

The Effect of Yu-Gi-Oh! Trading Card Game (TCG)-Generated Complex Sentences on EFL Reading Comprehension of XI Usaha Layanan Pariwisata (ULP) Students at SMK PGRI 2 Kudus

Muhammad Naufal Farezqi

Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-generated complex sentences on EFL reading comprehension at 11th students of SMK PGRI 2 Kudus. A mixed-methods research design was employed, involving intact class consist of 32 students assigned to a pre-experimental research design. The effect size analysis revealed a very large practical impact of the intervention (Cohen's $d = 2.275$), demonstrating the substantial effectiveness of YuGiOh TCG-Generated complexes sentences in enhancing reading comprehension. Qualitative findings further supported the quantitative results, revealing the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the use of Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG in the reading classroom are positives as an innovative bridge between difficult grammar and student interest. The observable behaviors and quality of interactions characterize the learning environment during Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-based reading activities successfully transform the classroom into an active, low-difficulty, and highly collaborative learning community. Overall, the study concludes that Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-generated complex sentences is an effective media to increase students reading comprehension in English as a Foreign Language learning content.

Keywords: Effect, Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-generated complex sentences, EFL, reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly at the secondary school level where students are expected to engage with increasingly complex texts. However, many EFL learners continue to experience difficulties in interpreting such syntactically dense sentences, which negatively affects their overall reading comprehension and academic performance. Previous research has consistently shown that limited ability to process complex syntactic structures constitutes a major barrier to successful reading comprehension in EFL contexts (Grabe & Stoller, 2019).

One contributing factor to this challenge is the persistent reliance on conventional reading materials and teacher-centered instructional approaches. Textbooks often present decontextualized passages that fail to connect with students' interests or everyday experiences. This condition frequently leads to low engagement, surface-level reading strategies, and limited motivation to process complex grammatical structures deeply.

Conventional media, such as textbooks and printed materials (newspaper, magazine, etc), have long been regarded as essential

tools for structured and reliable content delivery. A previous study held by Damanik (2017) found that the use of newspapers as authentic materials in the teaching of a foreign language is not necessarily appropriate for all students at all levels. Another study by Febriansyah, et.al (2024) explained conventional resources such as textbooks and printed handouts do not offer the same level of engagement as digital tools.

In recent years, this issue has been further intensified by changing learner characteristics in the digital and post-pandemic era. This research is crucial for providing an alternative medium as a solution to these difficulties, one of the such medium is game. Research on game-based and media-rich learning environments indicates that students demonstrate higher engagement and sustained attention when instructional content is embedded in familiar and interactive contexts (Gee, 2003; Peterson et al., 2021). Consequently, educators are increasingly encouraged to explore student-centered approaches that integrate culturally relevant artifacts into classroom instruction to support deeper engagement with complex reading tasks.

One instructional approach that has gained scholarly attention is game-based learning (GBL). Research consistently demonstrates that game-based learning environments can enhance student motivation, engagement, and language learning outcomes when aligned with instructional objectives (Wibowo et al., 2024). In EFL contexts, gamification and educational games have been shown to foster active participation and improve reading comprehension by creating low-anxiety, interactive learning conditions (Qomariyah & Taufiq, 2025).

Most existing studies on game-based learning in EFL reading focus on digital games, quizzes, or gamified platforms such as Quizizz and Wordwall. These studies report significant gains in students' reading comprehension and motivation, particularly when learners are encouraged to interact

with texts through competition, collaboration, and immediate feedback (Pratiwi, 2025; Diksi: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa, n.d.). Systematic reviews further confirm that game-based learning contributes positively to ESL and EFL reading outcomes across various educational levels (Earichappan & Hashim, H, 2024).

Studies conducted in Indonesian and international contexts indicate that card games can improve vocabulary mastery, learner interaction, and engagement through repetitive exposure and social negotiation of meaning (Armelia et al., 2024; Cheok & Ali, 2024). These findings suggest that non-digital games can function as effective, low-cost instructional tools in classrooms with limited technological resources.

However, existing card-game-based studies primarily focus on vocabulary learning among elementary or lower-secondary students. They rarely address reading comprehension or the processing of complex syntactic structures. As a result, the potential of card games to support higher-order reading skills remains underexplored, particularly at the senior high school level.

