

Using Short Stories in Teaching Reading Comprehension of Narrative Text to the First-Year Students of SMK Negeri Campalagian

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to determine whether or not the use of short stories is effective in teaching reading comprehension of narrative text to the first-year students of SMK Negeri Campalagian. This research used cluster random sampling with 25 students of class X TKJ (Teknik Komputer dan Jaringan). This research used a pre-experimental design consisting of two cycles, namely pre-test, and post-test. The data was obtained through a reading comprehension test which consisted of 30 questions that aimed to determine students' ability to comprehend a text. In analyzing the data, the researchers used a t-test to find out whether there was a significant difference before and after students were given treatment using short stories. The results of statistic calculations showed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. This was indicated by the t-test value which is greater than the t-table value ($26.796 > 1.711$). Based on the result, it can be obtained that the use of short stories is effective in teaching reading comprehension of narrative text to the first-year students of SMK Negeri Campalagian.

Keywords: *Effective, Reading Comprehension, Short Stories, Narrative Text.*

1. Introduction

Learning a language is the most important thing, especially the English language which is regarded as a world language whereby using that language will make us adapt and communicate easily with other people when we move from one country to another. Furthermore, most of the information sources are published generally in mastering English is complicated because we require to master four language skills, Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. Although, this research disciplines only one skill which is reading skill. Johnson (2008) stated that "Reading is the practice of using text to create meaning. The

two keywords here are creating and meaning. If there is no meaning being created, there is no reading taking place". Therefore, building meaning becomes the primary part when people read. Essentially reading is a complicated activity that involves many things, not just pronouncing the group of words, but also involves a visual activity interpreting what they have read and understood.

In Indonesia, it is most likely that students have difficulty understanding English text. It is because there are so many vocabularies and complicated vocabulary patterns, and confusing word order. According to Nuttall, five problems are mostly faced by students

while reading not in their first language. They are the code or letter symbol, vocabulary, sentence structure, cohesive devices and discourse markers, a problem beyond plain sense and the concepts. Therefore, reading requires comprehension to understand the context and get new information about the text.

According to Anderson (1997), there are several problems with reading comprehension: First, readers had difficulty understanding the background of a passage. Therefore, they are unsuccessful in comprehending lengthy reading texts such as stories. Second, many learners can translate word by word and fail to understand the message from a text. Third, learners were lack motivation to read an English text. Therefore, they use up much time finishing the reading test. Even, frequently they copy their friends' work.

Seeing the negative effect, the author tries to find a solution to support students increase their reading skills. Here the writer uses Short Story as an alternative way to reduce reading difficulties because it is interesting, inspiring, and concise that only needs a short time to finish. Pourkalhor and Kohan's also stated that applying a short story during the learning process can make students more comfortable and easier to understand a text. Additionally, many benefits can obtain when reading short stories. In addition to entertaining, reading short stories can increase vocabulary, provides real examples of grammatical structures, and train logical thinking skills. When students read a short story, they become able to distinguish a good and bad thing, rules, restrictions, learn how to make decisions, solve problems, and learn to empathize. Other than that, it can teach the culture of the community in which the story is from so we know how people's traditions are. Therefore, the writer

stated a short story as proper teaching material for improving students reading skills.

2. Literature Review

2. 1. Definition of Short Story

Using literature had applied more than one century ago for teaching language. During the nineteenth century, English has taught by the Grammatical Translation Method, where learners translate literary texts from a second or foreign language into their mother language. However, literature is no longer used in the seventies because it switches to a method that emphasized structure and vocabulary. During the last two decades, literature has returned to being used in EFL teaching without using the Grammatical Translation Method because instructors realize that literature help strengthens skills and complements language teaching

A short story is a piece of literature, MacMillan stated that a "Short story is a brief work of prose narrative." That indicates short stories as stories told using narration that combines monologue and dialogue forms. When reading it, we do not spend much time comprehending the text. Meanwhile, Lazar stated that "Short story is a work of fiction." That indicates a short story is a story that comes from imagination. In other words, a short story is not strictly from history or facts. From those definitions, it may conclude that a short story means an uncomplicated literary text that interesting and can apply as material when studying a language.

