



Does the Fix- Up Strategy Affect Indonesian EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension?

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Abstract

Gaining comprehension when reading has become a challenge for students in EFL context. The present study was undertaken to deal with the hardship that EFL learners confront in their reading class. A strategy called fix up was considered effective in coping with the issue. This research employed a quantitative approach with an experimental design involving 40 students from a senior high school in Takengon, Aceh Tengah, Indonesia. They were equally divided into experimental and control groups, each consisting of 20 students. The instrument utilized here was a test comprising 25 multiple-choice questions, which has passed through validity and reliability test. The scores were analyzed by utilizing a t-test. The results showed that the learners in experimental group performed a much more significant increase compared to those in the control group. In addition, t-score was found greater than the t-table ($6,66 > 2,024$) at a significance level of 0,05 with df (38) suggesting that H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. It can be concluded that the fix-up strategy affects the students' reading comprehension, and it is recommended that other English instructors apply this strategy to create more active learners and to provide a better learning circumstance.

Keywords: *fix up strategy, reading, reading comprehension, EFL, PISA*

Abstrak

Memperoleh pemahaman ketika membaca sudah menjadi tantangan bagi pelajar dalam konteks bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL). Studi ini dilakukan untuk mengatasi kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh pelajar dalam kelas membaca. Sebuah strategi pembelajaran yang disebut strategi fix up dipandang efektif dalam mengatasi masalah ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain eksperimen yang melibatkan 40 pelajar dari sebuah SMA di Takengon, Aceh Tengah, Indonesia. Mereka terbagi rata dalam kelompok eksperimen dan kontrol, masing masing terdiri dari 20 siswa. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah tes yang terdiri dari 25 soal jenis pilihan ganda, yang telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitasnya. Skor perolehannya dianalisa dengan menggunakan uji t. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pelajar di kelas eksperimen menampilkan peningkatan yang lebih signifikan dibandingkan pelajar yang ada di kelompok kontrol. Selain itu nilai t yang diperoleh lebih besar

daripada nilai t table ($6,66 > 2,024$) pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05 dengan derajat kebebasan (38) yang berarti bahwa H_0 ditolak dan H_a diterima. Dapat diambil kesimpulan bahwa strategi fix up mempengaruhi pemahaman bacaan siswa, dan direkomendasikan kepada pengajar bahasa Inggris lainnya untuk menerapkan strategi ini untuk menghasilkan pelajar yang lebih aktif dan untuk memfasilitasi/menyediakan suasana belajar yang lebih baik.

Keywords: *strategi fix up, membaca, pemahaman membaca, EFL, PISA*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is the key of uncovering ideas and gaining knowledge in the world. In the twenty-first century, the learners' achievement in their studies are indubitably determined by their powerful reading comprehension skills. (Ness, 2009; Programme for International Students Assessment, 2009, as cited in Kissau & Hiller, 2013). Good ability to read can have a positive effect on the students. It helps them feel motivated to learn. The students' confidence when reading English educational passages will increase by having the ability to read (Yee, 2010). This circumstance, however, makes readers perceive that they are successful in attaining the information they read from the text. Conversely, the inability to read will demotivate the students, feeling useless, which can lead to a negative effect on their study achievement. Such an issue will hinder the students from grasping the appropriate meaning of the reading materials and thus may contribute to their failure in their studies (Nasri & Biria, 2016; Supakorn & Panplum, 2022).

In Indonesia, English is learned as the Foreign Language (EFL) in which the students only engage in English in classrooms. They are not involved with English outside the classroom (Yosintha, 2020). This state of affairs becomes a challenge for students in understanding the language and inevitably arouses some difficulties among the students in acquiring the language. Among the difficulties the students deal with in their classrooms are low interest in reading and difficulty in understanding the text (Suhermanto, 2019), lack of vocabulary, and the inability to figure out the main idea (Rusmiati et al., 2022).

The result of testing skills and knowledge in reading by PISA (The Program for International Student Assessment) in 2018 showed that Indonesia's average value in reading achievement is one of the lowest among PISA-participating countries and economies. Indonesia scored 371, while the average score was 487 (rank 72 of 77) (OECD, 2019). It showed that it is far left behind. This nuance illustrates the reality that Indonesia's interest in reading is very low and in severe crisis. It needs serious attention from all elements.

