PROBLEM BASED LEARNING MODEL INTEGRATED LET'S READ APPLICATION ON READING COMPREHENSION AT TENTH GRADE OF SMA SWASTA TELADAN PEMATANGSIANTAR

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Abstract
This research aimed to investigate the effect of the Problem Based Learning model integrated with the Let's Read application on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts at SMA Swasta Teladan Pematangsiantar. The research employed a quasi-experimental quantitative design with a non-equivalent, involving class X-5 as the experimental group and class X-3 as the control group, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test. The data were analyzed with SPSS 22. The result of the analysis used a one-tailed test showed that the calculated t-value (2.452) was greater than the t-table value (1.666). Since t-count > t-table, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. This result indicated that the Problem Based Learning model integrated Let's Read application had a positive and significant effect on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Problem Based Learning model integrated Let's Read application is effective and can be applied as an alternative model in teaching reading comprehension skills.

Keywords: Problem-Based Learning, Let's Read application, Reading Comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

In human life, language is the main foundation of essential interaction and communication. Through language, individuals not only convey ideas and feelings, but also build and maintain complex social relationships. Among the various languages in the world, English occupies a unique position as an international language. It's because English is used by many people across the world to communicate, the language is very important. Therefore, as it is taught from elementary to university level, students should learn and understand it (Daulat Lumbangaol et al., 2024:35). This condition underlines the necessity of the essential basic language skills learning. Learners are required to develop proficiency in four essential language abilities, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Sharma and Puri, 2021: 34). The comprehensive development of these four skills has a major impact on students' academic progress because it helps them understand material presented in English as well as other sources in English. In addition, social and emotional growth is facilitated by English language proficiency, which helps students understand different points of view and communicate more comfortably in a global environment. Therefore, in today's school education, one of the demands faced by students is to develop the ability to use English for communication in both spoken and written forms (Daar, 2020:1). This demand becomes increasingly relevant considering the importance of reading skills in accessing information and actively participating in the learning process. Reading is considered an important skill; therefore, it deserves special emphasis in classroom instruction.

Reading is the act of interpreting and understanding ideas conveyed through written text, and it requires students to interact with the content in order to acquire knowledge that improves their thinking and enables them to generate ideas from the text they read (Pramayshela et al., 2023:113). Through active interaction with texts, students are trained to explore main ideas, understand the content presented, draw conclusions, and finally, generate ideas inspired by the material they learn. After extracting information from the text, full comprehension is still required. Thus, reading and comprehension are inseparable. Good reading skills, accompanied by deep comprehension, they serve as a crucial basis for students to achieve academic excellence. Reading comprehension refers to the skill of interpreting and grasping the meaning contained within the text being read (Rahmah et al., 2023:37). This definition highlights that reading comprehension is not merely about recognizing words or reading fluently, but rather about constructing meaning from the written material. Readers are expected to be able to recognize the paragraph's main idea, extract information from the text, correctly conclude the reading text, and determine the text's purpose as part of this reading comprehension task (Ardini, 2021:178). Students often struggle with reading comprehension when they fail to grasp the meaning of sentences and understand the text as a whole. This is caused by a variety of factors, including a lack of vocabulary, a lack of prior knowledge, ignorance of grammar and phrase meaning, difficulty with specific words, complex sentence structures, an unsupportive learning environment, poor reading strategies, anxiety, difficulty focusing, and a lack of comprehension of the text's structure (Al-Jarrah and Ismail, 2018:35).

Reading comprehension has long been recognized as one of the most challenging skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. It's because reading requires the application of critical thinking to grasp new ideas and information from a text, and learners need deeper comprehension to acquire accurate information (Silalahi et al. 2022). This difficulty is caused by several specific problems. However, reading comprehension is frequently obstructed by several difficulties. Many EFL students find it difficult to differentiate between main ideas and supporting information, recognize main ideas across paragraphs, understand culturally unfamiliar subjects, relate the text's content to what they already know, interpret language in context, and make sense of what they read (Ramadhianti and Somba, 2023:9). These challenges are not limited to a specific country or region, but are widespread and occur globally in English language learning. Students in high school, in particular, encounter comparable challenges. Finding the primary concept, comprehending word meanings based on context, and drawing the right conclusions from reading texts are frequently challenges for students (Aini et al., 2023:11). This indicates that high school students still lack essential sub-skills needed for effective reading comprehension. The inability to identify the main idea often results in misunderstanding the overall message of the text. Likewise, when students struggle to interpret vocabulary in context, they are unable to grasp the deeper or implied meanings of certain sentences. Furthermore, the difficulty in making inferences suggests that students might not be actively engaging with the text or connecting it with their prior knowledge. These weaknesses can significantly hinder

students' ability to comprehend texts holistically and affect their academic performance in English.

