

**THE EFFECT OF ACTIVATING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE ON STUDENTS'  
READING COMPREHENSION IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT THE SECOND  
GRADE OF MTSN 6 AGAM IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/2022**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this research were to find the students' reading comprehension in descriptive text that taught by using activating background knowledge and to find whether significant differences of student' who activate background knowledge with the student' who are not activate the background knowledge on reading comprehension in descriptive text. This was experimental research. The researcher used two classes on this research (experimental class and control class). It means that by comparing two groups by giving a different treatment then giving a test to check whether there was significant effect or not. The population of this research was 278 students, because the population number was big, the researcher took purposive sampling with some consideration. The instrument that used was multiple choice the questions consist of 20 items. T- test was used to analysis the data. The mean score of the data analysis for significant effect of using activating background knowledge was 50,67 in pre-test and 83,67 in post-test. The result shows that to 55,78 compared to level significant 0,05 was 1,70 and it showed that the Ha was accepted. This can be concluded that there was significant effect of using activating background knowledge on students' reading comprehension in descriptive text.*

**Keywords:** Activating Background Knowledge, Reading Comprehension

**ABSTRAK**

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kemampuan pemahaman membaca siswa pada teks deskriptif yang diajarkan dengan menggunakan teknik *activating background knowledge* serta untuk mengetahui apakah terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara siswa yang mengaktifkan pengetahuan latar belakang dengan siswa yang tidak mengaktifkan pengetahuan latar belakang terhadap pemahaman membaca teks deskriptif. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian eksperimen. Peneliti menggunakan dua kelas dalam penelitian ini, yaitu kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol. Hal ini berarti bahwa penelitian dilakukan dengan membandingkan dua kelompok yang diberi perlakuan berbeda, kemudian diberikan tes untuk mengetahui apakah terdapat pengaruh yang signifikan atau tidak.

Populasi dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 278 siswa. Karena jumlah populasi yang cukup besar, peneliti menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling* dengan beberapa

pertimbangan tertentu. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan berupa tes pilihan ganda yang terdiri atas 20 butir soal. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah uji *t*. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata pada pretest sebesar 50,67 dan meningkat menjadi 83,67 pada posttest. Hasil uji *t* menunjukkan nilai hitung sebesar 55,78, sedangkan nilai tabel pada taraf signifikansi 0,05 adalah 1,70, sehingga hipotesis alternatif (*Ha*) diterima. Dengan demikian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan teknik *activating background knowledge* memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa pada teks deskriptif.

**Kata Kunci:** Pengaktifan Pengetahuan Latar Belakang, Pemahaman Membaca

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Learning English aims to improve students' skills. There are four skills that students' have to master namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading involve receiving message, so it is regarded as receptive skills (Abdushukurova, 2024); (Andariska & Reflinda, 2021). On the other hand, Speaking and writing involve language production, so it is regarded as productive skills. It is clear that students' need to master both of receptive skill and productive skill in learning English (Sagoian & Sagoyan, 2018). However, reading is one of the abilities that students need to be mastered (Safura & Helmanda, 2020). Reading is the fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to built meaning (Nunan,

2003). Reading are taught in junior school has a goal that students are able to read well and understand the meaning. Students' are expected to have more skills to explain the content of the text after they comprehend the reading text (Everhart, 2022). As a result, the purpose of reading is to get the information from the text.

English teachers considered that reading comprehension is not favorite class for most students. Some of English teachers still use conventional technique to teach reading comprehension. Conventional technique usually made students bored because the technique was monotonous and the students were not active on the learning process (Arwila, 2022). Teacher should find the technique to overcome this problem. One of the ways to make teaching reading comprehension effective is making the student interest

and active. Teacher should apply appropriate teaching technique as well as method to establish the effectiveness of English teaching. It will make easier and enjoyable for student receive the lesson (Syahfutra & Niah, 2019). So that, English teacher should be creative and selecting the technique to teach reading comprehension.