In this regard, a proper learning strategy should be implemented to provide a better learning circumstance. It is where the learners go through the steps to rectify their learning (Shi, 2017). Learning strategies are crucial in promoting the students' independence in their study, which triggers autonomous learning contributing to the learners' responsibility for their study. In this case, a strategy which facilitates those needs called the fix-up strategy is offered. It is a strategy that can assist the students in conceiving the text's message when they get lost with certain words or sentences. In this strategy, tools were offered by the teachers to fix the way of students' creating the meaning previously (Indrasari, 2012). The steps of implementing the strategy are re-reading the text, associating to the prior knowledge, learning the sentence structure, forecasting, reading ahead to the end of the verse, inferencing, visualizing, and creating a new inquiry (Moreillon, 2007). Moreover, the fix-up strategy was often pointed as

“lookbacks,” signifying that the readers “walk” back and forth in their reading text to expunge the obstacle in obtaining the right message of the written text (Duffy, 2009).

Considering the strength of the fix-up strategy, it is assumed that the strategy is one of the solutions to the problems encountered by the Indonesian learners. Hence, the current study was carried out to answer the following query: Does the fix-up strategy affect Indonesian EFL students’ reading comprehension? Before finding the answer of the above research question, it is essential to review the related literature concerning reading comprehension and to summarize the relevant previous studies regarding the implementation of the fix-up strategy.

The role of reading comprehension in ESL or EFL settings has attained great importance specifically in the academic field. It is regarded as the most indispensable skill for learners since they grasp the information via reading to improve their education. Hence, it is paramount for the learners to have a good reading ability by reading a significant number of texts at an incredible speed with proper comprehension (Yukselir, 2014). Likewise, as English is viewed as an EFL in Indonesia, Pammu et al., (2014) asserts that reading is an essential skill to the learners’ success in the academic field and is one of Indonesia’s principle in empowering its community. It is a significant skill to obtain for some purposes like getting a promising career, enriching ideas, broadening the perception, and augmenting awareness (Phantharakphong & Pothitha, 2014).

Along with many studies conducted about reading, a variety of its definitions have been defined by the experts. According to Anderson (2003:1) as cited in Albeckay (2014) that in reading, meaning of the text was built by involving both the reader and the text (reading material) in an active activity. In the process of comprehending texts to construct the meaning, the readers use their previous knowledge and experience, decode the author’s words, take their position concerning the text, and anticipate social interaction and communication (Lenz, 2005, as cited in Ninsuwan, 2015) and (Ruddel, 1993). Thus, it can be deduced that readers possess adequate prior knowledge and are skilled in linking it to the available information in the text.

Furthermore, reading comprehension (RC) is defined as the ability to extract the meaning of the written form. The purpose of our reading is for meaning and it is the utmost achievement in reading (Crystal, 2007). Similarly, the readers built a bridge to be associated with the authors’ messages or ideas when reading (Hadi & Priyana, 2018). Successful reading is signified by being able to attain the appropriate information as intended by the writer. To successfully achieve this goal, the learners must employ various reading skills because good readers employ several strategies purposely when reading (Afflerbach et al., 2008). Previewing, predicting, skimming, scanning, and making inferences are among the strategies offered when reading (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2004). Hence, the learners need to apply those strategies when reading to help gain time and cover much ground.

Good readers apply various kinds of reading strategies while reading. It is how to reach compelling reading for various purposes and texts (Ivanova & Ivanov, 2021). Performing only one sole reading strategy does not produce adequate comprehension. Reading strategies consist of two: cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The former strategies assist the language learners in combining the new information with the previous background knowledge to construct the new idea. Metacognitive strategies, however, are aimed to support the learners in setting their reading goals and how to be effective and autonomous in learning (Baker, 2002). They are higher skills of critical thinking, which assist the readers in attaining awareness of their conceiving the reading materials (Yukselir, 2014). Specifically, learners’ ability to focus their concern on

comprehending the content and the combination of previous information and new idea were the benefits the learners obtained from the strategies (Collins & Smith, 2008). By applying those reading strategies and keeping track of their comprehension while reading, unskilled readers can be trained to be the more skillful (Gholami et al., 2012).

