independence, and discipline. It pushes students to develop their 21st-century collaboration, communication, and negotiation abilities. The ability of students to make decisions determines their achievement. Students can find their identities as learners when teachers use project-based learning as a model for instruction. The teacher and pupils must communicate when we employ. Its purpose is to ensure that students are regularly developing their ideas and skills and staying on course. According to Yustiana (2020), additional research has revealed that project-based learning offers additional advantages, including (a) learning by asking questions;

(b) debating ideas; (c) designing plans and collaborating with others, forming learning experiences; (d) outlining the main questions of the project; and (e) providing instruction on a particular task that students must complete. Students make project plans that include gathering information, delegating tasks and responsibilities to one another, and discussing ideas. Meanwhile, in agreement with Tiffany & Purbani (2020), project-based learning has the following drawbacks: (1) Most projects take longer than expected. Moreover, the duration needed to embrace comprehensive approaches like project-based learning, as well as the challenges instructors have while executing project-based science within district regulations; and (2) classroom management. Teachers need to find a balance between giving students autonomy and upholding order for their students to be productive. (3) control. To foster student learning, teachers often feel obliged to control the flow of information while simultaneously maintaining the belief that doing so is necessary to help students develop their understanding. Instructors find it difficult to scaffold their students' comprehension exercises, giving them either too much independence or not enough modeling and feedback; (5) instructors find it difficult to integrate technology into the classroom, particularly given its pervasive use. Exams that force students to think are difficult for teachers to create, and (6) assessments show what they have learned.

METHOD

Research Design

The study was carried out using a descriptive-qualitative research methodology. The research study was conducted at a junior high school in Cimahi, Indonesia

Respondents

The students of one junior high school in the ninth grade consisted of 32 students who were the research's topic. For this study, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is one of the sampling strategies that requires extra care to guarantee that the study data is more representative.

Instruments

The data collection process was considerably helped by the research equipment. Questionnaires and interviews were the research instruments employed in this study.

Questionnaires

According to Sugiyono (2011), a questionnaire is a method of gathering data in which respondents are provided with a set of questions or written statements to react to. The researcher employed a 12-statement, closed-ended questionnaire in this study. To gather the answers based on the statements or survey questions that used the Likert scale, a closed-ended survey instrument was developed. Each questionnaire term includes five categories on the Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree (Siniscalco & Auriat, 2005). The options' scores range from 1 to 5, consequently.

Interview

In this study, open-ended interviews were the method of choice. According to Sugiyono (2011), unstructured or open-ended interviews are the best method for conducting in-depth research on respondents. Interviewing parties that represent different levels of the item is necessary for the researcher to obtain a comprehensive picture of the issue. The

researcher questioned six students, two of whom had excellent reading abilities, two of whom had medium reading abilities, and two of whom had low reading abilities.

Procedures

Preparation stage

For the research's preparation stage for teaching reading. The researcher also developed a range of study instruments, including tests, field notes, questionnaires, and observation sheets.

Implementation stage

At this point, the researchers would take care of the students by teaching them how to read texts using two different methods in two different classes. The researchers conducted four meetings to complete the study. After the treatment, the researchers distributed surveys during the most recent meeting using Google Forms.

The assessment stages

During the evaluation phase, which marked the end of the study, the researcher collected data on the care provided to students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Students' Responses to the Contextual Guessing Technique Versus Project-Based Learning in Improving Their Reading Comprehension

The researchers used a questionnaire to obtain the students' responses. The researcher administered a closed-ended questionnaire consisting of ten statements. For the contextual guessing, one student disagreed, five students strongly agreed, sixteen students agreed, and ten students were neutral, and that was the first statement of the students who thoroughly enjoyed the report text utilizing the contextual guessing technique. The contextual guessing technique suggests that the students enjoyed reading the text, with only one student expressing disagreement with the statement. Meanwhile, in reading instruction, 17 students strongly agreed with the statement that project-based learning made them involved. None of the students strongly objected, agreed, or disagreed.

