

The 3-2-1 Reading Comprehension Strategy: Students' Reading Comprehension Development and Students' Perception

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Abstract

The 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy is a new strategy and the study on the strategy is still rare at least in 2019. This strategy presents in the right time when the teacher needs to apply new strategy in the reading classroom. This research was conducted as an attempt to improve the students' reading comprehension. Designed as a non-observation classroom action research, this research involved 36 students in a junior high school. There were two tests administered in the classroom, the pre-intervention and the post-intervention test. The intervention is conducted by doing three sessions of reading comprehension practice with the 3-2-1 strategy. The comparison of means between the tests by using paired sample t-test showed that there is a significant difference between the means where the post-intervention test mean is significantly higher than the pre-intervention test mean. This implies that the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy can be a good consideration for reading teachers. The students mentioned that this strategy has positive impacts on their reading practice and result. However, it is also captured that this strategy is only suitable for reading short text. This opens opportunity to the next researchers to conduct research on the use of 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy on reading longer text.

Keywords: *321 reading strategy, reading comprehension, reading comprehension improvement, students' perception*

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1. Background

English has been one of the international languages taught in the schools in different levels. This language is also taught as either second language or foreign language in different schools in different countries. In Indonesia, English is taught in Junior and Senior high schools as a foreign language.

The existence of English in the schools curriculums shows us that it is an important language to be learned by the students although that is not used widely in Indonesian societies and it is not used as a medium of communication in official domains like government, the law courts, and so on (Lauder, 2008:11). There are many reasons that become the background of the importance of English today. English has been used as a lingua franca in various contexts

ranging from economy to technology to education. Since lingua franca is a language used or chosen among speakers who come from different linguistic background (Jenkins, 2009), then English is taught and used with hope that people with different first languages (like Indonesian) can learn and so that understand what is communicated in those different contexts.

In education, English has become the most used language in the world. For example, most of the textbooks are written in English. Moreover, all international scientific journals only publish articles written in English. This shows that English is important in educational field. High schools students are taught English not only to communicate with tourists. By learning English, they can also express themselves through speaking and writing. Moreover, they can learn other knowledge and skill by reading any texts written in English which can be accessed on the internet.

To be able to comprehend the text, the students need to be taught reading comprehension. Without proper teaching on reading, students will deal with certain difficulties in understanding the meaning of the texts. Moreover, non-native speaker students like ours usually see reading aloud and reading comprehension the same thing. Teacher should be able to teach the students to comprehend the text by reading.

Reading texts written in English can be time consuming and boring. Based on our experiences as an English teacher in a junior high school, most of the students ignored their reading tasks and relied on their classmates, to provide them answers. It seemed like the students struggle with the grammar or vocabulary used in the text which could be more complex than their reading and grammar skill. However, as reading comprehension focuses on the process of making meaning, the students are not demanded to be grammatically perfect. As long as they can grasp the meaning of the text, it is quite enough especially for junior high school students.

Related to the issue mentioned above, the researcher would like to find out a strategy which can be used to teach the students reading comprehension. Being inspired by Alsamadani (2011), who tested a reading strategy called 321-strategy and concluded that it could help students to comprehend the text, the researcher decides to use the same strategy to the students in reading short story. Moreover, the researcher wants to know the students' perception towards the strategy.

Short story is chosen by the researcher by considering its complexity and length which is suitable for junior high school students..

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1. Reading comprehension

2.1.1. Defining reading comprehension

The term *reading comprehension* refers to the understanding of the text being read by the reader (Udin, 2018). Comprehension alone is defined as the process of getting meaning of a communication, as in personal letter, speech, sign language; the knowledge or understanding is the result of such a process (Harrison, 2004:51). Based on that definition, a fuller definition of reading comprehension can sound like getting meaning from a text which is being read.

Reading activity can be divided into many kinds depend on its function. The function of reading varies as the function of writing also varies. People may write to inform, to entertain, to argue, to instruct and so forth. Based on these functions, people may also read to get information, to be entertained, to believe, or to get certain instructions.

Slightly different and simpler, Grellet (1981:4) mentioned only two reasons why people reading: for pleasure or for information.

Although there are different reading purposes, comprehension is the key point. Without comprehension on the text, the purpose of reading cannot be achieved. It is impossible to be entertained by reading a short story without understanding the meaning of the text.

Therefore, it can be said that reading comprehension is not a kind of reading activity. Reading comprehension must be seen as a requirement for any reading activity can achieve its goal or purpose.

2.1.2. The importance of reading comprehension

As a requirement for any reading activity can achieve its goal or purpose, reading, in general, is an important activity. Not only is reading important for the students but also for teachers.

Harrison (2004:3) mentioned that:

Reading determines how we are able to think, that it has a fundamental effect on the development of the imagination, and thus exerts a powerful influence on the development of emotional and moral as well as verbal intelligence and therefore on the kind of person we are capable of becoming.

From that quotation, it is understandable that reading is not only important for information and knowledge. Reading does not only determine the intellectual aspect of the reader but also the imaginative and emotional aspect of the reader. Reading is also seen as a way to develop multiple quotients (intelligence and emotion) so that the reader can achieve the optimal state of his or her growth.