2. 2. Elements of Short Story

The short story has some elements, Gardon and Kuehren stated six elements of a short story as follows:

a. Plot

It is a sequence of events in a narrative which arrange in chronological order to get the desired story. Two aspects that build a story plot are causality or cause and effect, which means how events affect other events. The story plot has some stages, the introduction stage, the appearance of conflict, the climax stage, the dissolution stage, and the completion stage.

b. Setting

The setting means a description of the time, atmosphere, space, or place where an event occurs in the story, and it writes in specific, general, or every detail in the story. Essentially, the setting is more than described where, when, and how the situation of the event takes place. However, it is closely related to the character or actor in an event. In addition, the setting also really influences the subject matter and the theme of the story.

c. Character

Character is people involved in a story. In short stories, there are main characters and minor characters. This main character is a figure that directly interacts with a conflict whereas, supporting characters are characters who are expressed in the short story but are not directly involved with the problem in the stories.

d. Point of view and tone

The writer's way of telling a story is called point of view. It is the way of writer puts himself into the narrative. Two types of points of view the first is "I" first person the second is "She, He, and They" third person. The first person of view usually uses the pronoun I or me. When using the first person of view, the reader seems to be a character in the story. The third person of view is the omniscient and the limited omniscient. The omniscient tells everything about the main characters as the third person

(omniscient) knows the character's thoughts, feelings, events, and even the background of an incident. The Third-person (omniscient) is like someone who knows about the character he is telling. In addition to using the pronoun (He and She), the common pronoun used is the character's name. While the limited omniscient third person. Limited omniscient is not as omniscient as the third-person of view omniscient. In the limited omniscient, the writer tells the extent of his knowledge obtained from observing, hearing, experiencing, or feeling an event in the story.

e. Theme

An idea or subject matter that underlies a story is called a "Theme". It is general, broad, and needs to be elaborate. The theme will determine the direction of the article or the author's goals

f. Style

In a short story, we will find many metaphors or language that seem polite or impolite, formal or informal, that's called language style, or we can say that language style is the author's characteristic in conveying his writings to the public. The language style is usually related to situations and atmosphere in certain feelings and circumstances, such as good or bad impressions, discomfort, and pleasure.

2. 3. Advantages of Short Story

Some advantages when using a short story (Pathan and Mar'ei). They are as follows:

- a. A short story assumes to be the most beneficial in teaching material because it provides wealthy linguistic aspects and powerful stimulation to learners in expressing themselves in different languages

- b. Short stories provide simple language structures and become original examples of language structures and vocabulary items and present them in the appropriate contexts for their use. Therefore, the reader can use these examples in real-life conversations.
- c. Short stories can improve the reader's insight because they provide information about the countries, people, and cultures whose languages are studied. In conclusion, a short story benefits reader because it can make it easier for them to socialize with those people after understanding their culture through short stories. In addition, short stories can develop the ability to interpret discourse in different language contexts.
- d. A short story is one of the practical stories to be used as teaching materials for English teachers. Because the length of the text does not need a long time to be discussed in its entirety, discussing a short story only requires one or two class meetings. Besides that, it is not complicated as another story, which making students easier to work alone. In conclusion, it can help students in developing their independence when learning a foreign language.
- e. Short stories provide knowledge that can motivate readers and have superb educational value. Therefore, English teachers should choose short stories rather than informative materials that are often used in classes.

2. 4. Reading Comprehension

Reading is an effort to conceive the meaning and gain understanding. Reading and understanding are connected, where reading means action to conceive a text while understanding is a purpose of reading Linse (2006). According to Klingner (2007), reading comprehension is creating meaning by

interpreting and understanding word meaning and then connecting with ideas in a passage. Similarly, Snow (2002) stated, "reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language."

From various experts' opinions, it can understand that reading comprehension is not only how well we read including precise pronunciation and aloud voice. However, reading comprehension means the effort to build an understanding by connecting the meaning of words into sentences so that the reader can find the main ideas and interpret them in their mother language. Additionally, reading comprehension is a strategy carried out and used to understand what the author wants to convey.