Various effort that have been done by the teachers at school so that the students can comprehend the text. The efforts that have been made was usually related to the selection of teaching methods, the use of the technique of activating background knowledge aids or means to improve students' reading comprehension (Vaughn et al., 2024). The efforts made by the teachers at school in students' mastering reading comprehension is by using the conventional technique of teaching reading. The way of the teacher provides the technique can make a great contribution students' to master reading comprehension (Sanchez et al., 2021).

Based on the preliminary research by doing observation and interview that has been made with English teacher on Tuesday, 21

September 2021 at second grade of MTsN 6 Agam Bukittinggi in academic year 2021/2022 , the researcher found some problems. The first problems that the students did not understand what the text about. Students did not know what is the type of the text even the students have learned it in the first grade some and students were less interested in learning English because the English lesson was difficult to be understood. These explanations the researcher found from some of students that the researcher interviewed in the class. Second, students were not able to conclude the information and ideas from the text because the students bored during teaching and learning English and the teacher only monotonous when taught. Third, students were not able to identify the information, detail, and generic structure from the text. Student did not master yet to find the detail information and generally they still had low score in reading. Fourth, the teacher used conventional method in teaching reading that made students hard to process the learning and made students bored in the learning process. Some students said there was no understanding of them in learning.

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Based on the problems, it is important for the teacher to develop ways to teach reading comprehension. There are so many strategies in teaching reading comprehension and one is activating background knowledge from the students. Activating background knowledge as a good strategy to develop students reading skill, because activating background knowledge is how students can make connection between new information and their experience before. Activating background knowledge is both eliciting from what they already know and building initial knowledge that they need in order to access upcoming content (Maulida, 2013). Moreover, background knowledge is what somebody already knows when comforting, the new information and continually shintesize, consolidate and integrate old and new information into hierarchical knowledge structure (Juarsih, 2012). The opinions above can take conclusion that activating background knowledge is connecting old information and new information to continue the learning process.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher assumed that the used of activating background knowledge to

improve students reading comprehension skill. Finally, the researcher focus on "***The Effect of Activating Background Knowledge on Students' Reading Comprehension in Descriptive Text at Second Grade of MTsN 6 AGAM BUKITTINGGI in Academic Years 2021/2022***"

## **B. METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative approach using an experimental research design to investigate the effect of activating background knowledge on students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts. Specifically, a quasi-experimental design with a pretest–posttest control group design was applied. Two groups were involved in the study: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received instruction through the activating background knowledge strategy, while the control group was taught using conventional reading instruction without explicit activation of prior knowledge. The population of this study consisted of 278 second-grade students of MTsN 6 Agam in the academic year 2021/2022. Due to the large population size, purposive

sampling was employed based on specific considerations, including students' initial reading ability and class equivalence. Two classes were selected as samples, one serving as the experimental group and the other as the control group. Data were collected using a reading comprehension test in the form of multiple-choice questions, consisting of 20 items measuring students' understanding of descriptive texts. The test was administered twice: as a pretest prior to the treatment and as a posttest after the treatment. The research procedure was conducted over several instructional sessions, beginning with the pretest, followed by the implementation of the instructional treatment, and concluding with the posttest. The collected data were analyzed using statistical procedures, including normality and homogeneity tests as prerequisite analyses. To test the research hypotheses and determine the significance of differences between groups, an independent samples t-test was applied at a 0.05 significance level.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### RESULT