From the observations conducted throughout the Internship Program at SMA Swasta Teladan Pematangsiantar, it was identified that a considerable number of tenth-grade students struggled with understanding English reading passages, especially narrative texts. First, students struggled with determining the main idea, as they often failed to identify the central message of a paragraph or the overall theme of the story. Second, students did not know enough vocabulary, which made it difficult for them to understand word meanings and disrupted their comprehension of the text. Third, students had difficulty in making inferences, as they were unable to draw logical conclusions from implicit information. Fourth, their ability to identify detailed information was weak, as they frequently overlooked specific facts or supporting details necessary for comprehension. Lastly, students also encountered problems in recognizing references, such as linking pronouns or cohesive devices to the correct words or phrases in the text.

The inability to identify the main idea, understand the storyline, conclude information from the text, capture the moral message, and comprehend vocabulary in the context of a sentence. This issue was reflected in the students' reading comprehension scores, particularly in assessments focused on narrative texts, where the majority of students scored below the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) for reading comprehension, which was set at 70. This clearly indicated that students' ability to understand written texts was still below the expected standard. In fact, based on Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 37 of 2018 and the English Learning Outcomes in the Merdeka Curriculum, students were expected to understand both explicit and implicit contextual meanings of various text types, including narrative texts. In other words, reading comprehension was a core competency that played a crucial role in achieving the objectives of English language learning.

Although reading comprehension is a key skill in learning English, the learning process in the classroom is still not optimal. One of the causes is the use of conventional learning models that have not been able to build active student involvement in understanding the contents of the reading. Many teachers still rely on lecture methods and practice assignments without providing space for students to interact directly with the text. As a result, learners tend to be passive and show low motivation in reading, which affects their ability to grasp the meaning of the text. This condition highlights the importance of implementing a contextual and interactive learning approach that not only fosters students' interest in reading but also effectively enhances their comprehension skills. An engaging and participatory model is essential to encourage students to take an active role in understanding English narrative passages

One instructional approach that offers significant advantages for enhancing reading comprehension is Problem-Based Learning. This method highlights the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities by engaging learners with authentic and contextual challenges. This learning model provides various benefits because it encourages students to be actively involved in the learning process. In practice, students engage in self-

directed exploration to gain new insights, apply them to real-world problems, and evaluate both their learning outcomes and the effectiveness of the methods they used. The teacher's role is positioned as a facilitator, guiding the process rather than merely delivering information. The aims of Problem-Based Learning are to foster adaptable knowledge, enhance critical problem-solving abilities, strengthen autonomy in learning, improve collaboration, and cultivate intrinsic motivation (Hmelo-Silver, 2004:235).

The Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach has demonstrated significant benefits in enhancing students' reading comprehension by engaging multiple dimensions of the learning process. Through this method, learners become more involved in exploring, interpreting, and critically assessing the information presented in texts. Applying PBL has also been shown to elevate students' academic performance to higher achievement levels, as well as helping most students improve their achievement in reading comprehension, because there are wider opportunities to interact directly with text material, both individually and in groups. In addition, students were also able to obtain information from the text well, felt more interested in the reading given, and showed an increase in their ability to analyze the contents of the text and understand the meaning as a whole (Rianti et al., 2024:444).

The Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach not only encourages an interactive and cooperative learning environment but also stimulates students' interest in reading while strengthening their comprehension of the material. Based on findings from earlier studies and supporting explanations, it can be inferred that PBL contributes substantially to the development of students' reading abilities. Consequently, this research applies the PBL model as an effective alternative strategy to address existing challenges and assist learners in enhancing their reading comprehension skills, especially in narrative texts. The benefits of the Problem Based Learning model are seen in its ability to improve students' critical thinking to identify main ideas, understand vocabulary in context, draw conclusions from the text content, and comprehend the storyline in the text. The Problem Based Learning model also creates a meaningful and motivating learning atmosphere because students do not only receive information passively, but also actively build understanding through discussion and independent exploration. This learning model is believed to increase student learning motivation because students are directly involved in a meaningful and collaborative learning process (Branch, 2004:240).