2. 5. Level of Reading Comprehension

a. Literal comprehension

It is readers' understanding obtained from what is written directly in the passage. As stated by Billerica (2005), in literal comprehension, the answer to a question is directly written in a few sentences in the reading passage. In other words, this level includes readers' capability to acquire clear information from the text, which does not need a higher level of thinking than other levels of comprehension. According to Rubin (as cited in Nor and Yahya, 2006), there are six skills that should be understood by students in literal comprehension:

- 1) Identifying the meaning
- 2) Identifying the main idea
- 3) Identifying the important point
- 4) Making comparison
- 5) Identifying the cause-effect
- 6) Identifying the sequence of events

b. Interpretive comprehension

It refers to the students' capability to interpret meaning. At this level, students should be capable to shorten, construct, make a generalization, an inference, and a prediction. It means that students' understanding of the text already involves a higher thinking level than literal comprehension because the answer to that question is not written directly in the text. When students read, they should use their thinking ability broadly to understand the text. According to Rubin (as cited in Nor and Yahya, 2006), there are five skills for interpretive comprehension as follows:

- 1) Interpreting the main idea
- 2) Interpreting the important point
- 3) Interpreting comparison
- 4) Interpreting cause-effect
- 5) Making conclusion

c. Extrapolative comprehension

This level means students do not only understand a text but also analyze the content of the text deeply. According to Billerica (2005), extrapolative comprehension only occurs after the readers grasp the ideas and information that the author provides. According to Rubin (as cited in Nor and Yahya, 2006), this level of comprehension requires thinking skills beyond the literal and interpretive levels, which depend on the readers' knowledge and experience. Four skills that should be understood by students are:

- 1) Evaluating
- 2) Making a conclusion
- 3) Internalization
- 4) Identifying the moral of the story

2. 6. Factor Influencing Reading Comprehension

When comprehending a text, students usually faced difficulties that cause by a variety of

various factors. Eight factors can be a cause of the lack of reading comprehension (Westwood) as follows:

- a. Poor vocabulary knowledge
- b. Lack of fluency
- c. Lack of familiarity with the subject matter
- d. The difficulty level of the text (readability)
- e. Low use of effective reading strategies
- f. Limited verbal reasoning
- g. Difficulties with processing information
- h. Difficulties in remembering information after reading

2. 7. Narrative Text

Narrative means an essay or writing that is described based on a plot, in which there are events, characters, conflicts, and lessons. Narrative can be a fact or fiction. Anderson stated that "narrative text is a kind of text that tells the story aimed to present a view of the world that entertains or informs the readers or listeners". It can conclude that narrative is a suitable text that can develop as teaching material because it is not only for entertainment but also as a medium to create students' attitudes and behavior through the moral value implicit in it.

2. 8. Types of Narrative Text

Anderson (2003) classified types of narrative text as follows:

a. Fable

A fable is a fairy tale that presents animals as the main characters by giving them human attributes, and it describes a moral lesson at the end. An example of a fable is the hare and the turtle, the rabbit and the pig, the family of ants, and the cat and the mouse.

b. Fairy Tale

A fantasy or imaginary story containing imaginary characters is called Fairy Tale. In this story, the readers are presented with

fantastic elements or other magical events, such as the story of a girl who can sleep for 100 years or a pumpkin that can turn into a train. Some examples of fairy tales are Cinderella, Pinocchio, Snow White, Thumbelina, etc.

c. Legend

Legend is a type of narrative text used to explain an event or someone who existed in the past, convey a lesson, or entertain an audience. Legend is not always true which means the story is half historical and half fictional. Examples of legend are Malin Kundang, Lake Toba, Sangkuriang, etc.

d. Novel

A novel is one of the types of narrative that content is longer and more complex than other types. The novel tells human life with the people around them by highlighting the character and their nature it is typically published as a book. Examples are Home, Divergent, Laskar Pelangi, etc.

e. Horror

Horror is a genre where the story is identical to supernatural and mystical such as ghosts, vampires, and witches. This type of narrative can make the reader feel tense and goosebumps when reading it. Examples of horror are the Insidious, Anabel, Red Room, etc.

2. 9. Generic Structure of Narrative Text

Four generic structures classified by Gerot and Wignell (1995) as follows:

a. Orientation

All story requires an orientation even if the story is simple. Orientation is the beginning or introduction of a story, which usually includes an introduction to characters, time, atmosphere, and place in a narrative. Orientation also makes a story more likable with an attractive background.

b. Complication

A complication is a paragraph that describes the beginning of the problem and then continues to conflict, climax, and anti-climax. In general, complications contain interactions between actors that cause a conflict or contradiction. Three types of conflict may occur, such as natural conflict, psychological conflict, and social conflict. Based on the name implies, natural conflict is a problem between actors and nature, social conflict is a problem between actors, and psychological conflict is a problem between the actor and himself.

c. Resolution

Resolution is the paragraph that ends the story. In this section, there is a settlement that makes the storyline end. Every problem that arises must have a solution that can be closed with a happy or sad ending.

d. Re-orientation

Reorientation means a closing sentence that tells the last condition of the character in the story. This section is an optional part that informs a moral message or teaching that the author wants to convey from the story.

