

Modified Story Pyramid Strategy to Improve Students' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract: *The aims of this study were to find out whether or not the modified story pyramid strategy based on cooperative learning improve students' reading comprehension better than non-modified story pyramid strategy. This study was quantitative research. The participants were 40 students of second grade of Junior High School in Lampung, Indonesia. The researcher uses reading comprehension test as the instrument. Independent samples T-test uses to analyze the data. The results show that there was statistically significant difference between experimental and control group in their reading comprehension $p < 0.005$ ($\rho = .001$). It means the modified story pyramid strategy better than non-modified story pyramid strategy.*

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, Modified Story Pyramid Strategy, Cooperative Learning, Narrative Text*

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I. Introduction

Reading is one of the important skills that students from elementary school through university levels need to learn. By reading the students are able to get a lot of information based on what they have already read. Although generally people think of reading as a simple, it is actually a very complex process that requires a great deal of active participation on the part of the reader. Grabe (2009) defines reading as the process in which readers learn something from what they read and involve it in academic context as a part of education.

Meanwhile, comprehension refers to the ability to go beyond the words, to understand the ideas and the relationships between ideas conveyed in a text (Rosari & Mujiyanto, 2016). Reading comprehension is a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text (Pardo, 2004). Reading comprehension is also defined as the ability to interact with words and ideas on the page in order to understand what the writer has to say. It includes the meaningful interpretation of written language and an interaction of the reader, the text and the situation in which the text is read (Bromley, 2000). Similarly, Snow (2002) explained that reading comprehension is the process of understanding meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.

However, to be able to efficiently comprehending the text which is read, some strategies need to be applied. Setiyadi (2006) said that the teacher considerably needed to provide the students with the right techniques, so that they were optimally engaged in studying. One of the successful keys in teaching learning process may depend much on the method or strategies the teachers employ in the classroom.

There are many ways to teach narrative text in reading, especially in reading comprehension. One of the ways is by using graphic organizer (Brown, 2001). graphic organizer is a visual representation of knowledge that structures information by arranging important aspects of the concept or topic into a pattern using labels (Bromley, 2000). One of the strategies in graphic organizer is story pyramid strategy. Story pyramid is a strategy to ensure that students thoroughly comprehend a variety of different aspects of a story by closely analyzing the main character, setting, problems, events, and solution (Puthota, 2009).

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the implementation of graphic organizer to enhance students' writing skill (Anastasia et al, 2018) and students' reading skill (Manoli et al, 2012; Ayiz et al, 2018). Many studies also have been conducted to investigate the implementation of story pyramid strategy. A study by Aritonang et al. (2019) investigates the implementation of story pyramid strategy to increase the students' ability in writing narrative text, the results found out that story pyramid strategy can give significant effect of students' writing narrative text because story pyramid strategy facilitates students to practice writing. It helps them to organize their thoughts to create writing piece, it helps students to write based on the outline that provided in story pyramid. Another study by Nullah (2016) investigates the influence of story pyramid strategy towards student's writing. The result also shows that the use of story pyramid strategy in teaching writing was significantly influenced.

Similar to the previous research, Nurchurifiani (2018) also conducted a research about the influence of story pyramid strategy toward students' reading ability. The result shows that there was influence of story

pyramid strategy towards students' reading ability of narrative text. Moreover, the students are not able to cooperate with others. From the problem above, the researcher modifies the story pyramid strategy based on cooperative learning with assuming that students can share information and help each other while learning. Then, the researcher formulates the research question as follow:

1. Does modified story pyramid strategy based on cooperative learning improve students' reading comprehension better than non-modified story pyramid strategy?

II. Literature Review

Reading

In learning English, one of main skills that should be understood by the junior high school students in Indonesia is reading. By reading, the students will get information and knowledge from the text. Reading enables students to know how English is actually used in printed and written forms (Khand, 2004). Reading is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought (Pang, 2003). Those factors are important in understanding a passage or a text. When eyes receiving a message from the text, the brain is working out to grasp whether knowledge or information that are decoded from the text. Reading always comes along with comprehension. Grabe and Stoller (2002) define reading comprehension as the ability of understanding and interpreting information in a text correctly. Comprehension in reading becomes important because it makes the readers understand what they read.