Within this context, Trading Card Games (TCGs) such as *Yu-Gi-Oh!* present a unique yet underutilized opportunity for EFL reading instruction. *Yu-Gi-Oh!* TCG cards contain dense textual descriptions characterized by conditional statements, procedural sequences, logical connectors, and multi-clause constructions. Linguistically, these texts resemble authentic instructional and academic discourse, making them a potentially rich source of complex sentence exposure for EFL learners.

Preliminary research related to *Yu-Gi-Oh!* TCG in educational contexts suggests positive outcomes in learner engagement and vocabulary learning. For instance, Na'imum (2025) reported that players' experience with *Yu-Gi-Oh!* contributed to increased vocabulary familiarity. Additionally, instructional media development studies in Indonesia have

validated Yu-Gi-Oh! cards as engaging learning tools in classroom settings (Hidayat et al., 2022).

Furthermore, prior research has not sufficiently explored classroom interaction patterns, learner perceptions, or teacher perspectives when trading card game (TCG) materials are integrated into formal EFL reading instruction. Existing studies on game-based language learning have predominantly focused on learning outcomes or motivational effects, often overlooking the social and interactional processes that occur during classroom implementation. Understanding these dimensions is particularly important within the Indonesian Kurikulum Merdeka, which emphasizes contextual learning, student agency, collaboration, and meaningful interaction as core pedagogical principles. Without qualitative insights into how learners and teachers experience and negotiate such instructional innovations, quantitative findings on learning outcomes provide only a partial account of instructional effectiveness (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Based on the reviewed literature, several research gaps are evident. First, there is limited empirical evidence on the effect of TCG-generated complex sentences on EFL reading comprehension. Second, few studies employ a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative measurement of comprehension gains with qualitative exploration of learner perceptions and classroom behavior. Third, research examining game-based reading instruction at the senior high school level in Indonesia remains scarce.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the effect of Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-generated complex sentences on vocational high school EFL students' reading comprehension through a mixed-method research design. Quantitatively, the study examines differences in reading comprehension between experimental and control groups through pre-test and post-test

measures. Qualitatively, it explores students' and teachers' perceptions as well as observable classroom interactions during TCG-based reading activities.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of EFL reading instruction by offering empirical evidence on the pedagogical value of trading card game texts. The study also aims to support teachers in designing more engaging, contextually relevant reading activities aligned with Kurikulum Merdeka, while enriching academic discourse on game-based learning, syntactic complexity, and reading comprehension in EFL contexts.

METHODS

The researcher employed a pre-experimental design. A single group pre-test-post-test design was used, which is a quasi-experimental research approach where the same dependent variable is measured in one group of participants before (pre-test) and after (post-test) administering a treatment.

This study will be conducted with a total of 32 eleventh-grade EFL students from a Vocational high school (SMK) in SMK 2 PGRI Kudus. Additionally, 2 to 3 EFL teachers from the same school will participate through purposive sampling. Selected teachers must have a minimum of three years of teaching experience and have expressed openness to innovative, game-based pedagogy.

To address the research questions comprehensively, this study employs a set of quantitative and qualitative research instruments aligned with the mixed-methods design. They are reading comprehension test, questionnaire, interview guide and classroom observation checklist. The research procedure will be executed over a 10-week period, structured into four sequential phases to ensure methodological rigor, clear implementation, and comprehensive data collection

FINDING & DISCUSSION

To ensure that the research instrument accurately measures students' learning outcomes, an item validity test was performed on the pretest and posttest questions. The calculation compared the corrected item-total correlation value (r_{count}) against the (r_{table}) value of 0.349 ($N = 32$). The item validity test was conducted for a total of 50 questions (Q1 to Q50) using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation formula. With a sample size of 32 respondents ($N = 32$) and a significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$), the critical value threshold for the Pearson table (r_{table}) is 0.349. An item is declared statistically valid if its corrected item-total correlation value (r_{count}) is greater than 0.349 ($r_{count} > 0.349$). Out of the 50 items tested in the pretest, 21 items got the validity criteria, while the remaining 29 items were declared invalid. In the posttest, 22 items were found classified valid, while 28 items were classified as invalid.