Experts and scientists had written a lot of scientific texts which contain huge information about the world and the life in many contexts. Novelists or artists had written inspiring stories full of wisdoms and teachings which are ready to be extracted or at least interpreted. However, without a capable reader, those writings have no significance no matter how powerful the words written in those texts.

The ability to comprehend the text in not only a glance but a quite detailed manner becomes so much important for the meaning of the text is about to grasp. In this point, reading comprehension, which is defined by Grellet (1981:3) as understanding a written text by extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible, becomes an important skill to be developed.

Therefore, there are at least three reasons why reading or reading comprehension is important:

Firstly, reading is important to enrich the knowledge about the world and life which are explained or written in various sources by experts and scientists. This first importance shows how reading supports the intellectual quotient of human being.

Secondly, reading is important to develop the thinking ability including imagination and creative thinking. This second importance shows how reading supports the way of thinking which makes the knowledge development becomes so much possible.

Thirdly, reading is important to support emotional maturity. As an active practice, reading enhances the ability to think and as the thinking ability develops, the reader is able to control his or her mentality.

Reading comprehension, in the classroom, is taught to train the students to understand the meaning of the text. In the schools, students are required to read certain texts and then demanded to demonstrate what they have grasped from the text. Perhaps, the importance of reading as proposed by Harrison (2004) above is a full version of reading purpose. In the high school level, the students are only demanded to understand the text which is the fundamental aspect of reading comprehension.

2.1.3. Teaching reading in the classroom

Most teachers did mistakes in teaching reading; they asked the students to read aloud while their purpose is to train the students to comprehend the text. Reading comprehension is not really an exercise to read a text. It is more suitable to say that reading comprehension is about interpreting the text. Therefore, the students must be taught to read the text silently as we read a novel at home.

Grellet (1981:10) explained this:

The first point to be noted when practicing reading in the classroom is that it is a silent activity. Therefore, silent reading should be encouraged in most cases, though the teacher may sometimes need to read a part of the text aloud. The students themselves should not read aloud.

The next thing that is needed to be considered by the teacher is that each student has different reading speed. Therefore, Grellet (1981) also suggested that a classroom procedure should consist of helping the students to time themselves and increase their reading speed little by little. According to Grellet, it is necessary to reach a certain reading speed in order to read efficiently.

The last thing which is also important is this. Although reading is a silent activity, it does not imply that it only lends itself to individual work (Grellet, 1981:11). The students must be encouraged to share or compare their comprehension of the text which will lead to discussion that will not only develop their reading comprehension skill but also to enhance multiple linguistic skills.

The principles of the reading practice in the classroom suggested by Grellet above do not only apply to the L1 classroom but also to the English classroom whether English is treated as a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL).

In reading text written in foreign language like English, the principles are applied extendedly. Because reading English text requires sufficient grammar knowledge and vocabulary amount, the text given to the students must be appropriate with their English knowledge. They also must be given chance to read in longer duration. If it is necessary, the teacher should not limit the reading time for the students will need to check certain words in the dictionary or return to the certain words or sentences to make sure that they have grasped the meaning of the words or sentences.

It cannot be denied that reading L2 or FL texts requires more efforts because the students need to mentally or physically translate the passages into the language they can understand. It means that reading L2 or FL texts is two times difficult than reading L1 texts.

Teachers should pay attention to the reading difficulties that the students are dealing with. Teachers should not treat the students as if they are reading L1 texts. Therefore, in the following subpart the researcher puts some potential difficulties in reading especially in reading L2 and/or FL text.

2.1.4. Reading difficulties

Reading is one of the language skills with difficulties in multiple levels. Commonly, we identify the existence of reading difficulty based on the understanding on the text. However, difficulty in reading cannot be pointed out in that simple way.

In an unpublished thesis in An-Najah National University, Yaseen (2013) mentioned at least three levels of reading difficulties. Those levels are decoding difficulties, comprehension difficulties, and retention difficulties. Here are some brief explanations about the difficulties in each level; the researcher makes some adjustments in the explanation to make it more relevant to the current study.

Decoding Difficulties

Decoding difficulties are the difficulties experienced in the lexical and grammatical level.

In the lexical level, a student may be unable to recognize certain words (if the word is new to him or he already forgot the meaning of the word). This difficulty leads the students to either misunderstanding or not understanding the meaning of a passage where the word is located. This difficulty also applies when a student cannot distinguish certain words which have (or almost have) similar shape (like homophones). When students experience this difficulty, they often refer to the dictionary to get the meaning of the word.

In the grammatical level, a student may find unfamiliar grammatical structures although the words used in those structures are familiar to him. This can also happen when the student finds long sentences. The difficulty turns worse when the student does not have sufficient knowledge about punctuation that grammatically helps to construct the meaning of the sentence. When the students experience this difficulty, they tend to use translation tools in order to know the meaning of the sentence.

In sum, decoding difficulties are caused by the lack of linguistic competence. Decoding difficulties can cause the students (or readers) fail to comprehend the text. This, perhaps, is the basic difficulty that needs to be avoided. Therefore, in the classroom, the teacher needs to select appropriate text by considering the complexity (both lexical and grammatical) level of the text compared to the students' linguistic competence.

