

ENHANCING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION OF NARRATIVE TEXTS USING THE STRATEGY OF STORY MAPPING

Rijalul Fawaid¹, Wijayadi², Nur Fitriah³

Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya

rija.fawaid01@gmail.com, wijayabingumsby@gmail.com, chaniafitriah1018@gmail.com

Abstract : This study aims to improve students' reading comprehension of narrative texts through the implementation of the Story Mapping Strategy. The research subjects were 35 students of class X-09 at SMAN 17 Surabaya. The method used was Classroom Action Research (CAR) following the model of Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), which consists of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection in two cycles. Data was collected through reading comprehension tests (pre-test and post-test), observations, and interviews. The result of research showed a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after applying the Story Mapping Strategy. The students' average score increased from 61,5 in the pre-test to 83,1 in the post-test of the second cycle. Additionally, the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) increased from 24 % to 85,7 %. The Story Mapping that implemented helped students effectively organize information from narrative texts, thereby enhancing their comprehension. This strategy allowed students to identify key elements of the story, such as characters, setting, and plot, which contributed to their understanding of the narrative text. Based on findings, Story Mapping has been proven to be an effective strategy in teaching reading comprehension of narrative texts at the high school level. Therefore, this strategy is recommended for teachers to enhance students' reading comprehension skills.

Keywords : Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text, Story Mapping Strategy

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman membaca siswa terhadap teks naratif melalui penerapan *Story Mapping Strategy* (Strategi Pemetaan Cerita). Subjek penelitian ini adalah 35 siswa kelas X-09 di SMAN 17 Surabaya. Metode yang digunakan adalah *Classroom Action Research* (Penelitian Tindakan Kelas) dengan mengacu pada model Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), yang terdiri dari tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi dalam dua siklus. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui tes pemahaman membaca (pre-test dan post-test), observasi, dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kemampuan pemahaman membaca siswa setelah penerapan *Story Mapping Strategy*. Rata-rata nilai siswa meningkat dari 61,5 pada pre-test menjadi 83,1 pada post-test siklus kedua. Selain itu, persentase siswa yang mencapai Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM) meningkat dari 24% menjadi 85,7%. *Story Mapping* yang diterapkan membantu siswa dalam mengorganisasi informasi dari teks naratif secara efektif, sehingga meningkatkan pemahaman mereka. Strategi ini memungkinkan siswa untuk mengidentifikasi unsur-unsur utama cerita, seperti tokoh, latar, dan alur, yang berkontribusi terhadap pemahaman mereka terhadap teks naratif. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, *Story Mapping* terbukti menjadi strategi yang efektif dalam pembelajaran pemahaman membaca teks naratif di tingkat sekolah menengah. Oleh karena itu, strategi ini direkomendasikan bagi guru untuk meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman membaca siswa.

Kata kunci: Pemahaman Membaca, Teks Naratif, Strategi *Story Mapping*

INTRODUCTION

As foreign language, English plays an important role for Indonesian students, as it will be essential for them to interact and engage in global competition in the coming years. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the ability on using English effectively will help them build good communication with individuals from various

countries. Therefore, it is very important that Indonesian students should develop strong proficiency in all four fundamental language skill such as speaking, listening, , reading, and writing so student can participate confidently and competently in international settings.

Of all the language skills, reading is the most useful skill for students because it increases information and knowledge. Skills in reading English texts have been considered crucial (Hamdani, 2020). In general, reading is the process of obtaining information from written words. Reading texts usually aim to help readers understand the author's ideas. Reading is not merely a process of grasping the meaning of printed words, it also involves visual word recognition skills. Therefore, reading involves interpreting and understanding texts correctly, including main ideas. meaning, purpose, and other important information.

Through reading, readers can understand the content of a text, identify the main idea, and grasp the core of the reading material. According to Tang et al. (2019), the purpose of reading comprehension is to obtain an understanding of meaning after reading. To understand a text, a reader must be able to identify words quickly, understand each meanings, and connect units of meaning into a coherent message. Each person needs to understand what they reads because reading is an essential skill contributing to one's success in order to accurately acquire and understand ideas and information, readers must engage in effective reading practices to knowing the main ideas of the reading material. A reader should understand the content of the text and recognize the author's intended message. Therefore, the organization and writing style of a text also influence one's comprehension.