Narrative Text

A narrative is a piece of text, tells a story and, in doing so, entertains or informs the reader or listener (Anderson, 1997). A narrative is a kind of text types composed both in written and spoken forms, which describes a sequence of real or unreal events (Kane, 2000). Narrative text is an imaginative story to entertain and engage the reader in an imaginative experience. Narrative deals with problematic events which lead to a crisis or turning point of some kind, which in turn finds a resolution. The characteristics of narrative text are tells a story, contains well-developed characters, contains a setting describing where or when the story takes places, contains a carefully fashioned plot with a problem and resolution, contains a theme that explains the meaning of the story, contains vocabulary used to enrich understanding of the story, may be written in first, second, or third person (Kenan, 2006). It is important to know that the social function of the narrative text is to inform and entertain. Narrative text will tell the story with amusing way.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a kind of teaching strategies that commonly used in the classroom. According to Slavin (1995), cooperative Learning is a variety of teaching methods in which students work in small groups to help each other learn academic contents and share information. He further elaborates that in cooperative learning students are expected to help each other, discuss and argue with one another, assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding. Furthermore, Johnson and Johnson (2000) states that cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. By doing this, the classroom atmosphere will be enjoyable for students to learn in order to achieve the goal of the lesson as well as the goal of the team (Haydan, 2013).

Story Pyramid Strategy

Story pyramid is a strategy that will help the students to organize events in a story (Vallerie, 2009). Story pyramid help students visually organize a story's elements, increasing their ability to retell, summarize and comprehend the story (Beverly et al, 2010). Moreover, story pyramid is a strategy to ensure the students thoroughly comprehend a variety of different aspect of a story by closely analyzing the main character, setting, problem, events and solution (Puthota, 2009). Ideally, it shows students' critical thinking, because the students would analyze the text from the easy one to the difficult one based on highest to the lowest pyramid.

According to Kathleen (2001), after reading, students summarize the aspects of a story in pyramid form with eight lines. Students write based on the following guidelines:

Line 1: Name of main character.

Line 2: Two words describing the main character.

Line 3: Three words describing the setting.

Line 4: Four words stating the problem.

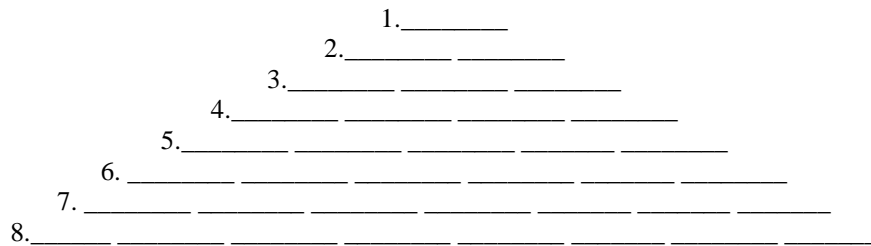
Line 5: Five words describing one event.

Line 6: Six words describing second event.

Line 7: Seven words describing a third event.

Line 8: Eight words stating the solution to the problem.

Figure 1. The graphic of a story pyramid



Non-Modified Story Pyramid Strategy

The procedures of using story pyramid strategy (Mclaughlin and Timothy, 2015):

1. The teacher explains what a story pyramid is and demonstrated how it works.
2. Gives the students a story, read it, and create a story pyramid.
3. Asks the students to answer the questions in pyramid forms.
4. Then, discuss the students' complete pyramid.
5. Next, reflect on how a story pyramid can help readers summarize stories.

Modified Story Pyramid Strategy

The procedures of using story pyramid strategy in teaching narrative reading:

1. Teacher tells the students that they are going to discuss about narrative text.
2. Gives the material about narrative text and explains about it.
3. Explains how to use story pyramid and give a model to the students.
4. Asks the students to makes some group. Each group consist of four students.
5. The teacher delivers a story and asks the students to read the story carefully.
6. The students discuss about the story in a group.
 - a. There are four students in one group (one student focus on the characters and their characteristic, two students focus on the problems and event series of the story, and one student focus on solution of the problem).
 - b. The students should share information with each other in order to understanding the whole story.
7. Teacher delivers a story pyramid worksheet to the students.
8. The students read the information request in the worksheet and fill in the story pyramid.
9. After finish fill in the story pyramid, teacher asks one student of each group to read it in front of their friends.

III. Material and Methods

This study was a quantitative research. The researcher uses two classes as the sample of the research. The first class was used as experimental group and another class was used as control group. The experimental group is the class which uses modified story pyramid strategy in teaching learning process. However, the control group uses non-modified story pyramid strategy in teaching learning process. The researcher uses pre-test and post-test in the process of collecting data. Pre-test is used to measure students' reading comprehension before given the treatment. After given the treatment, students will be tested in post-test to find the difference of students' reading comprehension by comparing the average result between pre-test and post-test. The design is as follow:

G1	T1	X	T2
G2	T1	X	T2

Remarks:

- G1 : Experimental group
- G2 : Control group
- T1 : Pre-Test
- X : Treatment
- T2 : Post-Test.