To determine the stability and consistency of the test items, a reliability test was performed for the 32 respondents. The data was calculated using the Cronbach's Alpha formula in SPSS. The instrument achieves a reliable status since the resulting coefficient exceeded the minimum requirement of 0.60. Pretest carried out on the 22 valid items in a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.850 ($0.850 > 0.60$), the pretest instrument is Reliable.

While for the posttest phase was carried out on the 22 valid items in a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.850 ($0.850 > 0.60$), the posttest instrument is Reliable. Both the pretest and posttest instruments achieved identical and excellent Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.850. According to the standard measurement scales, an Alpha score within the range of 0.80 to 0.90 indicates a Very High level of internal consistency.

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T-Test aims to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in students' reading comprehension before and after the implementation of the media.

Table 1 T-Test Result

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PreTest - PostTest	-25.656	11.278	1.994	-29.723	-21.590	-12.868	31	.000

To evaluate the level of effectiveness of the implemented YuGiOh-TCG Complex Sentence, an effect size test was conducted. The evaluation utilized the Cohen's d

method, which categorizes the magnitude of effect into small, medium, or large. The result of this effect size analysis for the 32 respondents is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 2 Paired Samples Effect Sizes

		Point Estimate	95% confidence interval	
			Lower	Upper
Pair 1	Pre-test Post test	Cohens	-2,275	-2,854
		Hedges Correction	-2,220	-2,785

Based on the table 1 above it can be seen that according to the standardized criteria established by Jacob Cohen. For the 32 respondents resulting value of 2.275 is exponentially higher than the minimum benchmark for a large effect ($2.275 > 0.80$). This statistical evidence proves that the implemented of YuGiOh TCG-Complex Sentence provides large effect on students' achievement. It confirms that the YuGiOh TCG-Complex Sentence is an exceptionally effective and highly recommended instructional tool for improving student reading comprehension in this subject.

The statistical analysis clearly shows that using Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-generated complex sentences bring benefits to high-school EFL students' reading comprehension. Yu-Gi-Oh! cards are famous for having very long, condensed, and complicated text. Each card contains real English complex sentences (using adverbial clauses, relative clauses, and conditional statements like "If... then..."). In a normal English class, students often find complex sentences boring and difficult. However, because these sentences are part of a game, students are highly motivated to read and analyzed the text carefully to understand the card's effect and win the match.

When students read Yu-Gi-Oh! cards, they are not just memorizing grammar rules; they are applying them in a practical situation. To play the game correctly, the students had to identify the main clauses and subordinate clauses within the card descriptions. This active parsing practice directly trained their brains to handle difficult English texts, which explains why their posttest scores jumped so significantly.

The success of this media is fully supported by the data. The Paired Sample T-Test (Sig. 0.000) proves that the improvement did not

happen by accident. Furthermore, the Cohen's ($d = 2.275$) proves that the game is an exceptionally effective media. It does not just create a small difference; it creates a massive shift in how well students can comprehend English readings.

From the explanation above it can be said that Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-generated complex sentences as a good media in teaching reading comprehension because it makes complicated grammar into an exciting, interactive learning experience that substantially upgrades high-school EFL students' reading comprehension skills.

This finding aligns with Larsen-Freeman (2003) theory of Grammmaring. She argues that grammar should not be taught as a set of rigid, abstract rules to memorize. Instead, it must be acquired as a dynamic skill through meaningful practice in a real context. In this study, the Yu-Gi-Oh! cards served as the perfect contextual tool. Krashen (1985) Input Hypothesis states that language acquisition happens best when learners receive "comprehensible input" ($i+1$) that is slightly above their current level, provided in a stress-free environment. Although the complex sentences on the cards were initially intimidating and frustrating for the students, the visual prompts on the cards and the rule-based context of the game made this difficult input comprehensible and absorbable.

Both student respondents confessed that they were forced to read the text with high accuracy because a single misunderstanding could lead to making a wrong choice and losing the match. This behaviour explains the high reading scores in the posttest. That reality supports Gee (2003) Theory of Video Games and Learning. Gee emphasizes that games are effective educational spaces because they create a "situated meaning." In a traditional textbook, students read

passively to answer comprehension questions later. In a Trading Card Game (TCG), students read actively because the text has an immediate, functional purpose. Understanding the syntax and vocabulary directly influences their actions and survival in the game. This goal-directed reading naturally triggers what Afflerbach et al., (2008) describe as mindful reading strategies, where learners automatically monitor their own understanding and re-read difficult sentences to achieve a specific goal.