The second statement, which concerned the usefulness of the contextual guessing strategy when reading report content, was met with strong agreement from 12 students, agreement from 16 students, neutrality from 3 students, and disagreement from 1 student. With only one student disagreeing with the statement, it was possible to conclude that the contextual guessing strategy was useful when reading texts. On the other hand, the ease of implementing project-based learning to assist students in understanding the text was ascertained by analyzing the results of the second questionnaire question. The following breakdown of the student body was found: 24 agreed that project-based learning made it easier to understand the text content; 1 was neutral; 9 strongly agreed; and no one disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The third statement that concerned the contextual guessing technique helped the students read the text more comprehensively. Of the students, 10 strongly agreed, 15 agreed, 6 were indifferent, and one disagreed. One student disagreed with the assertion, suggesting that the contextual guessing strategy helped the students read the report text with greater comprehension. Twenty-seven students agreed with the third questionnaire

item, which asked how simple it is for students to use project-based learning to enhance their ideas. Of the students who responded, seven highly agreed with the statement. Not a single student gave a disagreement, strongly disagreed, or neutral response.

The fourth statement talked about how the contextual guessing strategy could help students understand words they did not know in the text. Seventeen students strongly agreed, five students agreed, nine students were neutral, and one student disagreed. The use of the contextual guessing strategy could improve students' comprehension of unknown words in the text. It was consistent with Widaryanto's (2022) assertion that students might expand their vocabulary and make educated guesses about unknown terms by using the contextual guessing strategy. While a total of 22 students disagreed, 12 strongly opposed, and 12 were neutral in response to the fourth questionnaire question regarding how project-based learning helped students retain vocabulary.

The fifth statement regarding the impact of contextual guessing on students' vocabulary development while reading the text elicited the following responses: Eleven students strongly concurred, ten students agreed, ten students remained neutral, and one student disagreed. It was possible to draw the conclusion that when the students used the contextual guessing strategy to read the report content, their vocabulary grew.

The sixth statement questioned the students if they preferred using the contextual guessing approach or a dictionary. Of the responses, 10 strongly agreed, 12 agreed, 9 were unsure, and 1 disagreed. The students' preference for the contextual guessing method over using a dictionary can be inferred. It was in line with Siregar's (2019) claim that by employing the contextual guessing approach, students may understand the content more rapidly without utilizing a dictionary. On the other hand, for the project-based learning, 12 students highly agreed and twenty-two other students agreed with the sixth questionnaire question about grammar in the descriptive text; no students were indifferent, disagreed, or severely disagreed.

Because of their limited vocabulary, they felt that the seventh statement on the contextual guessing approach was improper. Of the students, 5 agreed, 10 were impartial, 15 protested, and 2 severely disagreed. It's reasonable to conclude that a sizable percentage of the students disagreed that the contextual guessing approach was not suitable for them. However, 5 students agreed that because of their limited vocabulary, the method was not suited for them. It supported the conclusions of Sapitri et al. (2022), who found that low motivation, difficulties with language understanding, and contextual factors all led to students' difficulties with reading comprehension. In contrast, there were no students who agreed or strongly agreed with the question. The students were either in severe disagreement or disagreed. Sixteen students strongly disagreed, out of the eighteen that disagreed. Whereas the response of students who used a project-based learning approach showed that 6 students strongly agreed, and 28 other students agreed. Meanwhile, there were no neutral students, who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Regarding how the contextual guessing approach increased their motivation to read the text, eight students strongly agreed with statement number eight; 13 students agreed, and 10 students were neutral. It was feasible to conclude that they were more eager to read the report because of the contextual guessing technique. Regardless of the project-based learning approach, 7 students strongly agreed, and 27 other students agreed. Meanwhile, there were no neutral students, who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The ninth statement asked students if they preferred learning the text in groups as opposed to one-on-one instruction. Of the students who responded, 14 strongly agreed,

