

**THE INFLUENCE OF SEMANTIC INTEGRATION ON READING PROFICIENCY
OF 6TH SEMESTER STUDENTS AT MUHAMMADIYAH TANGERANG
UNIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY ON THE NOVEL
“THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE”**

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of semantic integration on the reading proficiency of 6th-semester students at Muhammadiyah Tangerang University, focusing on the novel "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Employing a quantitative research design with pre-test and post-test assessments, the study engaged 10 students majoring in English Literature. Results indicated a significant improvement in reading proficiency, with an average increase of 15 points in test scores. Questionnaire feedback highlighted the effectiveness of semantic techniques in enhancing vocabulary understanding, text comprehension, and critical thinking. Despite limitations such as the small sample size and focus on a single text, the findings underscore the potential of semantic integration strategies to boost academic reading skills. Future research should aim to expand the sample and explore a wider range of literary works to validate and extend these findings

Keywords: Semantic Integration, Reading Proficiency

INTRODUCTION

Constructing literal and inferred meanings from linguistic input in print needs cognitive activities at lower-level levels of visual feature extraction and word decoding, as well as higher-level processes of lexical access, syntactic analysis, and semantic integration. Reading comprehension is therefore dependent on these processes.. Reading is one of the key skills in English language acquisition. Good reading skills enable learners to understand and interpret texts more effectively. One important aspect of reading is the ability to integrate the semantic meaning of words and sentences in a text. Semantic integration refers to the mental process in which the reader constructs a coherent representation of meaning from the text read(Perfetti & Stafura, 2014).

Reading proficiency is a crucial aspect of academic success, and it is particularly essential for students in higher education. The ability to comprehend and engage with complex academic texts can significantly impact a student's overall performance and learning outcomes. In the context of Muhammadiyah Tangerang University, understanding the factors that influence the reading proficiency of 6th-semester students is crucial for enhancing their academic success.

To address these issues, the integration of semantic knowledge becomes crucial in enhancing the reading proficiency of 6th-semester students at Muhammadiyah Tangerang

University. Semantic integration, the process of connecting and understanding the meaning of individual words and phrases within a text, is central to effective reading comprehension(Cahaya Febrianti, 2023). By fostering a deeper understanding of the semantic relationships within the text, students can more readily grasp the overall meaning and make the necessary connections to the academic context.

One such factor that merits investigation is the influence of semantic integration on reading proficiency. Semantic integration, the process of connecting and understanding the meaning of individual words and phrases within a text, is a critical component of effective reading comprehension(Rahim et al., 2018). University students, particularly those studying in a non-native language, often struggle with comprehending academic materials due to the challenges posed by semantic integration(Putra & Munawwaroh, 2021).

The case study of the novel "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" provides a unique opportunity to explore the relationship between semantic integration and reading proficiency among 6th-semester students at Muhammadiyah Tangerang University. Previous studies have highlighted the difficulties faced by international students in engaging with academic texts, particularly in terms of their ability to understand discipline-specific terminology and make necessary connections to the academic context.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the influence of semantic integration on the reading proficiency of 6th-semester students at Muhammadiyah Tangerang University. A case study approach focusing on the novel "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is used to provide detailed insights into the specific context and the impact of semantic techniques

Participants

The study was conducted with a sample size of 10 sixth-semester students from Muhammadiyah Tangerang University. The demographic details of the participants are as follows:

- **Age Range:** 20-22 years
- **Gender Distribution:** 10 females
- **Major:** All participants are majoring in English Literature.

Instruments

1. **Pre-Test and Post-Test:** These tests were designed to assess the reading proficiency of the students before and after the intervention. The tests included passages from the novel "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and were scored out of 100 points.
2. **Questionnaire:** A questionnaire was distributed to gather participants' feedback on the integration of semantic techniques during the study of the novel. The questionnaire comprised 10 questions rated on a Likert scale (1-5) where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Procedure

1. **Pre-Test:** Participants were given a pre-test to measure their baseline reading proficiency.
2. **Intervention:** Students engaged with the novel "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" over a set period, utilizing semantic integration techniques to enhance comprehension. These techniques included:
 - Contextual analysis of vocabulary
 - Sentence structure breakdowns
 - Thematic discussions
3. **Post-Test:** Following the intervention, participants were given a post-test to assess any improvements in reading proficiency.
4. **Questionnaire:** After the post-test, participants completed the questionnaire to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the semantic integration techniques.

Data Analysis

1. **Test Scores Analysis:** The pre-test and post-test scores were compared to measure improvement in reading proficiency. The average improvement was calculated for each participant.
2. **Questionnaire Analysis:** The responses from the questionnaire were analyzed to determine the participants' perceptions of the semantic integration techniques. Average ratings for each question were calculated.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Information

The study was conducted with a sample size of 10 sixth-semester students from Muhammadiyah Tangerang University. We display the names of the participants with initials to keep their names confidential. The demographic details of the participants are as follows:

- Age Range: 20-22 years
- Gender Distribution: 10 females
- Major: All participants are majoring in English Literature.