The major goal of reading is comprehension. Reading comprehension is the process of understanding, evaluating, and recognizing the author's ideas in a text. A reader needs comprehension to grasp the message or information conveyed in the text. Snow (2002:11) defines reading comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language."

Comprehension is an active process. Active reading involves interacting with information and creating an internal dialogue with the material. Readers are expected to engage actively with the text to construct meaning. Kendeou et al. (2007:28) state that a common component in many definitions of comprehension is the interpretation of textual information, the use of prior knowledge to interpret this information, and ultimately, the construction of a coherent mental representation of what the text is about. One important factor in improving reading comprehension is becoming an active reader.

Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from a text. Students who have better reading comprehension skills can easily understand the information and implied meaning in texts. This means that to succeed in reading comprehension, readers must motivate themselves to focus on reading, try to form mental frameworks for storing ideas, and adopt effective reading techniques. Snow (2002:11) also defines reading comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language". The process of comprehension involves decoding the writer's words and then using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer's message.

Perfetti and Stafura (2014) state that text comprehension is a complex cognitive skill where the reader ought to put up meaning by utilizing all the available resources from both the text and prior knowledge. It is the ultimate goal of reading—if we do not focus reading to understand, then reading is meaningless. Comprehension requires the reader to be an active constructor of meaning. This means that in reading comprehension, students are expected to actively create their own interpretations as an effort to search and analyze meaning from the text. At the senior school level, students are hope for comprehend various types of texts. Based on the school-based curriculum, students must master different text types, including procedural, recount, narrative, descriptive and report texts.

Based on the researcher's teaching experience at SMAN 17 Surabaya, many students struggle to comprehend narrative texts. The result of interview with an English teacher at SMAN 17 Surabaya revealed that students struggle to understand the finding the idea of narrative texts, conclude moral lesson, and present the information they read. Additionally, the teacher states that students require more time to analyze and comprehend texts. While reading is an basic skill, it showed one of the most challenging to teach and learn in the classroom. These challenges become the basis discussion of this research.

Narrative text is a text that tells a sequence of imaginative events based on real or fiction story. The structure consists of orientation, complication, resolution and reorientation. The students are unable to identify the major elements of a narrative text, such as setting, characters, conflict, goals, and moral lesson. As a result, they cannot extract detailed information from the text. When asked to answer some questions related to the narrative text, most students fail to provide correct answers.

The difficulty in reading may also lead the learners to loose track of their thoughts and understand the text or read it fluently (Mahapatra, 2016). To understanding a text effectively, students not only need a good mastery of English but also appropriate reading strategies. Therefore, in this study, the researcher is interested in providing a solution to help students improve their reading comprehension, especially on narrative texts. This research was conducted by applying one of strategy, namely Story Mapping, which uses a graphic organizer to help students identify the major elements of a story.

Story Mapping is a technique used after reading a story. It provides a visual structure that helps students organize information, analyze story elements, and connect events correctly. Syafii (2021) and Murtdalo and Ekorini (2025) stated that identifying story grammar elements through story mapping improves comprehension abilities. A Story Map is a visual representation of the setting, characters, series of events and actions of story characters. This method enables students to connect story events and perceive the structure of literary texts. Considering the advantages offered by the Story Mapping strategy, the researcher is motivated to implement this approach as a means to address students' difficulties in understanding English texts, particularly narrative texts. The researcher aims to implement the story mapping strategy on these comprehension challenges by carrying out a classroom action research project. This study is specifically implemented to enhance students' abilities in reading comprehension through the applying of the Story Mapping strategy in the teaching and learning process.

In this study, the first step in implementing the Story Mapping Strategy was distributing a Story Map outline to students and explaining how to use the strategy in reading. The Story Map outline used was designed by Idol in 1987, covering story components such as setting (characters, time, and place), the problem in the story, the goal that the characters want to achieve, the actions taken by the characters to solve the problem and reach their goal, and finally, the outcome where the problem is resolved.