Comprehension Difficulty

Comprehension difficulty is a logical consequence of decoding difficulty. In other words, in order to comprehend a text, the students need to be free from decoding difficulty. Yaseen mentioned that students who struggle to decode find it difficult to understand and remember what has been read. Since their efforts to grasp individual words are so exhausting, they have no resource left (2013:10).

If decoding difficulty can be faced in either lexical or grammatical unit of the text, comprehension difficulty is more about struggling to “see” the ideas presented through the text and how the ideas are connected. Haager (in Yaseen, 2013) explained that it is so because of the lack of concentration during reading, confusion about the meaning of words and sentences, omission certain words or glossing over detail and difficulty in distinguishing significant information from minor details.

Retention Difficulty

This difficulty can be divided into three levels. The first level is the difficulty to recall what has been read. The second level is the difficulty to relate the idea grasped from the text to the prior knowledge. And the third level is the difficulty to apply the content of a text to personal experiences and trouble remembering or summarizing what is read (David, in Yaseen, 2013).

Reading to remember is a basic practice for children but for teenager students (an up) must read to understand and they must be able to relate the idea they grasped from the text to the prior knowledge and also to apply the content of a text in practical way.

Retention difficulty, in all levels, are potentially occurred or experienced if the students have decoding and comprehension difficulty. In the other words, successful retention heavily depends on the decoding and the comprehension towards the text.

Since all difficulties seem to be grounded on the decoding difficulty, it is imperative for the teachers to encourage the students to develop their lexical and grammatical competence from time to time. It is also important for the teachers to select appropriate source texts to practice by considering their linguistic competence level.

Certain students may experience reading difficulties not because their linguistic competence but because they suffer certain reading disorders like dyslexia or hyperlexia (Nation, 2019). It is said that reading comprehension tends to be low in children and young people with dyslexia.

Dyslexia is defined as impaired ability to learn to read (Sage’s English Dictionary). Dyslexia can cause the decoding difficulty and therefore other difficulties (comprehension and retention) follow. According to Nation (2019), when discussing some relevant studies, some people with a diagnosis of dyslexia also have broader language problems. Furthermore, these problems are not unusual, with weaknesses in vocabulary, grammar, and discourse-level processing. It seems like the weaknesses in vocabulary experienced by dyslexic people is caused by their limitation in reading; because they read less, they have less opportunity to build vocabulary through reading.

Teachers must be aware of their students regarding to this case. Teachers must be able to know if certain students are dyslexic so that they can be treated under special conditions. Especially in foreign language classroom like English, students who find it difficult to decode the words of their native language (L1) are probably dyslexic. This means that difficulty in decoding the words in foreign language should not be prematurely concluded as dyslexia symptom.

2.2. Teaching Reading Strategies

To support the students’ reading comprehension, teachers must consider applying various teaching reading strategies as popularized by experts. This is based on the definition of reading comprehension strategies as a cognitive or behavioral action that is enacted under

particular contextual conditions, which the goal of improving some aspect of comprehension (Graesser in McNamara, 2007:6).

Reading requires more than lexical and grammatical knowledge. Ability to understand sentences in a foreign language does not merely support reading comprehension and this is not only applied for children but also for adults. Even adult readers can struggle in comprehending the text and most adults think that they have comprehended the text adequately while in fact they have not. This is what Graesser (in McNamara, 2007) called the illusion of comprehension.

Although to some extent students can understand what they read, applying certain strategies deliberately and explicitly is important. If we look at the definition of strategy as “generally deliberate activities undertaken by active learners, many times to remedy perceived cognitive failure” (Garner in Alsamadani, 2011:185), then a strategy is not only important to support the students’ comprehension but also to help them fixing their comprehension failures occurred many times before. It is to say that reading strategies are also remedies of reading comprehension failures.

Many reading strategies are available for teachers today. Bouchard (2005) wrote a book which discusses a broad range of reading strategies which are based on more than thirty researches. She categorized the reading or comprehension strategies into three categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies. Each category consists of at least eight strategies. However, the strategy under question in the current research is not covered by Bouchard. Below is the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy..

2.2.1. The 3-2-1 Reading Comprehension Strategy

The 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy was firstly proposed by Zygouris-Coe, Wiggins, and Smith (2005). This strategy is said to require students to actively summarize ideas from the given text and to encourage the students to think independently and also to them to become personally engaged to the text.

Alsamadani (2011), perhaps, the first research in six years after Zygouris-Coe et al published their work that investigated the effectiveness of this strategy to support the students’ reading comprehension. Designed as a quasi-experimental research, Alsamadani found that this strategy successfully boosted the students’ reading comprehension.

This strategy has at least three main features. The first feature is that the students experience active reading or learning. The second feature is to encourage the students to think independently which will boost their creative and critical thinking to comprehend the given text. And the third feature is to engage the students with the text which is important for the students to focus on their reading activity.

2.2.1.1. The Steps of the 3-2-1 Reading Comprehension Strategy

This strategy is very much simple to be applied in a reading classroom for this strategy has only three steps and each step is the reason why this strategy is called 3-2-1. The following steps are based on Alsamadani (2011:186).