2. 10. Language Features of Narrative Text

Knapp and Watkins divided language features of narrative text as following:

a. Past tense verb

It is a simple verb form to show that an event occurred in the past. The narrative text tells an event in the past so, it uses the past tense verb, except for dialogue.

b. Temporal connectivity

Temporal conjunction is a word that describes a time relationship between two things or events. Temporal conjunction is a type of conjunction that describes when an event occurs or is also known as time connectives.

c. Specific Character

Specific characters in the narrative text mean the characters are not generally. For example, the Mermaid character that depicted as being like a fish but having a human head.

3. Research Methodology

This research uses a quantitative approach to examine the data. The researchers applied a Pre-experimental design that includes a single group that was being given a pre-test, and post-test. The pre-experimental design was applied to measure learners' proficiency during the experimentation using short stories. Then the success of the experiments was decided by analyzing the students' scores.

The research was conducted on the first-year students of SMK Negeri Campalagian in the academic year of 2021/2022. It was started on 31 January until 9 March 2022. The school is located at Jl. Poros Tenggara, Luyo District POLMAN Regency, West Sulawesi. The population of this research was the whole first-year students of SMKN Campalagian. There were 225 students from eight classes, which consisted of around 25 to 30 students each class. The researchers used Cluster random sampling to determine the sample and the selected cluster was class X TKJ (Teknik Komputer dan Jaringan).

There are two types of variables that were used in this research, independent and dependent variables. The independent variable of this research was short stories and the dependent variable is reading comprehension. The treatment of this research was conducted in six meetings and the instrument used was a reading comprehension test which consisted of 30 questions that aimed to determine students' ability to comprehend a text. The first test is a post-test that was given to know students

reading comprehension ability before giving treatment and the post-test was given to know students' reading comprehension ability after giving a treatment.

4. Findings and Discussions

The researchers found that there was an improvement in students reading comprehension after giving a treatment. In the literal comprehension, it found that the highest improvement is in questions number 4 in skill of making comparison. And the most difficult question in this level is question number 8 in skill of identifying the meaning of a word, it could be happened because of the lack of students' vocabulary and they were unfamiliarity with the word. In line with Harmon's opinion (2002) that students faced difficulties in reading comprehension due to the limited vocabulary. Westwood (2008) also stated that one of the factors can cause the lack of reading comprehension is poor vocabulary knowledge.

In the interpretive comprehension, it found that the highest improvement is in question number 18 in skill of interpreting cause-effect and the most difficult question in this level is question number 28 in skill of interpreting comparison. It could happen because students were difficult in interpret the information in the text to guess the answer, because it is not stated directly in the text but they should make their own interpretation.

In the extrapolative comprehension, it found that the highest improvement is in question number 14 in skill of evaluating, and the most difficult question in this level is question number 29 in skill of making a conclusion. Beside that the researchers also found that that literal questions are easier to answer than extrapolative questions. It is because the

answer of the literal questions is directly written in one or two sentences in the text, while the answer of extrapolative questions is not stated directly in the text or beyond the text. Based on Rubin's (1991) opinion that literal comprehension only needed a low level of thinking because the idea and information explicitly stated in the text, while extrapolation

comprehension needs the high-level thinking because it needs divergent thinking, which is the thinking skill outside the literal and interpretive comprehension (Rubin, 1991).

5. Conclusion

The final result of this research showed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. It was proved by the mean of the post-test was greater than the mean of the pre-test $78.72 > 49.16$, and the t-test value proves that there was a significant difference between students' pre-test and post-test, where the t-test value was greater than the t-table ($26.796 > 1.711$). In other words, the student's reading comprehension ability especially in the narrative text was improved. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the use of short stories in teaching reading comprehension of narrative text to the first-year students of SMK Negeri Campalagian was effective because it needs divergent thinking, which is the thinking skill outside.

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