One of the strategies that can be implemented when teaching reading is fix-up strategy (hereinafter referred to FUS). It can support a reader when encountering difficulty in reading a text. FUS is what the readers utilize to assist themselves get unstuck when they are interacting with confusing text (Tovani, 2000). Moreillon (2007) stated that the FUS facilitates learners in reconstructing meaning such as going over the assigned text, reading ahead, or grasping unfamiliar vocabulary. In a similar way, it is described as a tool to find a way of returning home or comprehend their reading materials. It can be deduced that this strategy can aid the learners conceive the points of the text when they do not know the certain sentences or vocabulary.

Regarding the benefit of applying reading strategies in reading, some research has studied the effectiveness of the FUS in improving students' RC in the EFL context. In 2012, Indrasari studied the effectiveness of this strategy on SMP students by applying an experimental research design. The number of participants was 52, equally distributed in control and experimental group. A reading test was used as the instrument to measure the students' ability in reading comprehension. After analyzing the data using ANOVA, the result showed a positive contribution to the students' achievement. The study deduced that the strategy is effective to be used in teaching reading (Indrasari, 2012).

Applied to the tertiary level of education, a study of the fix-up strategy was carried out by Suhermanto in 2019 to the second-semester English students of IAIN Curup. It applied a quasi-experimental research design. A reading test consisting of 30 multiple choice questions was utilized to assess the learners' reading ability. The findings of the study showed that the t-score was 3,095 were higher than the t-table score. Likewise, this study found that it was also effective to apply the strategy in reading class (Suhermanto, 2019).

The other study of the fix up strategy was also conducted in secondary level (MA) Darussalam Anrong Appaka Pangkep by Munawarah et al. (2020). The purpose of the study was to see the students' skills in reading descriptive text. By applying a quasi-experimental research design, pre-test and post-test were given to the students before and after the treatment, respectively. The students obtained 39, 28 as average in pre-test score which was classified as "poor". However, the score increased in the post-test; they got 56, 96 which was included in the "fair" classification. The further statistical analysis signified that the t-test score was 5,382 and the t-table score was 2,021, indicating that the fix-up strategy enables students to think critically. The study concluded that the strategy supports the learners conceive the text at the time they get stuck in reading descriptive text (Munawarah et al., 2020).

In the same year but on discrepant type of text, Jamila et al. (2020) undertook a study of the fix up strategy on the same education level, i.e., secondary level (MA) Al-Wasilah Lemo. The sample of this study was 15 students in Agama I class as the control group and another 15 students in Agama II class as the experimental group. This study explored the effectiveness of employing the FUS on students' RC, especially on analytical exposition. After conducting both pre-test and post-test, the result showed that the students got 44.00 as the mean score at the beginning, which was categorized as "poor". The post-test result, nevertheless, denoted a significant improvement. The students obtained 65, 00 after the treatment of the fix-up strategy, which was included in the "fair" category. Furthermore, the statistical analysis showed that the t-score

(5,209) was higher than the t-table score (2,145). The study deduced that the FUS was effective in improving students' RC in the second grade of this school.

Muhassin et al. (2021) undertook the latest study of the FUS in investigating its impact on MTs students' RC. It was a quasi-experimental research design entangling 69 students of MTs Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. 36 students were in the experimental group, while another 33 students belonged to the control group. This study utilized two instruments: a test consisting of 25 multiple choice questions and observations. By applying t-test analysis, the findings indicated that the learners treated with the fix-up strategy exhibited a significant improvement in reading comprehension. The strategy also supported learners' autonomy, awareness, and actively involved in learning reading.

The previous studies above represent varieties of research about the fix-up strategy in the EFL context in several aspects: research design, sample, place, instrument, teaching material etc. From the sample side, it had been conducted to tertiary education level and secondary level. In Indonesia, secondary level consist of four kinds of schools: Mts, SMP, MA, and SMA. MTs and SMP are classified as junior, while MA and SMA as senior. From the summary of the earlier research above and to the author's best knowledge, only a little study of the FUS on RC had been conducted on the SMA level and thus it still needs some more research in this context. Hence, there is still a gap that the current study can fill. This study was conducted to probe the influence of the FUS on learners' RC of SMA.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed experimental research. It is deemed the appropriate research design to be applied in the current study since its purpose is to discover the causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Rogers & Revesz, 2019). In this case, the FUS served as the independent variable and RC as the dependent variable. It was expected that the strategy could change the students' comprehension on reading.