First, the students must discover three (3) items in the text that he/she read. The students are required to actively read the text to summarize and cite three different major points or details or ideas. This is an effective way for reading teachers to tackle the problem of passive participation from students.

Second, the students are asked to share two (2) of the three interesting items that they have identified. This step seems to limit the students to two items while the items can be more than that.

Third, the students write one (1) question that they have in their mind after reading the text. Students can ask factual questions, clarify their understanding of the sequence of events, and verify their general understanding of the reading.

Based on the steps mentioned above, it seems like this strategy sets the learning or reading purposes and encourages personal comprehension through self-questioning. If it is so, then this strategy can be categorized as metacognitive strategy since Bouchard (2005:4-5) explained that a metacognitive strategy is characterized by a) choosing thinking and problem solving strategies to fit specific learning situations, b) clarifying purpose of learning, c) monitoring personal comprehension through self-questioning, and d) taking corrective action when comprehension fails.

2.2.1.2. Benefits and Challenges of the 3-2-1 Reading Comprehension Strategy

The discussion above shows that the 3-2-1 strategy seems to offer multiple benefits like students' active participation (in reading activity), independent thinking, and students-text engagement. These are the benefits of this strategy.

This strategy is best used as a practice and in time the students will be habituated to discover meanings, interesting points, and questions when they read in the future.

The students will be encouraged to change their habit to perceive reading as a passive activity and their concentration towards the text they are reading will increase as they practice more and more.

However, there is too little information about this strategy because research on this strategy is still rare. It can emerge double-sided effects. The first is that it encourages the future researchers to test the application of the strategy and the second is that there may be drawbacks or disadvantages of this strategy which is not discovered yet. The 3-2-1 strategy may face the challenges that other strategies face.

According to Bouchard (2005), all reading strategies face a similar challenge: English language level. She wrote that it is important for the teachers to choose and adapt learning strategies to complement the students' English language level and thus promote successful participation. The other challenge is the students' learning style. Reading is very good for visual learner while it challenges the auditory learners. However, as all students with different learning styles are required (and enabled) to think, as long as they are not suffering from dyslexia, any reading strategies especially the 3-2-1 strategy are worthy to be taken into consideration.

2.3. Short Story as the Reading Object

Short story is chosen as the reading object of this research because it is considered adequate for junior high school students (as the name suggests, a short story is a short text) although it is also an interesting text for higher level students.

A short story, as it is known, is a text categorized under narrative genre (Beno, 2019). Whether a short story is fictional or factual (more known as recount text), a short story represents the human experiences and the world except for fables. Based on that fact, a short

story can be considered a good text at least for a start. Moreover, short stories are usually written by using daily vocabularies which are familiar for the readers in various levels. This is one of the benefits of using short stories in reading classrooms especially in the junior high schools.

According to Hirsch (in Kheirzadeh and Tavakoli, 2012), at least three principles have successful implication for improving students' reading comprehension; the first one is fluency which allows the mind to concentrate on comprehension, second, breadth of vocabulary increases comprehension and facilitates further reading and finally, domain knowledge, the most recently understood principle, increases fluency, broadens vocabulary and enables deeper comprehension. He continues that knowledge of reading comprehension requires knowledge of words and the world. Based on the explanation, integrating short story and 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy in the reading classrooms can be a good reading practice for the students to increase their reading comprehension skill.

2.3.1. The Function of a Short Story

A short story, since it is classified as a text in narrative genre, its function is to entertain the reader. However, in the classrooms, a short story offers multiple benefits especially in the reading comprehension classrooms.

As a literary work, the use of short story and other narrative texts had been used by the teachers in a long time ago. However, the use of literary works in the classroom got lesser attention when methods that emphasize structures and vocabulary were used like direct or audio-lingual method. For the past two decades or so, literature returned to be used in the classrooms.

A short story is said to offer multiple benefits, or it is multifunctional. Researchers who advocate the application of short stories in the ESL or EFL classrooms listed some benefits like motivational, literary, cultural and higher-order thinking benefits.

Regardless of the students' English proficiency, if a short story is appropriately selected, it can provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT courses for learners at intermediate levels of proficiency (Murdoch, 2002).

Lao and Krashen (2000) study concluded that the students who read literary text showed improvement in vocabulary and reading. This means that stories can be used to improve students' vocabulary and reading.

Short stories are interesting and students are motivated to read it. Elliott (1990) affirmed that literature motivates advanced students and is motivationally effective if students can genuinely engage with its thoughts and emotions and appreciate its aesthetic qualities. This tells us that the students' appreciation towards literary works should be developed for the use of short stories to engage the students in the reading activity.

Thoughts presented above show that using short stories in the reading comprehension classrooms is a worthy consideration especially if it is combined with 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This research is designed in Classroom Action Research (CAR). The reason of using this design is because this research attempts to improve the students' reading comprehension. This is in line with Kemmis & Taggart as cited in Burns (2010) that the classroom action research is a reflective practice which is used to overcome problems and to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Typically, a classroom action research consists of four cyclical phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection. In the planning phase, the researcher prepares the students, material, and the classroom. The students are given a reading comprehension test (test 1). In the action phase, the researcher teaches the students reading comprehension by using the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy. In this case, the use of the strategy is for reading practice. In the observation phase, the researcher gives another reading comprehension test (test 2) with different short story. In the reflection phase, the researcher compares the students' reading comprehension results and from the results the researcher decides whether to continue to the other cycle or to stop. In the last, the students are interviewed for their perception towards the reading practice with this strategy.