#### Testing Hypothesis

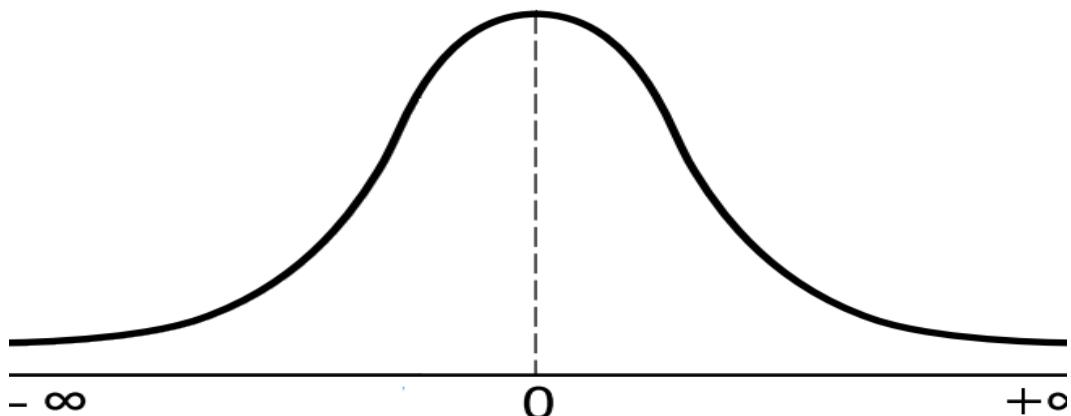
##### a. The first hypothesis

$H_a$  : there is significant effect of using students' activating background knowledge in students' reading comprehension in the second grade of MTsN 6 Agam. ( $H_a : \mu \neq 0$ )

$H_0$  : there is no significant effect of using students' activating background knowledge in students' reading comprehension in the second grade of MTsN 6 Agam. ( $H_0 : \mu = 0$ )

In order to find out whether the hypothesis can be accepted or rejected, the researcher was used t-test is done to find out which of  $H_a$  and  $H_0$  are accepted. If  $t_{obt} > t_{tab}$  it means that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_a$  was accepted.

From the results of the t-test the results have been obtained to note that the value of  $t_{obt}$  obtained is 55,78 and  $t_{tab}$  for degree of freedom ( $df = n - 2$ ) = (30 + 30 - 2) = 58 with level of significance 0,05 is 1,70 it can be seen  $t_{obt} > t_{tab}$ .



Ho rejected

$t_{\text{tab}} = 1,70$

Ha accepted  $t_{\text{ob}} = 55,78$

This second hypothesis is done

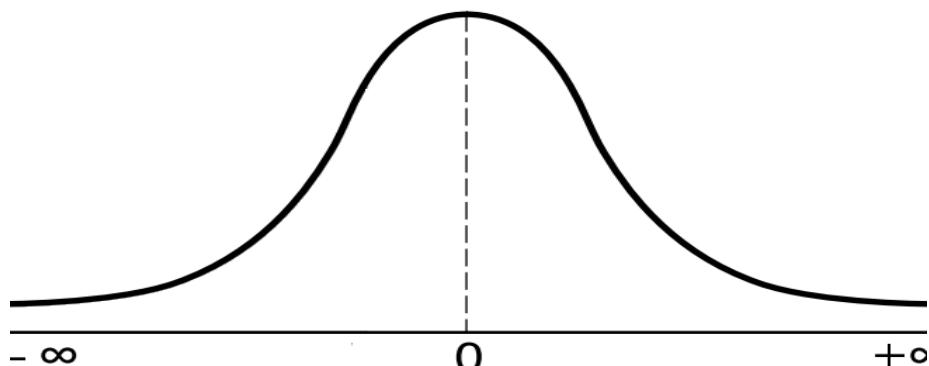
From the curve above it can be seen that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, because the value of  $t_{\text{ob}} > t_{\text{tab}}$ . So, it can be concluded that there is significant effect of using activating background knowledge towards students reading comprehension.

by comparing the post-test scores in the experimental class and control class. If  $t_{\text{ob}} > t_{\text{tab}}$ , means that  $H_a$  is accepted and  $H_0$  is rejected, to measure whether hypothesis would accepted or rejected, the researcher used t-test. From the formula it is known that the value of  $t_{\text{ob}}$  is 49,48 and  $t_{\text{tab}}$  for degree of freedom (  $df = n-2$  ) = 58 with the level of significance 0,025 is 1,96 it can be seen that  $t_{\text{ob}} > t_{\text{tab}}$ . It means that  $H_a$  accepted and  $H_0$  rejected.

### b. The Second Hypothesis

$H_a$  : there is significant differences between the students who are using activating background knowledge and students who are not using activating background knowledge in learning reading comprehension in the second grade of MTsN 6 Agam.