In particular, the quasi-experimental design was opted for its typical random cluster. Control group pre-test and post-test design or non-equivalent control group design was implemented to determine the causal relationship between the treatment and the output (Krishnan, 2018). In this type of research design, the result of pre and post-test of both groups was compared by using statistical analysis.

Table 1

Research Design

Quasi-Experimental Design	Sample	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Design	Experimental Group (EG)	O1	X	O2
	Control Group (CG)	O3	-	O4

In choosing the sample, this study employed random sampling technique so that the equal probability of being selected was fulfilled. Class XI MIA 1 and XI MIA 2 were elected as the control and experimental groups respectively. Furthermore, the steps of collecting the data were as follows: Prior to the application of the treatment, both of groups were given the pre-test to identify the existing condition or the students'

ability in reading. In the next meeting, treatment started to be applied in both class: fix up strategy was applied to the EG and a conventional strategy was applied to the CG. The treatment itself was implemented three times by one of the authors. Finally, in the last meeting the students in both group were re-evaluated to see their ability after the treatment was implemented.

Participants

The participants of the current study were the second- year (eleventh grade) students of a secondary school in Aceh. This senior high school is located in Kayukul Takengon, Aceh Tengah, Aceh, Indonesia. 67 students in the eleventh grade of the academic year 2019/2020 were distributed to three classes: XI MIA 1, XI MIA 2, and XI IPS 1. MIA stands for *Matematika dan Ilmu Alam* (Mathematics and Natural Science) and IIS stands for *Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* (Social Sciences). In this study, the selected sample was XI MIA 1 as the CG and XI MIA 2 as the EG. Each of those consisted of 20 students.

Instruments

As the instruments to collect the data, the study used an RC test to see the students' reading ability before and after the treatment. A test is the most widely used means to measure the students' learning achievement and it is also applied to evaluate reading performance (Al-Khasawneh, 2020). This study developed a test consisting of 25 multiple choice questions concerning procedure text based on the material stated in the school syllabus. In terms of validity and reliability, the instrument was tested to another class (XI IIS 1) before it was distributed to the control and experimental group. After ensuring that the instrument is valid and reliable by applying the statistical analysis, then it was used to both groups in the research.

Besides validity and reliability, the present study also applied the test for item facility (level of difficulty). A proper test is neither too easy nor too difficult, yet it is between the two (Brown, 2002). The following was the formula of measuring it and the table of difficulty level classification.

$$IF = \frac{B}{JS}$$

Where:

IF = Item Facility (level of difficulty)

B = Number of test-takers answering the item incorrectly

JS = Number of test-takers responding to that item

Table 2

Classifications of level difficulty

Level of difficulty	Interpretation
0,00	Too difficult
$0,00 < P \leq 0,30$	Difficult
$0,30 < P \leq 0,70$	Medium
$0,70 < P \leq 1,00$	Easy
1	Too easy

After each question item was tested through the above formula, the result was found that most of the items (21 of 25) were in the level of medium, while the rest (4 items: question no. 3, 4, 8, and 16) were easy. It can be seen that none of the item was

in the “too easy” or “too difficult” category, thus could be assumed that the items were classified in a good test. Therefore, the question items were used in the study.

Data Analysis

In analyzing data, the study utilized statistical analysis which called t-test, a kind of inferential statistic to determine whether there is a significant difference between the means of the two groups. The t-test calculation was then used in testing the hypothesis with the following criteria: If $t\text{-score} \geq t\text{-table}$, then H_a is accepted with $\alpha = 0.05$, and if $t\text{-score} \leq t\text{-table}$, then H_0 is accepted with $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