Interactive learning tools help minimize misconceptions in the learning process and strengthen the connection between teachers and students. Through the integration of Problem-Based Learning, students become more motivated, actively involved, and confident in developing independent learning skills (Dita et al. 2021:29). Thus, applying the Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach in teaching reading comprehension should be accompanied by supportive media that enhance students' skills in analyzing texts more thoroughly. One suitable medium is the Let's Read application, which offers a wide range of narrative texts organized by difficulty level, enabling learners to grasp the content progressively and regularly. Moreover, the app includes engaging visual features that significantly contribute to the comprehension process. Especially for students who still struggle with reading, the

application's picture series visualization tool may aid in their understanding of the text's plot, meaning, circumstances, and context (Stevani et al., 2023:3).

The integration of the Let's Read application in reading instruction significantly enhances students' ability to comprehend texts. The presentation of interesting reading texts builds students' interest in reading and encourages active involvement in the reading process. In addition, texts that are accessed digitally via mobile devices allow students to read anytime and anywhere according to their needs. This flexible access encourages students to interact more with the text, so that their ability to recognize main ideas, understand vocabulary in context, identify detailed information, and draw conclusions from the text develops optimally. The Let's Read application has the potential to significantly improve reading comprehension skills and contributes to better educational outcomes for students (Mahmudah et al., 2024:11).

The combination of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach and the Let's Read application is anticipated to foster an engaging and effective classroom atmosphere, enhancing students' participation as well as their comprehension of English narrative texts. This synergy provides a dynamic learning process where learners are not limited to reading but are also encouraged to tackle problems, collaborate with peers, and critically reflect on the material. While numerous studies have examined the role of PBL in developing reading comprehension, only a limited number have linked it to the use of digital platforms as instructional support. To date, no research has specifically integrated PBL with the Let's Read application as a medium to strengthen students' ability to interpret narrative texts. Addressing this gap, the researcher is motivated to conduct a study by proposing the title "Problem Based Learning Model Integrated Let's read application on Reading Comprehension at Tenth Grade of SMA Swasta Teladan Pematangsiantar"

LITERATURE REVIEW
Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a learning model that places students at the center of learning activities by presenting real-life problems as stimuli. In PBL, students are encouraged to identify problems, seek information, discuss alternative solutions, and draw conclusions collaboratively. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding the process, not simply as a provider of information.

The advantage of PBL lies in its ability to foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and active student engagement. Through problem-based learning, students not only understand concepts theoretically but also apply them in real-world contexts. This aligns with the goal of reading instruction, which is to enable students to interpret, analyze, and relate reading content to their own experiences and knowledge.

Let's Read Application

Let's Read is a digital library app that offers thousands of illustrated reading materials in various difficulty levels, themes, and languages. Designed to promote literacy from early

childhood to advanced levels, the app utilizes illustrations and audio to support text comprehension.

For language learners, Let's Read is highly beneficial because it helps enrich vocabulary, facilitates understanding of story context, and fosters reading interest. Furthermore, accessibility through digital devices allows students to read flexibly anytime and anywhere. Therefore, Let's Read can be an effective supporting tool for reading instruction in schools.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the active process of constructing meaning from written text by connecting new information to existing knowledge. This process involves cognitive skills such as identifying main ideas, understanding word references, interpreting vocabulary in context, making inferences, and finding detailed information.

In addition to these components, reading comprehension levels are also divided into several levels: (1) literal comprehension, which is understanding explicit information; (2) inferential comprehension, which is drawing conclusions from implicit information; and (3) critical comprehension, which is evaluating the content of the reading in depth. These three levels are very important for students to master in order to be able to read texts, especially narrative texts, well.

Narrative Text

Narrative text is text that tells an event or experience in story form. The structure of narrative text generally consists of an orientation (introducing the characters, setting, and situation), complication (problem or conflict), and resolution (solving the problem).

To understand narrative text, students need to master the ability to identify the plot, characters, setting, and moral message. This understanding requires more than just literal reading, but also inferential skills to interpret the implied meaning behind the story.

Previous Studies

Several previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of PBL and Let's Read in improving reading skills. Rosmiyati (2021) found that implementing PBL significantly improved students' reading comprehension. Similarly, Rianti et al. (2024) reported an increase in narrative reading skills after implementing PBL through classroom action research.

Research related to Let's Read has also yielded positive results. Azara & Fadhilawati (2024) and Destiara (2024) demonstrated that using this application can improve students' reading interest, vocabulary, and comprehension of texts. These findings confirm that both PBL and Let's Read have strong potential to support reading learning.