3.2. Participants

The population of this research is the eighth grade students of Islamic Junior High School 1 of Ternate which consists of 32 students. The sample of this research is the population itself where the students are not further selected and grouped.

3.3. Techniques of Data Collection and Data Analysis

Referring to Burns (2010) who stated that there are two techniques of data collection in CAR namely observation and non-observation technique, the researcher decides to use the non-observation technique.

The researcher used a reading test where the students are required to answer several questions related to the short story after the reading practice. The questions are generated from the short story given to the students to read. The questions are related to the characters, plots, and messages of the story. This test aims to measure their comprehension towards the story

To get the students' perception towards the use of the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy, the researcher uses non-structured interview to interview the students. The questions are open question and changeable. However, the main question is to know what they think and what they feel about the use of the strategy in the reading comprehension classroom. The researcher uses audio recorder to record the interview sessions.

Students' scores obtained by the reading comprehension tests (test 1, test 2 and so on, which later termed as pre-intervention and post-intervention scores) are calculated by using the student's t-test (or simply t-test) as advised by Norton (2009:146-147). Since the students are not grouped in independent groups, the t-test used is the related (repeated) measures t-test version. With the 0.05 level of significance, the students' scores are calculated with PSPP. The results between the pre-intervention and post-intervention are then compared. From the comparison the researcher draws the conclusion of whether the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy is considerable to improve the students' reading comprehension.

The students' perceptions towards the use of the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy are analyzed by using thematic analysis which is based on Norton (2009:117-123). After the interview, the researcher transcribes the recordings. The transcription is then worked out in 7 stages namely immersion, generating categories, deleting categories, merging categories, checking themes, linking themes, and then presenting the findings. The six first stages are done by the researcher in analysis but it is the last stage, presenting the findings, which the researcher puts in the analysis section.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1. Raw Data

The following table represents the students' scores described in percentage. There are two columns for the scores which stand for pre-intervention test score (pretest) and post-intervention test (posttest). That table is raw data and should not be referred as the base of the conclusion.

Table 1: Students' Scores

No	Students	Scores	
		Pretest	Posttest
1	Abidin Saleh	50	80
2	Alifia La Usman	75	100
3	Anastasia Korois	50	60
4	Anti Farid	25	70
5	Astriyani Rumarubun	25	70
6	Burhan Syukur	75	100
7	Cindy Mutia Haris	50	90
8	Dahlan Tubaru	50	90
9	Eko Sudarmono	75	100
10	Evalina Sabarudin	50	100
11	Fadli Kadir	50	80
12	Fatmawati Buamonabot	50	70
13	Fitrah Abd. Salam	75	90
14	Gufran Latif	50	80
15	Harun Mufti	25	70
16	Hatta Murid	25	70
17	Idham Tualenge	50	100
18	Iksan Abd. Rahim	75	100
19	Iskandar La Mida	75	100
20	Jainahu Hakim	50	80
21	M. Farid Nurlete	75	90
22	Magfirah Abd. Gani	50	80
23	Mandar Togubu	50	90
24	Maujud Saleh	50	90
25	Noval Idris	75	100
26	Rabul Hasyim	50	70
27	Sofyan Tarau	25	70
28	Sriyanti Jono	25	60
29	Sudarso Kasim	25	70
30	Sufriyono Kadir	50	80
31	Sukmawati Hasan	75	90

32	Taher Asis	75	100
33	Wa Inda Lamusu	50	80
34	Wahda Alhadar	75	90
35	Zakaria Umasugi	50	100
36	Zulkarnain Umasugi	50	90
Total Score		1900	3050
Mean		52,78	84,72

Data from the non-structured interview are presented along with the discussion and not displayed in this section.

4.2. Finding

4.2.1. Statistical Analysis on the Students' Scores

The researcher utilizes PSPP program to calculate the students' scores by comparing the means using paired-samples t-test and the result can be seen as follow:

Paired Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean
Pair1 Pretest_Scores	52,78	36	17,71	2,95
Posttest_Scores	84,72	36	12,76	2,13

Paired Sample Correlation

		N	Correlations	Sig.
Pair1	Pretest_Scores & Posttest_Scores	36	,76	,000

Paired Sample Test

	Paired Differences					<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i> <i>Deviation</i>	<i>Std.</i> <i>Error</i> <i>Mean</i>	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>			
Pair1 Pretest_Scores – Posttest Scores	-31,94	11,48	1,91	-35,83	-28,006	-16,69	35	,000

Based on the tables above, it can be seen that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest means (52.78 and 84.72). However, the standard deviations are not relatively close (17.71 and 12.76). The standard error of mean between the pretest and posttest scores are relatively close (2.95 and 2.13) which show that the standard error among the students is 1.91. By looking at the sig. value (.000) which is lower than the exact p value (0.05) as stated in the previous chapter, it is found that the difference between the pretest and the posttest scores is statistically significant where the posttest mean is higher than the pretest

mean significantly. Therefore, the finding is the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy had significantly improved the students' reading comprehension skill.