Classroom observations and interviews showed that the 8 small groups created a highly collaborative learning environment. Advanced students naturally explained difficult vocabulary (such as negate, tribute, banish) to weaker peers using simple game-related examples. That collaborative interaction is a clear demonstration of Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky states that learners can solve much more complex problems when working under peer guidance or collaboration than when working alone. The game structure naturally facilitated this peer-led assistance. In addition, discussing strategies helped students speak and read English more naturally without fearing mistakes. This phenomenon perfectly mirrors Krashen, S. (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. When a student's difficulty is low, and their motivation is high, the "filter" goes down, allowing the brain to process and acquire difficult language inputs like complex sentences much faster and more permanently. This explains the exceptionally large Effect Size ($d = 2.275$) generated by the treatment.

Finally, the teacher's perception highlighted that while the TCG mechanism is an outstanding vehicle for active reading, the fantasy vocabulary is not directly relevant to the vocational school (SMK) tourism curriculum. The teacher recommended replacing the fantasy texts with career-oriented topics like local traditions and

historical landmarks. That expert reflection is highly compatible with the core principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) by Hutchinson & Waters (1987). They state that learning materials for vocational learners must be driven by a needs analysis that directly connects classroom tasks with the students' future target needs. By maintaining the engaging strategic framework of the TCG but modifying the texts to fit tourism-related contexts, teachers can be fulfilled both the grammatical requirements of the 11th-grade curriculum and the professional needs of SMK students. To provide a comprehensive explanation for the statistical success found in this study, it is essential to analyze the qualitative data from the student and teacher interviews. The participants' lived experiences and perceptions directly explain why the students' scores grew significantly (Sig. 0.000) and why the learning method generated such a powerful impact (Cohen's $d = 2.275$).

The integration between the statistical data and the interview responses reveals three core thematic dimensions:

1. Transforming cognitive intimidation into meaningful active reading

The statistical data from the Paired Sample T-Test ($t = -12.868$) proves that the posttest scores were substantially higher than the pretest scores. The interviews explain that this improvement happened because the game flipped the students' reading habits from passive to active. In a conventional classroom, long and complex sentences are often ignored by students. However, Respondent 1 stated that in Yu-Gi-Oh!, "the information affected the game immediately... understanding the text helped me make decisions." Respondent 2 also added that they needed to "understand the text immediately because it affected my decisions in the game." This matches the statistical reality: students had a high-stakes, practical purpose to read. If they read a complex sentence too quickly or misunderstood it, they lost an advantage or

lost the match entirely (as experienced by Respondent 2). Therefore, the game environment forced students to read carefully, which naturally improved their reading comprehension and accuracy.

2. Overcoming grammar and specialized vocabulary barriers

The Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.850) proved that the items measuring complex structures were highly stable. The interviews show that the repetitive mechanics of the game successfully helped students master these complex patterns, especially conditional sentences. Both respondents highlighted that card effects heavily rely on conditional structures like "If this card is destroyed..." or "When this card is summoned...". Respondent 1 noted, "Because I saw these patterns repeatedly, I became more familiar with how they work." Furthermore, although the specialized vocabulary (e.g., tribute, negate, banish, activate) was initially a major obstacle and a source of frustration, the rule-based nature of the game helped students acquire these words quickly. Once the vocabulary barrier was broken, parsing the longer, complex sentences became much easier for the students.

3. Reducing speaking difficulty and enhancing peer collaboration

The single-group classroom environment (N = 32) became highly interactive because of peer collaboration. Respondent 1 mentioned that when they encountered difficult words, their friends "explained the meaning using simple examples, which was easier to understand than looking it up in a dictionary." Interestingly, discussing game strategies also served as a natural bridge for communicative practice. Respondent 1 observed that discussing strategies in English felt different because "the conversation had a real purpose... I spoke more naturally and worried less about grammar." This collaborative learning atmosphere reduced classroom difficulty and kept students highly focused, which

supports the massive Effect Size (Cohen's $d = 2.275$) found in the quantitative data.