7 agreed, 7 were neutral, 1 disagreed, and 3 disagreed. It is possible to conclude that most students preferred to learn report texts in groups, whereas a minority percentage of students enjoyed studying report texts independently. Nevertheless, in the usage of the project-based learning approach, 10 students strongly agreed, 24 other students agreed, and there were no neutral students, who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Thirteen students agreed, ten students were neutral, and eight students strongly agreed with statement number ten regarding how the contextual guessing strategy boosted their incentive to read the text. It was possible to conclude that the contextual guessing method made them more eager to read the text. Nonetheless, for the project-based learning approach, half the population of students strongly agreed about it.

The Students' Obstacles in Comprehending the Text Using the Contextual Guessing Technique versus Project-Based Learning

Contextual Guessing

To address students' obstacles, the researchers conducted interviews. The researchers interviewed six students from different reading ability levels and encompassed two high viewers, two medium viewers, and two low viewers. The goal of the interviews was to gather information about the challenges the students faced when applying the contextual guessing technique to their reading comprehension of the report texts.

The interview results revealed that two of the six students, who were classified as having low reading ability, disagreed with the other four, who said they had no trouble understanding the report material while employing the contextual guessing technique. Using this method, they had trouble comprehending the report's content. The information gathered from an interview with two struggling students was as follows:

According to the mentioned interview, despite their limited vocabulary and weak English, the students with low reading comprehension still struggled to understand the report text when employing the contextual guessing strategy. Laufer and Sim (1985) back up this finding, claiming that learners with a limited vocabulary find it difficult to employ contextual guessing due to the significant impact of vocabulary size. Nanda & Azmy (2020) further corroborated this, claiming that three noteworthy factors—students' limited prior knowledge, poor English vocabulary, and lack of motivation—were to blame for poor reading comprehension.

Project-Based learning

Drawing from the aforementioned interview data, it can be inferred that students encountered three challenges when implementing project-based learning to learn how to read texts. As per the informants of this method, the primary challenge encountered by students throughout the implementation of project-based learning was a lack of group cohesion among most members. It is consistent with Almulla's (2020) assertion that students experience several drawbacks from project-based learning. Ensuring student collaboration is a challenge, which might be linked to conflicts over priorities and ambiguity in the project assignment.

It was evident from the interview findings that certain students struggled with phrase translation because of their small vocabulary. The fact that problem-based learning methodology significantly boosts students' self-confidence in addition to helping them develop their technical and soft abilities. Students who have participated in problem-based learning-facilitated group activities have reported feeling more comfortable speaking up in front of the group, contributing, and using their creativity to solve problems. Participating in the problem-based learning process additionally enhanced the development of stronger cooperation, communication, and task management abilities. All of this suggests that problem-based learning helps students refine crucial components of their self-confidence in addition to fostering a learning environment that facilitates the development of skills.

CONCLUSION

The contextual guessing technique was well-received by students, as seen by the data collected from the questionnaire and interview. It increased their vocabulary, encouraged them to read the report, and assisted them in understanding foreign terms without the need for a dictionary. Furthermore, Siregar (2019) is in favor of it. The study's findings demonstrated that a tiny percentage of students encountered difficulties understanding the text when utilizing the contextual guessing technique because of two factors, such as a deficiency in vocabulary and weak English proficiency. Additionally, Nanda & Azmy (2020) endorse it.

Meanwhile, the majority of students in this study believed, according to the study's findings, that problem-based learning might enhance their instruction in reading the texts. They engaged in lively conversation as we were learning. They thought that since the environment was new and might expand vocabulary, learning was enjoyable. The research's findings from the interviews revealed the challenges that some students encountered while utilizing Nearpod to support their problem-based learning; they stated that their poor command of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation still made it difficult for them to translate sentences

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