4.2.2. *Categorized themes acquired from the non-structured interview*

Data from the interview conducted after the post-intervention test revealed that the students have relatively similar perception or experience in the reading practice with the 3-2-1 strategy. Following Norton (2019), the categories generated from the interview data are named positive response and negative response. Within each category are the themes of the students' responses.

The positive response contains the appreciation from the students towards the application of the 3-2-1 strategy in reading comprehension. The negative response, in contrary, contains the students' rejection or objection towards the application of the strategy.

Students do have reasons to accept (appreciate) or reject the application of the strategy. These reasons are mentioned as themes condensed into terms. The students' responses are used as the basis of the discussion about the reasons.

Table 2: Categories and Themes of the Students' Perception

Categories	Themes
Positive Response (PR)	PR1. New Strategy PR2. Increasing Focus PR3. Targeted Learning PR4. Non-Pressuring Environment
Negative Response (NR)	NR1. Determined Learning NR2. Overlapping Finding

The above table presents the categories and the themes of the students' experience-based perceptions towards the use of the 3-2-1 strategy in their reading comprehension classrooms. The discussion on this subject is presented right after the discussion of the cyclical practice of the reading practice and reading tests as described previously.

4.3. *Discussions*

4.3.1. *Description of the practice in the cycles*

In this part, the researcher discusses the reading practices and reading tests conducted in the four cyclical phases. As mentioned in the method chapter, this research is a non-observation action research. Therefore, the following discussion is a report based on the practice in the classrooms. There is only one cycle conducted because the students' result in the first cycle is satisfying.

4.3.1.1. *Planning*

In this phase, preparation including documenting the reading materials (short stories) and administering the pre-intervention test were accomplished. The students were prepared by giving them a brief explanation about the agenda. Students' understanding on reading comprehension activity was reviewed and it was found that few students even didn't have any idea about the term.

The researcher, who is also the teacher in the classroom, explained the reading comprehension activity and then turned to the core matter, the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy.

Since this strategy is relatively new in this school, especially in this classroom, it took an extra time to introduce the strategy to the students. The researcher couldn't extend the classroom session because the school has a strict schedule that needed to be maintained. Fortunately, the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy can be considered easy-to-apply because of its simplicity in instruction and the instruction can be given as the students hold the reading material.

The pre-intervention test was given to the students and they were required to complete the instructed task in approximately 60 minutes. The test consisted of a short story (148 words) and four questions. In this test, the strategy was not implemented yet.

After 60 minutes, the students submitted their works to the researcher and the researcher checked the answers by referring to the key answers provided. The students' scores were tabulated and saved. The scores were not calculated yet for the statistic used required two variables to examine; the post-intervention test score was required to examine the students' reading result.

4.3.1.2. Action

The students were trained reading comprehension with the 3-2-1 strategy in three sessions conducted in different schooldays. Because the stories were short, the students were given only 60 minutes and most of them could submit their works earlier.

In each session, the researcher reintroduced the 3-2-1 reading strategy to the students. Especially in the session 2 and three, the researcher invited the students to review their previous works. It was done because in the first session most students seemed to be confused with the tasks.

One important note to take here is the students were confused whether the 2 interesting things should be (or must be) different from the 3 things to understand. In the first session, even the researcher must try hard to formulate the answer. Since there's no detailed explanation about the 3 and 2 in the texts discussing the 3-2-1 strategy of reading, the researcher became aware that it was not only the question of the students.

Based on Alsamadani (2011) that the two interesting items are selected from the three items the students identified, the researcher explained to the students that they could take it from the three things that they understand from the text. However, for some students, they also found 2 interesting things which are different from the 3 things that they have understood. The reason was, the two things were interesting to them not because they understand it, but because they don't understand it. This eventually overlapped with the 1 question that they must propose.

The students were allowed to pick 2 interesting items from the text. Therefore, the implementation of the strategy in this classroom was somehow different to Alsamadani's.

The students practiced reading comprehension with the 3-2-1 strategy in three sessions conducted in different days. At the fourth session, the students were given a post-intervention test which consisted of a story (217 words). The story was chosen based on the difficulty level (pretest: 148 words 4 questions; posttest: 217 words 10 questions). The post-

intervention test was more difficult than the pre-intervention test while the calculations of the scores were similar, by looking at percentage.

4.3.1.3. Reflection

The students' scores both pre-intervention and post-intervention tests were processed by using paired samples t-test or related sample t-test. The result as presented in the table 1 revealed that the students' reading comprehension was boosted.

The difference of the means between the pre and post-intervention test was quite high where the post-intervention test mean (84.72) was higher than the pre-intervention test (52.78). The tests given were also different in terms of the difficulty level.