Research Gap and Framework

Although numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of both PBL and Let's Read separately, studies integrating the two into reading instruction, particularly narrative texts at the high school level, are still very limited. However, combining PBL as an active learning strategy with Let's Read as a digital medium has the potential to yield more optimal results.

Therefore, this study was designed to fill this gap. The conceptual framework of this study is that the implementation of PBL supported by Let's Read is expected to improve high school students' ability to understand narrative texts, including aspects of main ideas, vocabulary, inferences, references, and detailed information.

METHOD

This study used a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group design. This design was chosen to compare learning outcomes between the experimental group, which was taught using the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model with the support of the Let's Read application, and the control group, which received conventional teaching methods. The study population consisted of all 10th-grade students of SMA Swasta Teladan Pematangsiantar in the 2023/2024 academic year. The sample included two classes selected purposively: the experimental class, which received the treatment of PBL with Let's Read, and the control class, which received conventional learning.

The research instrument was a multiple-choice test measuring reading comprehension, developed based on comprehension indicators such as identifying the main idea, understanding references, interpreting vocabulary, making inferences, and finding detailed information. Content validity was assessed through expert judgment, while reliability was determined through a pilot test of the instrument.

The research procedure involved several steps. First, a pre-test was administered to both groups to assess their initial reading comprehension abilities. Then, the experimental group was taught using the PBL model with texts from the Let's Read application, while the control group followed conventional teacher-centered methods. The learning process took place over several meetings according to the predetermined schedule. Finally, a post-test was given to both groups after the treatment to measure any improvements in reading comprehension. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of PBL with the Let's Read application compared to conventional teaching methods in enhancing students' reading comprehension.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Hypothesis Test

The hypothesis testing aimed to examine whether a notable variation existed in the reading comprehension achievements of students from the control group compared to those in the experimental group. This stage of analysis was undertaken only after fulfilling the preliminary requirements, which included the normality test and the homogeneity of variance test. As the data met both assumptions normal distribution and equal variances the

analysis continued with a parametric statistical approach, specifically the Independent Sample T-Test, conducted using SPSS version 22.

The hypothesis of this research was formulated as follows:

a) Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): There is a significant effect of the use of the Problem-Based Learning model integrated with the Let's Read application on the reading comprehension ability of tenth-grade students in Pematangsiantar Teladan Private High School.

b) Null Hypothesis (H_0): The application of the Problem-Based Learning approach combined with the Let's Read platform does not produce a significant impact on the reading comprehension skills of tenth-grade students at SMA Swasta Teladan Pematangsiantar.

Table 1. Hypothesis Test Results

									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Value	Equal variances assumed	.067	.797	-2.452	73	.017	-5.701	2.325	-10.334	-1.068
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.450	72.506	.017	-5.701	2.326	-10.338	-1.064

The hypothesis was tested through an independent sample t-test to examine differences in post-test outcomes between the control and experimental groups. This research involved a total of 75 participants, with 38 assigned to the control group and 37 to the experimental group. Since two groups were compared (k = 2), the degrees of freedom were determined using the formula df = N – k = 75 – 2 = 73. The test of significance was conducted at the 0.05 level of confidence using a one-tailed approach. The analysis produced a calculated t-value of -2.452 (absolute value = 2.452). In contrast, the critical value from the t-table for df = 73 at α = 0.05 (one-tailed) was 1.666. Because the calculated t-value (2.452) exceeded the critical t-value (1.666), the result indicated statistical significance.

Therefore, it was concluded that H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. This means that there is a significant difference between the post-test results of the experimental class and the control class. Thus, the use of the Problem-Based Learning model integrated with the Let's Read application significantly affected the improvement of students' reading comprehension compared to learning in the control class at SMA Swasta Teladan Pematangsiantar.

The analysis results indicate\that the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning model combined with the Let's Read application effectively addressed the research questions, demonstrating a significant and positive influence on students' reading comprehension. The study revealed that:

1. The experimental group showed an increase in the mean score from 52.03 in the pre-test to 76.62 in the post-test, representing an improvement of 24.59 points. The control group also showed progress, with the mean score increasing from 52.11 in the pre-test to 70.92 in the post-test, which is an improvement of 18.81 points. These results indicate that while both groups experienced gains in reading comprehension, the experimental group, which received the Problem-Based Learning model integrated Let's Read application, achieved a higher increase, demonstrating the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing students' reading comprehension.