After implementing the Story Map, students are hope for comprehend the components of a narrative text and analyze and understand the main idea of the story. After completing the reading, students are required to fill out a story map based on their understanding of the text. When students demonstrated at least 90 percent accuracy in completing the story maps, the pre-reading instruction on story elements was discontinued. From that point forward, students independently read the passages and completed the story maps on their own. The researcher believes that the Story Mapping Strategy can help students understand and comprehend the narrative text. By using this strategy in their reading, students can break down each part of the story and place them in a structured Story Map. concluded that the Story Mapping strategy is effective in enhancing students' reading comprehension. Potale at al. (2025) state that story mapping provided several benefits such as Enhanced comprehension, familiarization with story elements, character analysis, and increased motivation. The significant improvements in each aspect of comprehension indicate that this strategy helps students better organize information, allowing them to understand texts more effectively.

Considering the advantages mentioned above, the researcher is confident that the story mapping strategy can significantly assist students in comprehending narrative texts. Through this approach, students become more capable of identifying key narrative components. Understanding the elements of a story enhances students' grasp of the narrative. When learners can identify characters, settings, conflicts, events, and resolutions, they become more engaged with the story and are likely to pay greater attention to its details. As a result, recognizing the fundamental parts of a story leads to stronger reading comprehension.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was implemented by using Classroom Action Research (CAR), which aimed to improve and modify the learning process in the classroom. In conducting action research, the researcher needed to identify the problem, collect and record relevant data, propose practical actions to solve the problem, design an action plan, and implement it. After that, the researcher had to monitor and record the results.

To evaluate the changes or improvements resulting from the implemented actions, the researcher reflected on the teaching process based on observation sheets, recorded notes, and students' scores in comprehension tests. The purpose of this reflection was to provide feedback for determining the next course of action.

Classroom action research is considered a meaningful form of research because it is conducted by the teacher within their own classroom. This type of research requires the teacher to design a study on an area of interest and carry it out in their own class. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988:5), cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison

(2000:227), action research is: "A form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out. The approach is only considered action research when it is collaborative, though it is important to note that the group's action research is achieved through the critically examined action of individual members."

Several references show some steps of the implementation of CAR. Based on Lewin (1946, 1948), as cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000:234), codified the action research process into four main stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These stages are referred to as a cycle. This research was conducted in two cycles, with the following descriptions of each stage:

1. Planning Stage

This stage involved identifying and narrowing the research topic, reviewing relevant literature, and developing a research plan. The research plan included:

- a) *CP or Capaian Pembelajaran* : Used as a guideline for planning and implementing the learning program.
- b) Lesson Plan: Helped the teacher in structuring the teaching and learning process in the classroom, including objectives, materials, teaching techniques, and all classroom activities.
- c) Teaching Materials: The textbook used in this study is *Buku Bahasa Inggris MGMP Surabaya*. Additionally, visual media such as Video or material power point related to the text were prepared to assist and guide students in understanding the text.
- d) Essay Test: Used at the end of each cycle to measure students' comprehension.
- e) Observation Sheet and Field Notes: Used to observe and document the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

2. Acting Stage

In this stage, the researcher implemented the planned action in the classroom where the problems are identified. The researcher taught the prepared lesson and applied the Story Mapping Strategy to help students understand narrative texts.

3. Observing Stage

To gather data regarding the impact of implementing the Story Mapping strategy on students' performance during classroom instruction, observation checklists were employed as the primary instrument. These checklists included a comprehensive list of student and teacher activities observed throughout the lesson. During this phase, a collaborator took on the role of monitoring the entire teaching and learning process. The observer carefully recorded both the teacher's instructional methods and the students' reactions to the learning activities.

4. Reflecting Stage

In this stage, the researcher and the observer shared, analyzed, and evaluated the information collected from classroom observations and field notes. The reflection results were used to determine the necessary adjustments for the next cycle.

RESEARCH SUBJECT AND DATA COLLECTION

The researcher selected Class X-09 SMAN 17 Surabaya as a school where the researcher doing *PLL* activities as the research subject because this class had the lowest reading scores. In this study, the researcher used the Triangulation Method as the data collection technique. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000:112) define triangulation as: "The use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspects of human behavior." The researcher used three primary data collection techniques:

1. **Achievement Test**

An Post test was used to assess students' comprehension of narrative texts.