Test	Number of		Mean
	Words	Questions	
Pre-Intervention	148	4	52.78
Post-Intervention	217	10	84.72

Referring back to Yaseen (2013) who discussed about the reading difficulty, comparing the number of words between the story given in the pre and post-intervention, the post-intervention test must be more challenging to the students. This is related to the retention difficulty. The higher the number of the words, the more difficult it would be. In other words, students must find it more difficult to remember the ideas presented in the longer story.

The students' comprehension towards the story is also challenged because longer story presents more complex ideas especially story with no repetition. The students' were seemed to be able to remember or comprehend the ideas because they were habituated with the 3-2-1 instructions. They might have mentally noted the items to understand, the interesting items, and the items they would treat as questions from the story.

The 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy directly instructed the students to actively search for meanings or ideas while reading the story. The presence of "questioning" in the reading practice has held the students from thinking that they have understood the story or what Graesser (in McNamara, 2007) called the illusion of comprehension.

The strategy also successfully trained the students to be engaged with the story in an extended time. Of course, reading longer story required longer time. This reflection confirms Zygorius-Coe, Wiggins, and Smith (2005) who stated that the strategy encourages the students to become personally engaged to the text.

The engagement to the text helped the students to concentrate on the text. This helped the students to get rid of the comprehension difficulty. The maintained concentration is needed to comprehend the text as Haager (in Yaseen, 2013) who mentioned that the cause of comprehension difficulty is because the lack of concentration during reading. At least it is one of the factors.

The comparison between the means has proven that the 3-2-1 strategy has significantly improved the students' reading comprehension. The significance was shown by the *sig. (2-tailed)* value (.000) which is lower than the exact *p* value stated in the previous chapter (.005).

Based on this reflection, the researcher decided to end the session or not continuing to the second cycle for the students' result was satisfying. Therefore, this research concludes that the use of the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy is considerable to be used in the reading comprehension classrooms.

4.3.2. Students' Perception

Students' perceptions towards the use of the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy in their reading classroom were gathered from a non-structured interview conducted at the very end of the sessions, after the post-intervention test.

From the interview, the researcher noted that the students' responses could be categorized into two categories: positive responses and negative responses. Since the researcher didn't intend to compare the responses, no calculation was accomplished.

In the positive response category, the students showed their appreciation towards the use of the 3-2-1 strategy. Their appreciations for some reasons also describe the advantages of the strategy. It also occurred in the negative responses where to some extents the potential drawbacks of 3-2-1 strategy need to be paid attention.

4.3.2.1. Positive Responses

New strategy

The 3-2-1 strategy was coined in 2005 but in this classroom it's a new strategy. In the 2019, the searching on the net resulted that the research report or even a discussion about this strategy was still rare. The students also described this newly strategy positively as it made possible for them to have new learning experiences.

Almost all students mentioned that this new strategy helped them to escape from boredom. Here are the picked responses:

"I like to study reading comprehension with this strategy because it is a new strategy. Usually we didn't study reading this way [A.K]."

"This strategy is different from what we had done. I now know how to read [B.S]."

"Reading is always boring for me because I could not understand what I read. However, this strategy helps me to search for meaning. This is new for me but I like it very much [G.L]."

These responses are similar to what the other students said about this strategy; that this new strategy is helpful for it gave them new learning experiences.

From the responses, it can be seen that the students tried to compare the new reading activity (with this strategy) and the "old" reading activity (without this strategy). In the past, as mentioned by G.L, he could not understand what he read. This strategy helped him to search for meaning, which must be understood that in the past he didn't know what to search in the text. It is related to the 3-2-1 strategy instruction that clearly instruct the students to find certain ideas or meanings in the text.

It was surprising that a student (B.S) stated that "I now know how to read". This particular response implies that he just experienced the real reading activity with this strategy. The sentence he made might mean that before using the 3-2-1 strategy he didn't really know what

to do in reading English text. If this is the case, then 3-2-1 strategy does not only help the students to comprehend the meaning of the text but also to teach the students what reading actually is; or how to read optimally.

Increasing Focus

It is clear that to comprehend the text, students' concentration towards the text must be maintained as well as possible. The students' concentration is important especially in reading texts written in foreign languages like English. Without maintained concentration, the students will miss many interconnected ideas because lacking of concentration can result in the weak retention.

The students are able to concentrate on the text if they are able to focus on what they are reading. Fortunately, the 3-2-1 strategy, based on the interview, helped the students to maintain their focus. The students mentioned that they could maintain their focus on the text. This, in researcher's point of view, is emerged by the instruction given to the students.

The 3-2-1 strategy has a determined instruction that helps the students to be clear of what they must do. It is very different from reading for pleasure that the readers may open themselves for any possibility that they can find within the text. The 3-2-1 strategy gives exact tasks to accomplish and the instructed tasks might have helped the students to be aware and focus on what they are searching or trying to grasp from the text.

"I could focus on the text. Usually, I could not maintain my focus especially when I read stories [C.M.H]."

"I could focus better than before. Moreover, I could remember what I've read [F.B.]"

The students were aware that they were not able to maintain their focus when they read texts (especially stories). However, with this strategy, they said that they could focus better than before. It also means that they tried to compare their current reading experience with the past reading experience.