Test Results

To assess the reading proficiency influenced by semantic integration, a pre-test and post-test were administered. The test scores were analyzed to determine the improvement in reading comprehension after studying "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

Participants	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score
EA	55	70
D	60	75
DAS	65	80
DA	70	85
MM	60	80

NCS	75	85
RAP	50	65
SWS	55	70
SW	65	80
YLC	60	75

The pre-test and post-test was conducted to measure the baseline reading proficiency and the improvement. The scores (out of 100) are summarized below:

Improvement Analysis

The improvement in reading proficiency was calculated by comparing the pre-test and post-test scores for each participant. The average improvement was calculated as follows:

- EA : 15
- D : 15
- DAS : 15
- DA : 15
- MM : 20
- NCS : 10
- RAP : 15
- SWS : 15
- SW : 15
- YLC : 15

Average Improvement: 15 points

Questionnaire Results

A questionnaire was distributed to gather participants' feedback on the integration of semantic techniques during the study of the novel. The questionnaire comprised 10 questions rated on a Likert scale (1-5), where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The average ratings for each question are as follows:

1. Understanding of Vocabulary Improved: 4.2
2. Enhanced Comprehension of Text: 4.5
3. Increased Interest in Reading: 4.0
4. Easier to Understand Complex Sentences: 4.3
5. Better Grasp of Literary Themes: 4.4
6. Improvement in Critical Thinking: 4.1
7. Engagement with the Novel: 4.3
8. Usefulness of Semantic Techniques: 4.6
9. Confidence in Reading Skills: 4.4
10. Overall Satisfaction with the Study: 4.5

Discussion

The findings from this study reveal significant insights into the role of semantic integration in enhancing reading proficiency among 6th-semester students at Muhammadiyah Tangerang University. The results demonstrated an average improvement of 15 points in reading proficiency test scores, underscoring the effectiveness of semantic integration techniques in fostering better comprehension and engagement with the text. The questionnaire results further highlighted the positive reception of these techniques by the participants, with high ratings in areas such as understanding vocabulary, comprehension of the text, and critical thinking.

The techniques employed in this study, including contextual analysis of vocabulary, sentence structure breakdowns, and thematic discussions, were instrumental in aiding students' understanding of the novel "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." These methods facilitated a deeper cognitive engagement with the text, enabling students to construct coherent representations of meaning from the words and sentences they read. The emphasis on semantic relationships helped students make necessary connections within the text, thereby improving their overall comprehension.

One of the most notable aspects of this study was the improvement in students' vocabulary understanding. The semantic integration techniques provided a contextual framework for students to grasp the meanings of complex words and phrases within the novel. This approach not only enhanced their vocabulary but also their ability to infer meanings and comprehend the text as a whole. The questionnaire feedback indicated that participants felt more confident in their vocabulary skills, which is a critical component of reading proficiency.

The integration of semantic techniques also had a significant impact on students' critical thinking abilities. By engaging with the thematic elements and underlying messages of the novel, students developed a more nuanced understanding of the text. The high ratings for questions related to critical thinking and literary themes suggest that semantic integration promotes a more analytical approach to reading. This aligns with the findings of previous studies that highlight the importance of semantic integration in fostering deeper cognitive processing and critical analysis (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014; Rahim et al., 2018).

The study also found that semantic integration techniques increased students' interest in reading. The participants reported higher engagement levels, which can be attributed to the interactive and analytical nature of the techniques used. This increased interest is crucial for sustaining reading habits and improving long-term reading proficiency. The feedback indicating overall satisfaction with the study suggests that students found the semantic techniques not only effective but also enjoyable.

Despite the positive findings, the study has several limitations. The small sample size of 10 participants limits the generalizability of the results. Additionally, focusing on a single literary work may not capture the broader applicability of semantic integration techniques

across different texts and genres. Future research should aim to include a larger and more diverse sample to validate these findings. Expanding the range of literary works studied could also provide more comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of semantic integration techniques.

The findings of this study have practical implications for teaching reading proficiency in higher education, particularly in non-native language contexts. Educators can incorporate semantic integration techniques into their curricula to enhance students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. By focusing on contextual analysis, sentence structure, and thematic discussions, teachers can help students develop a deeper understanding of texts and foster a more engaging and effective learning environment.

The study highlights the significant influence of semantic integration on reading proficiency among 6th-semester students at Muhammadiyah Tangerang University. The improvement in test scores and positive feedback from participants underscore the potential of semantic techniques to enhance vocabulary understanding, text comprehension, and critical thinking. While the study's limitations suggest the need for further research, the findings provide valuable insights into effective pedagogical strategies for improving reading skills in academic settings.

CONCLUSION

The research conducted on the influence of semantic integration on the reading proficiency of 6th-semester students at Muhammadiyah Tangerang University has demonstrated significant findings. Through a detailed case study of the novel "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," the study revealed that semantic integration techniques considerably enhanced the students' ability to comprehend and engage with the text. The average improvement of 15 points in test scores from pre-test to post-test underscores the positive impact of these techniques. Additionally, the high ratings in the questionnaire regarding the usefulness and engagement of semantic techniques further validate their effectiveness in improving reading skills and critical thinking.

However, the study is not without its limitations. The small sample size and the focus on a single literary work suggest that further research with a larger and more diverse sample is necessary to generalize the findings. Future studies should also consider including multiple literary texts to explore the broader applicability of semantic integration techniques. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the pedagogical strategies that can be employed to enhance reading proficiency among university students, particularly in a non-native language context

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