2. **Observation Checklist**

Observations are an integral part of the assessment process and provide evidence of what students actually do rather than just what they say they do. The researcher used an observation checklist to examine students activities and understanding of narrative text.

3. **Field Notes**

Field notes were used to record classroom interactions during the implementation of Story Mapping Strategy.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The researcher conducted Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Story Mapping Strategy to address students' difficulties and improve their reading comprehension of narrative texts. This section outlines the results of the research, highlighting both the implementation process and the practical use of the Story Mapping Strategy in the classroom setting. The study's findings consist of both qualitative and quantitative data, gathered over the course of one action research cycle. The qualitative data, which reflect the level of student participation during each session, were obtained through observation checklists, field notes, and student questionnaires. In this context, participation refers to students' active engagement in classroom activities. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were derived from the students' performance on achievement tests that were administered at the end of each cycle.

In this section, the researcher presents the findings and discussion. The descriptions are as follows:

1. **First Cycle**

Based on field notes from the first meeting, the teacher began the lesson by brainstorming with the students, asking the titles of narrative texts they had read. Then, the teacher showed a video the legend of Surabaya as early starter continued with explained the generic structure and elements of narrative texts. After that, the teacher introduced and demonstrated how to apply the Story Mapping Strategy.

In first cycle, It dedicated to implementing the Story Mapping Strategy and conduct a reading comprehension test. The data collection instruments included an observation checklist and field notes during the lessons, the teacher demonstrated how to use the Story Mapping Strategy in front of the class. The example of story is about tales titled "the three little pigs". However, many students appeared confused and had difficulty grasping the procedure. They required a repetition to fully

understand and apply the strategy to their reading assignments. As a result, the teacher had to provide additional guidance, particularly in helping students manage their time efficiently.

The students were divided into 7 groups and the teacher shared a text related to story of narrative text. The students completed the story mapping while the teacher monitored their discussion. Nevertheless, several students faced challenges during the test, and some were found attempting to cheat. This indicated that the teacher needed to offer more focused supervision and support during individual tasks.

After discussing their work, students were requested to present their result. It showed some indicators that the student still difficult to analyze the text. It can be know from the result in post-test cycle one, where the average score was 60%. This indicated that students' reading comprehension was still low and required improvement because the improvement is so minimum.

2. Second Cycle

During the second cycle, the teacher began by revisiting and reviewing the content covered in the previous meeting. This included a thorough explanation of the generic structure and key elements of narrative texts, as well as a step-by-step guide on how to effectively use the Story Mapping Strategy. In this session, students appeared highly attentive and showed readiness to engage in the lesson, which contributed to improved concentration throughout the class.

The teacher then instructed students to gather with their group then the teacher gave them a text related to narrative text. Next, students discussed and applied the Story Mapping Strategy. Unlike the first meeting, students were able to manage their time more efficiently, indicating that the time management issues previously observed had been successfully addressed. In the end the teacher administered an question based reading comprehension test to assess the students' understanding, it called post-test. The students worked on the test individually while the teacher closely supervised their progress. This time, students demonstrated greater confidence and seemed to complete the task with less difficulty. As a result, the average score in the second cycle rose to 85,7%, placing it within the "Average to Good" category. To visually present the improvement in students' performance, the researcher developed a diagram comparing the mean scores from pre-test to post-test.

Table 1. Student grade summary

Cycle	Assesment	Average Score	number of students above KKM	success percentage
	Pre Test	61,5	6	24 %
1	Post Test 1	77,2	21	60%
2	Post Test 2	83,1	30	85,7%

DISCUSSION

This Classroom Action Research (CAR) was implemented in three meetings of one cycle, each consisting of four stages: Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting. Each acting stage was conducted in one meeting (2 × 45 minutes). This section covers the discussion of the teaching and learning process and the discussion of the learners' improvement in reading comprehension utilizing the Story Mapping Strategy. During the teaching and learning process, the researcher acted as the teacher, and his colleague Elvira assisted as the observer.