There are many possible factors that may cause the students focus increased in reading. Interesting text, physical environment, and emotional state also play important role in determining the students' focus in reading. Unfortunately, these variables are not covered in the current research. Nevertheless, the 3-2-1 strategy theoretically should increase the students focus for it has exact instructions to accomplish; the instructions guide the students to find meanings or ideas and this "guide" helps the students to focus better.

Targeted Learning

Since the 3-2-1 strategy has clear instructions, the students' learning became easily targeted. Without a learning target, it is not easy to evaluate the students' result. This strategy has offered a way to plan the target of reading and to measure the achievement.

"The strategy requires me to get 3 items but I found more... at least I could have many things to understand from the text [S.J]."

"I was lazy to ask question because I didn't have question or I didn't know what to ask. However, because this strategy requires a question, I suddenly have many questions to ask about the text [M.T]."

It is important to understand that the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy does not only support the students' comprehension but also encourages the students to be critical. Since having questions is a sign that the students experience learning and the 3-2-1 strategy requires the students to have question (at least 1), then this strategy promises us to achieve the learning target.

It can be seen that the students could find more than what the strategy requires. This actually turns to limitation the researcher discusses in the next part. However, it is clear that this strategy offered the students a targeted learning (or targeted reading); also, the instructions guided the students to achieve the reading target.

Non-pressuring Environment

For some reasons, the students mentioned that they found the classroom more enjoyable with this strategy. This was unexpected for the 3-2-1 strategy has strict instructions. The students said that they found reading with this strategy non-pressuring.

“Usually, after reading a story we were required to retell the story. I often forgot the story. This strategy helped me to remember what I have read. Reading became so easy for me [A.R].”

“Reading is easy now because I know what I am searching for from the text [E.S].”

It seems like the clarity of the instruction helped the students to escape from frustration in the reading classroom. This finding tells us that we need to pay attention that any unclear reading instruction may put pressure on the students. As most teachers traditionally instruct the students to retell the story they read, the students often didn't know where to start. Perhaps, the target of 3-2-1 strategy is to support the students' reading comprehension and not retention. Therefore, the students felt the reading classroom more enjoyable than before.

4.3.2.2. Negative Responses

Determined Learning

Regardless of the encouragements that the 3-2-1 strategy offers to the students to improve their reading comprehension (and reading practice), some students said that this strategy limited their attempt to find more meanings in the text.

“This strategy requires me to find 3 items, but I found more... [S.J]”

“I think because the strategy tells me to find 1 question, I don't think about other thing anymore [H.M].”

“When I have had 3 things to understand, I became not serious to continue my reading [R.H].”

The problem with the strategy, according to the students, is that this strategy determines the numbers of items that they must find and it limits their attempt to find more.

Some students found that when they have noted 3 things to understand, 2 interesting things, and 1 question (as the strategy suggests), they became not motivated to seriously read the rest of the text.

In this perspective, the 3-2-1 strategy should be considered to be used in teaching reading short text. This strategy must be flexible and when it is used in teaching reading longer text it can be 4-3-2 or 5-4-3 and so on. Reading a long text with 3-2-1 strategy is a limited reading practice that limits the students to find more valuable things from the text.

Overlapping Finding

The last theme in this category is that the students mentioned that they sometimes found overlapping items. They were confused by the 3 items to understand and 2 interesting items. They asked whether the 2 interesting items are picked from the 3 understood things or to take new items.

“I am confused whether to pick the interesting items from understood items or what... [J.H.]”

“Sometimes, I found some interesting items not because I understood them but because I didn’t understand them [N.I].”

Since the 3-2-1 strategy of reading comprehension is relatively new and texts discussing this strategy are still rare, the technical detail about the implementation of this strategy is needed.

The students were confused whether the 2 interesting items were picked from the 3 items they identified before as suggested by Alsamadani (2011) or 2 new items for they might be interested to particular items for different reasons. If the 2 interesting items are picked from the 3 identified or understood items, then the overlapping findings limit the students to explore the text deeper.

Reading with the 3-2-1 strategy offers many positive things but still leaves question marks. This opens the way to the next researchers, or teachers and writers to explore and develop the strategy. To make it usable in reading longer text for the 3-2-1 way is seemed suitable only on reading short text.

5. Conclusion

The comparison of means between the pre-intervention and post-intervention tests by using paired samples t-test has shown a significant difference where the post-intervention test mean is significantly higher than the pre-intervention test mean. This implies that the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy has boosted the students’ reading comprehension. Data from the interview captured the students’ perception towards the use of the 3-2-1 strategy in the reading comprehension classrooms. It has been noted that the 3-2-1 strategy offered many positive things but also still left some questions. The students positively appreciated the use of this strategy but as a new strategy it still needs to be developed. The discussion of the data also revealed that the 3-2-1 strategy is only suitable in reading short text. Reading longer text perhaps requires 5-4-3 or even higher.

As mentioned above that the 3-2-1 reading comprehension strategy still leaves question. For this research tested the implementation of this strategy in reading short text, the next researcher may be interested to test this strategy in the longer text. This research also used the narrative as the texts read by the students. The next researcher may be interested to use the other text genres to be tested with this strategy. Also, it is possible to do research about 4-3-2 or 5-4-3 in the short text.

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