THE USE OF ALPHA BOXES TO IMPROVE RECOUNT TEXT ON
READING COMPREHENSION OF THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF
SMP NEGERI 17 PALEMBANG

A Thesis by

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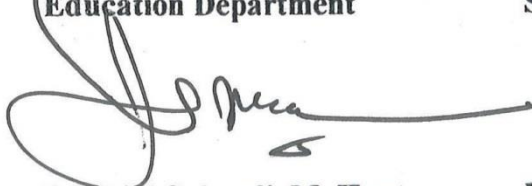
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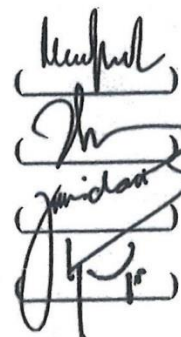
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DECLARATION OF PLAGIARISM

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DEDICATION AND MOTTOS

This thesis is dedicated to :

My lovely mother and my father

MOTTOS

"Your time is coming. Appreciate your process."

-Julian Mitchell-

"All of those doubts aren't real, they're just in your head."

-Sonya Teclai-

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THE USE OF ALPHA BOXES TO IMPROVE RECOUNT TEXT ON READING COMPREHENSION OF THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 17 PALEMBANG

ABSTRACT

Reading is one of the important language skills which must be mastered by the students. The students of SMPN 17 Palembang still have low performance in reading comprehension. It could be seen from the reading scores of the students in preliminary research which most of the students still got the score under the passing grade (KKM). This study aimed to find out whether or not there was (1) a significant difference in reading comprehension on recount text of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 17 Palembang between before and after they were taught by using alpha boxes and, (2) a significant difference in reading comprehension on recount text between the eighth grade students who were taught by using alpha boxes and those who were not. The sample of the study was 62 of the eighth grade students of SMPN 17 Palembang chosen by using purposive sampling. This study used quasi-experimental research design with pretest and post of experimental and control groups. The results of this study revealed that there was a significant difference in reading comprehension between before and after the students were taught by using alpha boxes as teaching media (p-value > 0.05, p-value$= 0.000$), and there was a significant difference in reading comprehension between the eighth grade students who were taught by alpha boxes and those who were not (p-value > 0.05, p-value$= 0.000$). It indicated that the application of alpha boxes in teaching reading comprehension on recount text gave influence for the students' reading comprehension.

Keyword: reading comprehension, alpha boxes, recount text

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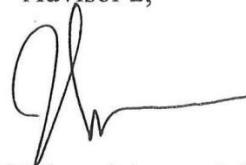
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents (1) background of the study, (2) problems of the study, (3) objectives of the study, and (4) significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is primary language of several languages but widely spoken around the world. English is used to help the interaction of people who cannot communicate another language which is not their native language when they are not in their own country. In Indonesia, English as a foreign language which is a must for students to learn through education in school or even in some cases or some people use English as their second language. Gebhard (2006) states that in many countries where English is a foreign language, a dual goal for teenagers studying in the educational system is to pass English entrance exams to enter good high schools and universities and, more recently, to be able to use English as a global language.

In school, the students are taught four language skills in learning English, there are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Every skill has the purposes and usefulness. According to Balcı (2009), reading is a complex cognitive process which is realized by combining many functions like seeing, perceiving, vocalizing, comprehending, and constructing in the brain. Reading is one of the important aspect of language in learning English. Regarding the importance of reading, based on Talebi (2012), reading is one of the important aspects in the process of learning a language because when students read, they can add out knowledge and information from the reading text. In Indonesia, the students' reading achievement is still in low level. According to Program for International Assessment (PISA) 2015, Indonesian students' score was below the OECD average which was on the 62nd ranks out of 70 countries. The students' ability score on the overall reading scale was 397 while OECD average score was 493. It means that the students in Indonesia have low performance in reading.

Regarding reading skill, the students not only read word by word, but the students also have to understand the meaning of the text they which is called as

comprehension. According to Klingner, Vaughn, and Boardman (2007), reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include word reading, word and word knowledge, and fluency. It means that the students must good at understanding while they reading in order to get good at comprehending the text. According to Graesser (2007), reading comprehension strategies are cognitive or behavioral actions that are enacted under particular contextual condition, with the goal of improving some aspects of comprehension.

In a nutshell, reading activity aims to comprehend the text being read. The activity of reading becomes useless if comprehension does not take place in that activity of reading and also that reading is no longer a receptive skill where the students move from line to line without catching the interaction of the texts but they are looking for comprehension achievement.