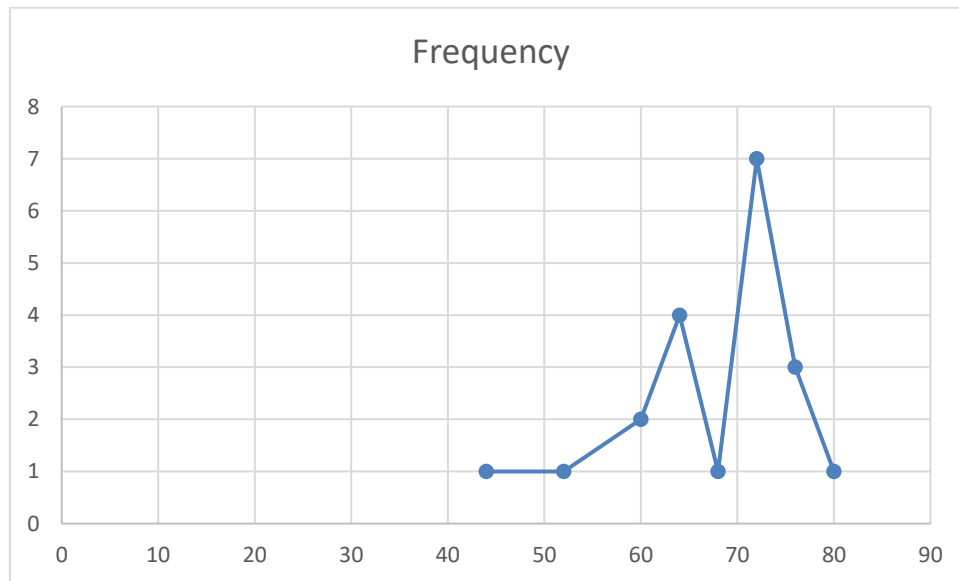
Result of RC Test for CG

Pre-test

The pre-test was conducted to the control class in advance of the intervention of a conventional method to figure out their ability in reading comprehension. The test was held on Saturday, Oct 5th 2019. The result of the test was 44 (1 student) as the minimum score, 52 (1 student), 60 (2 students), 64 (4 students), 68 (1 student), 72 (7 students), 76 (3 students), and 80 (1 student) as the maximum score. It was displayed in the following line chart.

Diagram 1

Pre-test for Control Class

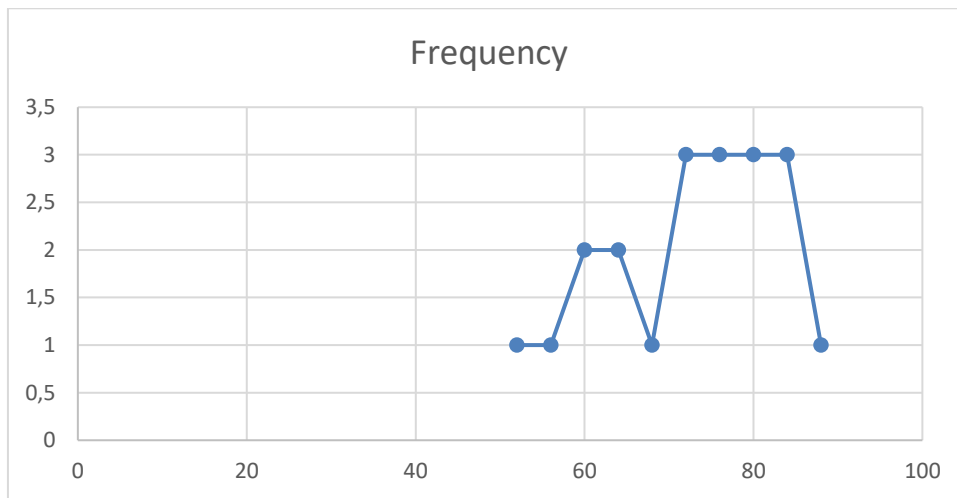


Post-test

The post-test was given to the students in control group in the wake of the certain intervention to see their ability whether or not there is an improvement. The score obtained from this test was 52 and 56 (each of 1 students), 60 and 64 (each 2 students), 68 (1 student), 72, 76, 80 (each of 3 students), and 88 (1 student). The lowest score was 52, the highest score was 88. It was as presented in the chart below.