2. In the post-test, 34 out of 37 students in the experimental group passed ($\geq$70), compared to 28 out of 38 students in the control group. This means that 91.9% of the experimental group passed, while 73.7% of the control group did, indicating that the Problem-Based Learning model effectively improved students' academic achievement in reading comprehension.

3. The independent sample t-test showed that t-count (2.452) was greater than t-table (1.666) at $\alpha = 0.05$, leading to the rejection of H_0 and acceptance of H_a. This indicated that there was a significant difference in the improvement of students' reading comprehension between those who were taught using the Problem-Based Learning model integrated with Let's Read and those who were not taught using the Problem Based Learning model.

This part discussed the research findings presented in the previous section. The discussion focused on interpreting the results of the pre-test and post-test, comparing the performance of the experimental and control groups, and relating the findings to relevant theories and previous studies. Furthermore, this section highlights the implications of the results for teaching reading comprehension using the Problem-Based Learning model integrated Let's Read application.

The findings of this research can be strongly associated with the theoretical perspective proposed by (Barrows and Tamblyn, 1980:8) stated that learning through problem-solving is more effective in forming knowledge that can be applied in the future than rote memorization. This theoretical perspective was reflected in the findings of this study, where the experimental group, taught through the Problem-Based Learning model integrated with the Let's Read application, showed greater improvement in reading comprehension compared to the control group. The significant increase in the mean score of the experimental group (from 52.03 to 76.62) and their higher passing percentage (91.9%) indicated that students were not merely memorizing textual information but actively constructing understanding through problem-solving activities. By engaging with narrative texts in problem-based tasks, students were able to develop transferable skills and deeper comprehension in reading material.

The findings of this research were supported by (Rianti et al. 2024:1), When students are involved in tackling tasks connected to reading materials, their level of enthusiasm and motivation tends to increase. Moreover, the application of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) through interactive learning media makes students feel more engaged, inspired, and confident in pursuing independent study (Dita et al. 2021:29). By integrating this model into

the media, learners were able to study more effectively, stay focused during reading activities, and interpret the content with greater accuracy. This finding clarifies why the experimental group, which utilized the Problem-Based Learning approach combined with the Let's Read application, outperformed the control group in both reading comprehension outcomes and overall achievement rates.

The findings of this research were comparable to the findings of Rosmiyati (2021), who reported that the Problem-Based Learning model students significantly improved' reading comprehension, with the mean score increasing from 60.43 in the pre-test to 75 in the post-test. In this research, the experimental group's mean score increased from 52.03 in the pre-test to 76.62 in the post-test, showing a greater increase of 24.59 points. This comparison indicated that the Problem-Based Learning model effectively enhanced students' reading comprehension, and the integration with the Let's Read application contributed to a higher post-test score than the conventional Problem Based Learning model implementation in previous research.

The results of this research implied that integrating the Problem-Based Learning model with the Let's Read application could effectively enhance students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. For teachers, this model offered a more interactive and engaging learning model to foster students' motivation, concentration, and problem-solving skills. For schools, it highlights the potential of combining digital media with active learning strategies in the curriculum.

Despite the positive results, this research had several limitations. First, the sample was limited to one class of tenth-grade students at SMA Swasta Teladan Pematangsiantar, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Second, the intervention was conducted in a short period, so the long-term effects of the Problem Based Learning model integrated with the Let's Read application were not examined. Finally, the study focused only on reading comprehension of narrative texts, leaving other text types or language skills unexplored.

Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the generalizability of the findings. It is also suggested to extend the duration of the intervention to examine the long-term effects of the Problem-Based Learning model integrated with interactive media. Additionally, future research could explore its impact on other text types or language skills to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The tenth-grade students at SMA Swasta Teladan Pematangsiantar faced difficulties in reading comprehension, particularly in identifying the main idea, making inferences, locating detailed information, and understanding references. To address these challenges, the Problem-Based Learning model integrated Let's Read application was implemented. This learning model contributed to a 91.9% improvement in students' reading comprehension of post-test in the experimental group, especially in overcoming the dominant difficulties in

identifying the main idea and making inferences. The results indicated that the applied learning model effectively enhanced students' ability to comprehend narrative texts.

The hypothesis was examined using a one-tailed t-test, which demonstrated a significant effect since the obtained t-value (2.452) was greater than the critical value from the t-table (1.666). consequently, H_0 was rejected while H_a was accepted. This finding indicates that applying the Problem-Based Learning approach combined with the Let's Read application significantly enhanced the reading and comprehension skills of tenth-grade students at SMA Swasta Teladan Pematangsiantar.

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