4. Teacher's curricular reflection is moving toward career-oriented content

While the statistical data proves that Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-generated complex sentences are highly effective, the teacher's interview points out an important direction for future implementation. The teacher acknowledged that the game creates an excellent, authentic reason for students to engage with tough English texts, which is usually hard to achieve. However, the teacher emphasized that the massive drawback is the heavy workload and preparation time required by the instructor. To solve this and make the method more sustainable, the teacher suggested adapting the game structure into a tourism-focused curriculum. The teacher recommended "replacing the original cards with larger flash cards that contain bigger text and simplified language," and redesigning them to feature "famous tourist destinations, cultural attractions, local traditions, and historical landmarks."

Malone & Lepper (1987) regarding intrinsic motivation in games. They state that educational games succeed when they provide challenge, curiosity, and a sense of control. By trying to solve the complex sentence puzzle to win a match, students took full control of their own learning process. Furthermore, Mubaslat (2012) and Sadiman et al. (2010) reinforce that game-based media acts as a catalyst that reduces foreign language difficulty (mental blocks). This experience aligns with the renowned vocabulary acquisition theory by Nation (2022), who states that vocabulary is learned most effectively when it is encountered repeatedly in a rich, meaningful communicative context rather than through isolated list memorization. Suyanto (2010) pointed out that Indonesian students frequently struggle with reading accuracy because school materials lack an immediate real-world purpose. By introducing Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG, the complex conditional syntax

was transformed into a "situated instructional guide." Students looked up words in the glossary because they needed to know the rules, which perfectly explains the highly consistent mastery found in the study's quantitative results.

The data showed a high quality of peer interactions, where advanced students routinely helped weaker classmates decode long card descriptions. Respondent 1 explicitly stated that learning from friends using simple game examples was much easier than using a traditional dictionary. This is a practical demonstration of Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism and Bruner's (1983) concept of Scaffolding. Learners achieve higher cognitive milestones when assisted by more capable peers. As noted by Lie (2002) local students thrive and feel much more secure when learning in a collaborative group structure. The Yu-Gi-Oh! group activities created a low-stakes environment where students could ask questions and help each other without feeling embarrassed or judged by the teacher.

The teacher perceived Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG as an outstanding innovation for classroom engagement but raised two practical concerns: the high workload required for teacher preparation and the lack of relevance between fantasy text and the vocational school (SMK) career goals. The teacher recommended modifying the cards to feature tourism-related content. This view aligns internationally with Hutchinson & Waters (1987) on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which mandates that vocational learning must be directly tailored to the students' future career needs.

It is relevant to the current directives of the Indonesian Ministry of Education (Kemendikbudristek) regarding the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka in vocational schools (SMK). Wardiman (1998) stated that SMK English materials must achieve "Link and Match" with the industry. By maintaining the engaging, rule-based strategic mechanics of the Yu-Gi-Oh!

TCG but replacing the text with local landmarks, historical sites, and hospitality vocabulary, teachers can be successfully fulfilled both the grammatical requirements of Class 11 and the professional future of Indonesian tourism students.

The impact of the treatment as proven by the Cohen's d effect size of 2.275 was driven by the unique atmosphere of the classroom. During the implementation of the Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-based reading activities, the learning environment was characterized by highly positive observable student behavior and a high quality of peer interactions.

The impact of the treatment as proven by the Cohen's d effect size of 2.275 was driven by the unique atmosphere of the classroom. During the implementation of the Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-based reading activities, the learning environment was characterized by highly positive observable student behaviours and a high quality of peer interactions. Unlike traditional reading sessions where students often look passive or distracted, the Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG activities triggered several distinct, productive behaviors that could be clearly observed in the classroom:

1. Intensive Textual Scanning

Students were observed leaning forward, pointing at individual words, and reading the card text multiple times. Because a small misunderstanding of a conditional clause ("If/When") could lead to losing a match, students naturally developed a habit of close, focused reading (reading accuracy).

2. Spontaneous Glossary Consulting

When students encountered unfamiliar technical words (such as negate, tribute, or banish), they actively searched for definitions in the provided vocabulary sheet. This self-directed behavior explains why vocabulary barriers were broken down quickly without requiring constant teacher lectures.

3. Emotional Investment

There was a visible display of excitement, pride, and sometimes healthy frustration

during the duels. For instance, as mentioned in the interviews, students showed genuine pride when they successfully activated a complex card effect entirely on their own.