Comprehension in reading can be caught by the reader as long as the reader uses his/her existing knowledge to make sense out of the text that the reader read. This may be an issue for the teacher in teaching reading in the classroom. According to Jaya (2019), in the teaching and learning process there is a teaching methodology or technique applied by educators and there is a systematic learning or learning style used by students. So, the teacher as the educators, should pay attention about the strategies or techniques for teaching reading comprehension to try avoiding the students face the difficulties when comprehending the text. Reichert (2005) suggests that the innovative ones should be substituted traditional concepts related to teaching reading.

In this study, the writer used alpha boxes to improve the students' reading comprehension. Alpha boxes is one of the techniques that requires students to move from simple recall of factual information to going beyond the information presented in the text (Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009). According to Hoyt (1999), the alpha boxes is one way to encourage students to collaboratively interact with text. Alpha boxes can take the form of a pre-reading or a post-reading activity to help stimulate students to think about and discuss key ideas in the text. For example, while notating examples under the appropriate alphabet letter in each

box, students can generate questions; highlight important concepts; make connections; provide explanations; locate, identify, and discuss unfamiliar words; and present different points of view (Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009). Alpha boxes is suitable with discovery that focus on student-centered as stated in curriculum 2013.

In other words, student-centered approach is based on activating the role in learning activities and leading to achieve the purpose of the learning process. However, generating questions, making connections, providing explanations, identifying and discussing unfamiliar vocabulary words, and presenting alternative perspectives are all higher-level cognitive processes that increase learning (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Alpha boxes also could enhance the student mental efficiency and help to overcome obstacles, gaining knowledge by themselves.

In this study, the writer would like to focus on reading comprehension on recount text. Recount text is a kind of the text which is really close to our daily life. According to Anderson and Anderson (1997), a recount is a piece of text retells past events, usually in the order in which they happened. Seaton (2007) also states that recount text tells the reader about what happened, who was involved, when it happened and where the event took place. So, when the students read the story of the recount text, they would have some questions related to the story, who, when, where, what, or how the story is going on. For comprehending the text, they would have problems in gaining the meaning of the text. The writer expects the students could understand recount text well and find some new knowledge they did not get before because they learn it by themselves and teacher's guidance. Besides, they could use more their own experience in applying alpha boxes in learning process so that could help the students activate prior knowledge, build vocabulary, and increase comprehension.

SMP Negeri 17 Palembang is one of the national standard schools (SSN) in Palembang. When the writer did the practicing of teaching in SMPN 17 Palembang, the writer observed the students' score of English. The one of English teacher said that many students that still had score under the passing grade (KKM) of English which was 75. Another problem from the teacher was that many students do not

want to read about English with many reasons, such as the text is difficult to read or they do not know the meaning of the text. As a result, in the try out the writer also found that most of the students answered the question without read the whole of the text and asked where the answer is. In this case, they must comprehend recount text correctly. But unfortunately, the eighth grade students of this school still lack of knowledge of English text and do not know how to comprehend the meaning of the text that they read. After seeing this problem, the writer would like to improve the students' reading comprehension on the recount text by using alpha boxes in teaching and learning process because it's very useful for their English proficiency to improve the knowledge of grammar and vocabularies.

Based on the explanation above, the writer was interested in conducting a research to improve students reading comprehension on recount text. Therefore, this study entitled "The Use of Alpha Boxes to Improve Recount Text on Reading Comprehension of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 17 Palembang".

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The problems of this study were formulated in the following questions :

(1) Was there a significant difference in reading comprehension on recount text of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 17 Palembang between before and after they were taught by using alpha boxes?

(2) Was there a significant difference in reading comprehension on recount text between the eighth grade students who were taught by using alpha boxes and those who were not?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems above, the objectives of the study was to find out whether or not:

(1) There was a significant difference in reading comprehension on recount text of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 17 Palembang between before and after they were taught by using alpha boxes.

(2) There was a significant difference in reading comprehension on recount text between the eighth grade students who were taught by using alpha boxes and those who were not.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this study was expected to be useful for learning and teaching process in English especially in improving reading comprehension. The writer hoped from this study the students could comprehend the reading text especially in recount text through their capability and could develop their skills in comprehending the reading text. This study could be one of the way of handling problem faced by the English teacher in teaching process. The teacher could be used the strategy as a useful input to improve the students' reading comprehension. At the end of this study, it was also expected that this study could be used as a reference for the further research and added knowledge and insight to the readers about reading comprehension skills in the reading text, especially in reading recount text. Finally, this study helped the writer to enlarge the writer's insight and knowledge regarding the appropriate learning activities.

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