(Setiyadi, 2006)

Sample

A purposive sampling was used for data collection. The samples of this study were 40 students of VIII grade of SMPN 1 Trimurjo. There are 20 students of VIIIA as the experimental class and 20 students of VIIIB as the control class.

Instrument

In gathering the data, the researcher used reading comprehension test. The researcher gave pre-test and post-test to find out the students' reading comprehension score before and after being taught by modified and non-modified story pyramid strategy.

Data Analysis

SPSS 22.0 was used to analyze the data gathered. In order to find out the students' reading comprehension score difference between experimental and control group, the data were analyzed by running *Independent samples T-test*.

IV. Result and Discussion

RQ: Does modified story pyramid strategy based on cooperative learning improve students' reading comprehension better than non-modified story pyramid strategy?

In order to answer the research question, students' score obtained through 30 questions of multiple choices of reading comprehension test. The following table clarifies both descriptive statistics on pre-test and post-test.

Group Statistics

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	Experimental Group	20	49.5000	7.76293	1.73585
	Control Group	20	50.5000	7.76293	1.73585

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pre test	Equal variances assumed	.005	.945	.407	38	.686	-1.00000	2.45486	-5.96960	3.96960
	Equal variances not assumed			.407	38.000	.686	-1.00000	2.45486	-5.96960	3.96960

*Table 1. The result of Pre-Test at Experimental and Control Groups

The table 1 above, experimental group has 20 students, mean score 49.5000, which means that the average of the first students' reading comprehension before given treatment. Control group has 20 students, mean score 50.5000, which means that the average the first students' reading comprehension before given treatment.

Group Statistics

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest	Experimental Group	20	77.2500	6.17188	1.38007
	Control Group	20	61.2500	9.44165	2.11122

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	4.592	.039	6.343	38	.001	16.00000	2.52227	10.89393	21.10607
	Equal variances not assumed			6.343	32.731	.001	16.00000	2.52227	10.86680	21.13320

*Table 2. The result of Post-Test at Experimental and Control Groups

From the table above, mean score of experimental group is 77.2500 that is the result of students' reading comprehension score in post-test which is more than 49.5000 on pre-test after being taught using modified story pyramid strategy. Mean score of control group is 61.2500 that is the result of students' reading comprehension score in post-test which is more than 50.5000 on pre-test after being taught using non-modified story pyramid strategy.

As can be seen in the table 2, there was statistically significant difference between experimental and control group in their reading comprehension, with *t-value* 6.343 and *significance 2-tailed* $p < 0.005$ ($p = .001$). The result shows the modified story pyramid strategy better than non-modified story pyramid strategy.

The finding is similar to the research conducted by Nurchurifiani (2018), her research found that there is significant influence of story pyramid strategy towards students' reading ability of narrative text in experimental group. Moreover, the students in experimental group have higher reading comprehension score because they were taught by the modified story pyramid strategy based on cooperative learning. The students were easier to understand the text because they share information and help each other in comprehending the text. This finding is similar to the research conducted by Haydan (2013), he found that the students gave positive responses since they stated that cooperative learning were fun and helped them in understanding narrative texts and they wanted to know more about it.

Additionally, the modified strategy enhances students' communication in experiment class. In this strategy, the students work not only individually, but also as a team. In a group discussion, there is a fair possibility that the students improve their communication skills. In a group, while sharing their opinions and exchanging views with others, they will automatically improve their communication skills (Ageasta and Oktavia, 2018). Students' communication in experiment class has improved. Each of the students has to share and express their ideas and opinions. They help each other by sharing the ideas, opinion and thought to answer the questions and they give their respect and solidarity to others. Hence, by using the modified story pyramid strategy, the students have the opportunity to share the idea and information with their friends. It can increase students' sense of participation and communication in classroom learning.

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that modified and non-modified story pyramid strategy improve the students reading comprehension. However, the modified story pyramid strategy better than non-modified. Through story pyramid strategy, the students were able to comprehend a variety of different aspect of a story by analyzing the main character, setting, problem, events and solution. Moreover, modified story pyramid strategy based on cooperative learning could help students easier to understand narrative text since they were able to share the difficulties with their friends in a group. Therefore, after being taught by modified story pyramid strategy, the students' sense of participation and communication in classroom learning were increased.

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