The interaction among the 32 students shifted from simple classroom chatting to meaningful, goal-oriented communication. The quality of these interactions can be categorized into two main types:

1. Peer Scaffolding (Helping each other)

The classroom turned into a collaborative space where advanced students naturally helped lower-achieving peers. Instead of relying solely on the teacher, students used simple, practical game examples to explain long sentences to their friends. This matches Respondent 1's statement that friends explained difficult meanings using simple game rules, which was easier to understand than a dictionary.

2. Purposeful English Communication

When discussing game strategies, the students' interactions were driven by a real desire to win, not just to finish a classroom assignment. Students used technical terms naturally and focused entirely on sharing ideas. This lowered their speaking difficulty, causing them to speak more fluently and worry less about making grammatical mistakes.

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During the reading sessions, students displayed clear behavioural markers of deep focus: they leaned forward, pointed at the card texts, re-read complex sentences, and independently checked the vocabulary glossary sheet. This behaviour stands in stark contrast to traditional reading classes, where passive disengagement is common. This intense cognitive focus aligns with Csikszentmihalyi (1990). He states that a person enters a state of "flow" (complete immersion and focus) when a task provides a perfect balance between challenge and skill, backed by immediate feedback. In this

study, the Yu-Gi-Oh! card texts provided that exact challenge. Students did not read to pass a test; they read to survive the duel, driving their intentional focus. Zaini, Munthe, and Aryani (2008) argue that effective learning happens when students do things themselves such as analyse, decoding, and executing text instructions rather than just listening to a teacher. Furthermore, Arsyad (2011) reinforces that well-designed visual-linguistic media captures students' attention spans and sustains their learning stamina. The pictures and strategic mechanics of the cards acted as a powerful hook that kept the 32 SMK students cognitively invested in reading long English sentences without getting bored.

The interactions among the students shifted from casual peer chatter to high-quality, task-oriented collaboration. Advanced students routinely helped lower-achieving peers decode conditional structures ("If/When" clauses), using practical game scenarios as clear examples. Long (1996) states that language acquisition is strongly accelerated when learners engage in "negotiation for meaning" during a communicative breakdown. When a student was confused by a card effect, the group had to negotiate and clarify the grammar until everyone understood.

Topping (2005) states that learning from a peer reduces cognitive stress and makes difficult academic input much easier to absorb. Anita Lie (2002) explain Indonesian students are naturally collectivistic and learn best when they can cooperate in a supportive community. The Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG structure successfully tapped into this local cultural strength. Instead of competing destructively, the small groups ($N=32$ divided into 8 groups) worked as a collaborative team to solve the language puzzle, creating a safe, low-difficulty environment that explains the highly stable reliability scores (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.850) across the board.

CONCLUSION

The effect of Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-generated complex sentences on high-school EFL students' reading comprehension at the 11th Grade of SMKN PGRI Kudus is significant proven by Paired Sample T-Test results $t_{\text{value}} -12.868$ and significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), meaning the posttest scores were substantially higher than the pretest scores. Cohen's d calculation an exceptionally high effect size coefficient of 2.275. The perceptions of students and teachers regarding the use of Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG in the reading classroom are positives as an innovative bridge between difficult grammar and student interest. The rule-based nature of the duels gave them a direct, practical purpose to read and decode complex conditional structures ("if/when" clauses) accurately to make strategic in-game decisions. The teacher perceived the media as an excellent vehicle for contextual grammar delivery that boosted classroom engagement. The observable behaviors and quality of interactions characterize the learning environment during Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG-based reading activities successfully transform the classroom into an active, low-difficulty, and highly collaborative learning community. Students demonstrated a high level of cognitive stamina and intentional focus, visible through spontaneous actions such as pointing at card texts, close re-reading, and voluntary consultation of the vocabulary glossary sheets. Teachers encouraged to utilize strategic card games like Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG as an alternative instructional media to teach complex reading structures and grammar, as it is statistically proven to reduce students' learning difficulty. For vocational high schools (SMK), teachers should modify the text on the cards to match the students' major. For tourism students, it is recommended to redesign the cards to feature local landmarks, cultural traditions, and hospitality scenarios while keeping the exciting game mechanics intact.

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