$H_0$  : there is no significant difference between the students who are using activating background knowledge and students who are not using activating background knowledge in learning reading comprehension in the second grade of MTsN 6 Agam.



$H_0$  rejected

$t_0 = 1,96$

$H_a$  accepted  $t_0 = 49,48$

Based on curve above it is known that  $t_0$  is greater than  $t_{\text{tab}}$ , in other words  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_a$  was accepted. It means that there is significant difference of students of using activating background knowledge in the experimental class.

### c. The Third Hypothesis

$H_a$  : there is a better result than the students' without using activating background knowledge in the learning process of reading comprehension of second grade of MTsN 6 Agam.

$H_0$  : there is no better result than the students' without using activating background knowledge in the learning process of reading comprehension of second grade of MTsN 6 Agam

The third hypothesis is to find out which is accepted and rejected, the data used in this third hypothesis is the same as the data used in the second

hypothesis. From second hypothesis, it was found that  $t_0$  is 49,48 and  $t_{\text{tab}}$  for freedom ( $df=n-2$ ) with the level of significance 0,05 is 1,70. It can be concluded that  $t_0 > t_{\text{tab}}$ . It means that the students' reading comprehension taught by using activating background knowledge is better than students' who are not taught by using activating background knowledge.

## DISCUSSION

Reading comprehension is one of the most important aspects in learning English. Reading comprehension is the ability to read the text, process it and understand the meaning. Reading comprehension aims to comprehend all of the information from the text. According to Saraswati, reading comprehension is not merely a process of recognizing and understanding words and the meanings, it involves a more complex

cognitive process where students could understand the meaning in written language, link it to the background knowledge, and build up a mental representation of the information that the readers read.

Activating background knowledge is an learning process to influence memory of students and make the connection in the new material. According to Yuksel, activating background knowledge is the most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. It means that activating background knowledge is combine the new material. It also practice students to learn the material by activate their background knowledge before got the explanation from the teacher.

Teaching reading comprehension in descriptive text is very exciting to students. Reading comprehension in descriptive text combine with activating background knowledge to get the new material by recall their knowledge that they already had. According to Maulida, background knowledge is building connections about information. Activating background knowledge suits with reading comprehension to make students think effectively.

From the results of the analysis of the mean score in post-test of the experimental class and the control class it was known that the mean score of experimental class 83,67 is higher than the control class 52,00. From this scores it is known that students reading comprehension are better if using activating background knowledge, where the teacher makes students interested in learning and also interested in reading comprehension.

From this, it can be seen that the use of activating background knowledge in MTsN 6 Agam gives a good effect on students, students who are enthusiastic in the learning process caused students to be more accustomed and better in reading comprehension.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The first is that there is significant effect of using activating background knowledge, this can be seen from the results of the mean scores of the students in the experimental class. It is known that the mean score of students on post-test results is higher than the mean score of students on control class post-test results. The mean score obtained by the students in the pre-test was 50,67 in experimental class while in the post

test was 83,67. The statement above is also supported by the result to 55,78 which is greater than t tab 1.706.

There is significant differences between students who are taught by using activating background knowledge. This is known from the mean score of post-test of students in the experimental class which is higher than the students in the control class. In the post-test students in the experimental class obtained an mean score of 83,67 while the control class got an mean score of 52,00. The statement above is also supported by the result to 49,48 which is greater than t tab.

The third is that reading comprehension who are taught by using activating background knowledge is better result than students who are taught without using activating background knowledge. Which is higher than the mean score of students in the control class.

From all the explanations above the researcher can conclude that the use of activating background knowledge has a significant effect on reading comprehension at MTsN 6 Agam.

Considering of the effect of activating background knowledge towards students' reading

comprehension in descriptive text, the researcher would like to give some suggestion as follows : 1) The researcher suggested that the teacher to use activating background knowledge in teaching and learning process for teaching English. 2) For researcher are expected to be able to deepen in the knowledge of the use of activating background knowledge. 3) Further researcher are suggested to conduct a research in the effect of activating background knowledge in teaching on another aspects in other context.

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