The main difficulties faced by students in reading narrative texts were as follows:

1. Students struggled to find detailed information in the given narrative text.
2. Students had difficulty identifying the main idea in each paragraph.
3. Students could not determine the moral lesson from the narrative text.

In the first cycle, students still struggled with these challenges. Many could not determine the moral value, had difficulty identifying the main idea, and faced challenges in finding specific information in the text.

To address these issues in the second cycle, the teacher chose a local story as a topic namely "The Legend of Surabaya" and actively guided students' activities while applying the Story Mapping Strategy. The teacher also ensured that all students answered questions independently in their group without relying on others. As a result, students became more active and engaged in the learning process.

By the end of the second cycle, all students completed their tasks successfully. The teacher also provided time for students to share their difficulties, and at the end of the session, the teacher summarized the key points of the lesson. After observing the learning process and analyzing the data, both the researcher and the observer decided to stop the action because the success indicators had been met.

Both the teacher and the observer calculated students' scores and found that the mean score:

- First Cycle: 77,2 (*Poor to Average*)
- Second Cycle: 83,1 (*Average to Good*)

The percentage of student achievement in each question showed that, based on the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) for English in this school, 85,7 % of students met the criteria.

Narrative texts have a generic structure consisting of:

- Orientation (introducing the setting and characters)
- Complication (presenting the plot, problems, and events)
- Resolution (showing the outcome of the story)

By applying the Story Mapping Strategy, students could break down the story into different components and events. The researcher believes that this strategy is an effective method to enhance students' comprehension. It provides a structured approach and allows for a broader understanding of the entire story.

At every stage of the Story Mapping process, students were able to provide accurate information, which served as strong evidence that they had developed a deeper understanding of the narrative text.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the Story Mapping Strategy in the reading class was able to improve the learners' attainment in reading comprehension, mainly in narrative texts. Based on the analysis of students' learning, the researcher concludes the following:

1. Students' reading comprehension of narrative texts improved through the application of the Story Mapping Strategy. The mean score increased from 60 on pre-test to 83,1 on a post-test.
2. This Classroom Action Research (CAR) was conducted in 2 cycle, consisting of four stages: Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting. Students continued to show progress in each meeting until they fulfilled the success indicators. In the first cycle, the success indicators had not yet been achieved, which made it necessary to conduct a second cycle. In the second cycle, the success indicators were fulfilled, and the action was stopped.
3. The Story Mapping Strategy helped students become more active during the teaching and learning process. They were able to identify and map out the basic components of a story, such as setting, problem, goals, actions, and outcomes. Story mapping provided structure and organization, which helped students comprehend the narrative text more effectively.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, the researcher suggests the following:

1. The Story Mapping Strategy should be adopted by English teachers as an effective reading comprehension strategy, particularly for narrative texts. This strategy helps students understand text elements, identify main ideas, and grasp the moral values of a story.
2. Teachers should clearly explain how to use the Story Mapping Strategy before starting the lesson. A clear explanation will ensure that students can apply the strategy effectively and improve their reading comprehension.
3. To enhance learning outcomes, teachers should select engaging and familiar stories that capture students' interest. Familiar stories make it easier for students to relate to the text and apply the Story Mapping Strategy effectively.
4. Future researchers may explore the use of Story Mapping Strategy in different types of texts, such as descriptive, recount, or report texts, to determine its effectiveness in various reading contexts.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the investigator offers the following recommendations. For English lecturers, it is suggested that they incorporate the Story Mapping Strategy as an additional method to enhance the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. To address potential limitations of the strategy, it is important for lecturers to be thoroughly prepared, particularly in terms of lesson planning and classroom management. A well-structured lesson plan is essential, as it helps the lecturer define clear objectives, select appropriate instructional materials and media, and determine the type of assessments to be used—these elements are crucial for successfully implementing the strategy. For future researchers, it is recommended that they conduct similar studies, either focusing on the same skill or exploring other language

skills such as listening, speaking, or writing, in different contexts or settings. Additionally, it would be valuable to apply the Story Mapping Strategy to other types of reading texts, such as expository texts (e.g., biographies, autobiographies, etc.). Future studies could also consider utilizing different research designs to explore the strategy further.

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