Diagram 2

Post-test for Control Class



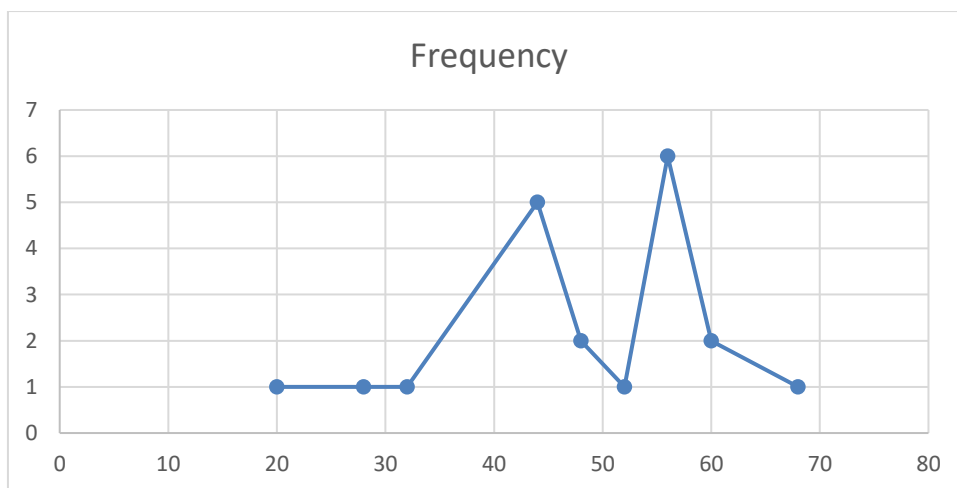
Result of RC Test for EG

Pre-test

The pre-test on the experimental group was established on Saturday, Oct 5th 2019 prior to the implementation of the FUS to get the idea of the students' basic ability in RC. The result of test was 20, 28, 32 (each of score obtained by 1 student), 44 (5 students), 48 (2 students), 52 (1 student), 56 (6 students), 60 (2 students), and 68 (1 student). It was depicted in the following line chart.

Diagram 3

Pre-test for EG

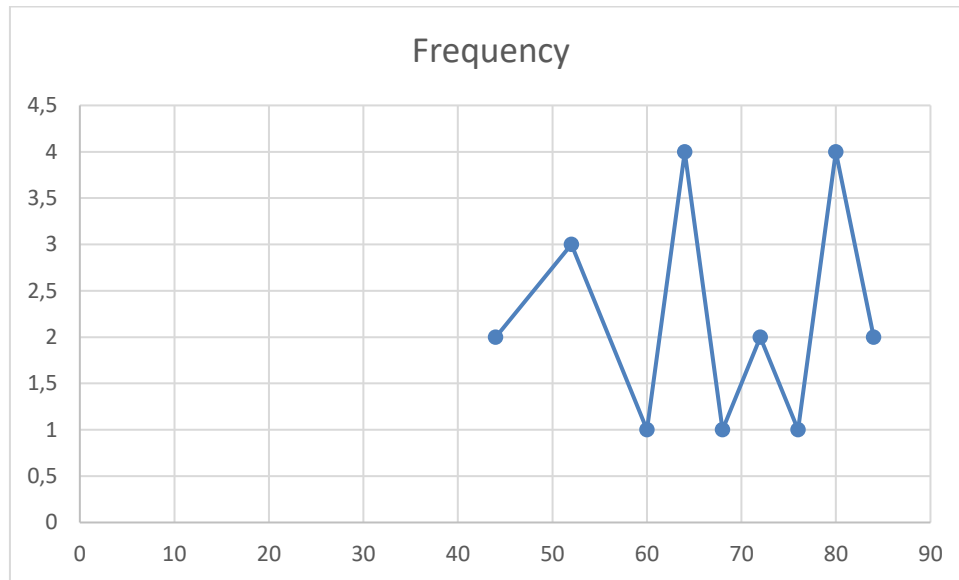


Post-test

After being treated with the FUS in learning reading for three times to the students in experimental group, then they are re-evaluated to see their “new” ability in reading comprehension. The post-test followed on Thursday, Oct 2th 2019. It can be learned from this evaluation that there is a significant improvement made by the students in this group, i.e. the mean score increased by 18, 2 points compared to the preceding

assessment. The scores obtained from this test was 44 (2 students), 52 (3 students), 60 (1 student), 64 (4 students), 68 (1 student), 72 (2 students), 76 (1 student), 80 (4 students), and 84 (2 students). It was as illustrated in the following chart.

Diagram 4
Post-test for EG



From the above score display, it can be noticed that both control and experimental groups improved their scores after the intervention. Notwithstanding the improvement, the students in the EG proved to have a significant increase. Their score went up by 18, 2 points from the previous test, while the control group's score only increased by 5, 1 points. The notable enhancement could have been induced by the implementation of fix up strategy.

Furthermore, a statistical analysis t-test was used to test the hypothesis which was created before the research was conducted. It was used to see which of the hypothesis was adopted and which was denied. The way of determination was based on the criteria that if $t\text{-score} \geq t\text{-table}$ then H_0 was rejected, and if $t\text{-score} \leq t\text{-table}$ then H_0 was accepted. The calculation of t-test found that t-score was 6, 66 while t-table was 2,024. It was clear that the t-score was higher than the t-table ($6, 66 \geq 2,024$), thus the first criteria was fulfilled: H_0 was rejected and therefore H_a was accepted. H_a stated "fix up strategy can increase students' reading comprehension". This finding was in agreement with the foregoing studies that found the FUS was proved to be effective in teaching reading (Suhermanto, 2019).

Discussion

Several studies have been carried out to examine the implementation of the fix up strategy in English RC in Indonesia, yet few of them delved the efficacy of the strategy in SMA level. The current study was conducted to find out the causal relationship between the fix up strategy and the students' RC in this secondary level. The finding reveals positive relationship between the two variables. It was found that the FUS can increase the students' RC. The finding was similar to the preceding studies' discoveries (Indrasari, 2012; Suhermanto, 2019; Munawarah et al., 2020; Jamila et al., 2020;

Muhassin et al., 2021) that the FUS was found to be effective in improving students' RC.

Indrasari's experimental study on the effectiveness of FUS on SMP students showed a positive contribution to the students' achievement. She concluded that the FUS is an effective way to teach reading. In addition, the study by Suhermanto on the second-semester English students of university education level also displayed that the students post-test score was higher (79, 33) than the pre test score (70, 10) signifying that the strategy was effective in teaching reading. While the similar study on MA students by Munawarah investigating the FUS in reading descriptive text showed the significant rise of the students' mean score from 39, 28 (poor) to 56, 96 (fair). This study concluded that the strategy enables students to think critically and supports them conceive the text at the time they get stuck in reading. Similarly, the use of the fix up strategy on the analytical exposition text in a quasi-experimental study by Jamila et al. found that the t-score (5,209) was higher than the t-table score (2,145). The study deduced that the the FUS was effective in improving students' RC. Finally, the latest study on MTs students' reading comprehension by Muhassin also indicated that the FUS affect students' reading performance significantly (64.56 - 78.44).

In addition, the deeper analysis of the impact that the FUS brought to the students' RC in the present study could be seen from the pre-test and post-test result. One group showed a very contrastive result to the other. It indicates that there is a significant gap of the EFL students in their reading comprehension. This study showed that the presence of the fix up strategy could make the students who implemented it outperform those who did not apply it in their reading comprehension.

The strategy has highlighted the denotative impact to the Indonesian EFL learners' in their reading comprehension. By following the steps in the fix-up strategy when reading, they were capable of increasing their comprehension about the reading materials. It served to be the solution in effacing the meaning hindrance confronted in reading the text materials since they halt for looking forward or backward to ensure the intended meaning by the author in the learners' reading text (Duffy, 2009).

The special treatment to experimental group enabled its participants to increase their scores from pre-test to post-test by 18, 2 points. Hence, it can be concluded that the intervention contributed to the improvement. There was significant deviation in the students' RC value and this suggested that the fix up strategy implementation affected the students reading comprehension in a great way.

CONCLUSION

The current study tried to probe the effectiveness of the FUS in enhancing the students' ability in RC. It was implemented in a situation where the students encountered the problems in comprehending texts. The strategy gave a solution to students' stagnant in the midst of comprehending the assigned text by the teacher. It was as suggested by the expert Moreillon (2007) that the students should stop to fix up the problem while they are reading. This step of the strategy solves the students' problem which assist them in understanding the passage better.

This study has proved that the strategy greatly impacted on the students' achievement. It was viewed from the students' result of the evaluation resulting in significant enhancement compared to the initial assessment ahead of the intervention of the FUS. The implementation of the strategy has successfully led the students end their problem in reading by increasing their comprehension of the reading materials.

However, this study has some limitations which were expected to be covered by the further research. Pertaining to subject, it was expected to conduct the study in a

larger sample either in primary education, secondary level (SMP, MTs, SMA, and MA), or even in tertiary education owing to only a little study had been conducted in this area. The further investigation also can attempt to broaden the implementation of this strategy into another English skill such as listening. Lastly, the similar research could also be established in different location in another part in Indonesia.

Considering the benefit this strategy brought to the students, it is suggested that the educators apply the strategy in their teaching practice. The existence of this strategy can equip the English instructors with more active milieu, stimulating learners to become actively participate in their learning. This strategy contributed to creating the better learning environment.

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