
USING NARRATIVE TEXT TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION SKILL OF THE GRADE ELEVEN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research to discover the students' difficulties in understanding narrative text, to know whether the use of narrative text can improve the students' reading comprehension, and to know the understanding level of students in reading comprehension. The study was qualitative in the action research approach. The subjects of the study were 30 students. The data for this study was qualitative. The results of this study showed that the students encountered difficulties in reading comprehension of vocabulary mastery, finding specific and general information from the text. The students did not interested to read a long text that the teacher dominated the class, never gave feedback, and modeled the teaching strategy. The researcher used the narrative text to improve students' reading comprehension. It displayed the improvement of student's average scores. On the pre-test the average score was 5.06, on the first cycle the average score was 5.8, then on the second cycle, the average score was 6,36. Furthermore, in the post-test, the average score was 8,03. The level of students' reading comprehension is categorized at a good level. Finally, the researcher concludes that using narrative text effective in improving students' reading comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a system of sound and words that are used by humans to express their thoughts and feelings. Through language, the human being can exchange their ideas, feelings to communicate in real life of society. Furthermore, language also has a function for accessible skill can be helped the language learner to improve and

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deepen their knowledge in the language skill (Hon-keung et al., 2012). This combination is answering to that of ideas into thought. It means that language is used to express our feeling, ideas, and desires (Taylor-leech, 2012).

English as an international language is utilizing in most international events. It is using as the medium of information flow on science, technology, and culture. Learning English as a foreign language is challenging than learning a national language or learning a mother tongue (Jeremías, 2013). It is because the foreign language has completely different aspects and systems, which are understood by the students or the learners, such as pronunciation, spelling, and the cultural background of the language. As a foreign language, English is difficult to learn.

Students learn English since elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school in Timor Leste. Studying English is not a new thing for students because English is one of the demand languages. Even though English is already familiar to each student, however, there are many difficulties in studying English (Souriyavongsa et al., 2013). Each one knows that English is not the Timorese native language. It is difficult for the students to remember and understand all the words in English when someone is speaking English.

There are many skills in the English language that needs to be studied, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading has become a critical element of learning the language. There are several reasons for Learning English. It means the study of the meaning of words and sentences. Many foreign language students often have read as one of their most important goals. They want to be able to read for information and pleasure. In other words, students have to read English material for their subject. The student is often thought to be easier to obtain information from written text by reading (Leishman, 2004).

The focus of this research is improving students' reading comprehension. Everyone knows this skill is one of the difficult subjects at school. So as a good teacher must create a teaching strategy so that the students can study. Besides that, the kinds of text can also be important in teaching English to make the teaching of reading comprehension successful (Kumari & Basu, 2013). To select the appropriate text, the teacher must consider the characteristics of the students, which are related to the learning process. Media also supports the success of language teaching and encourages them to learn English.

Existed various texts that can use as narrative, descriptive, explanation, recount, information, report, exposition, and argumentation. They are useful for the teacher to achieve the instructional goals of the teaching-learning process can also be interesting for the students. Therefore, in this study, the researcher tries to find out that good for teaching reading comprehension. Finally, the researcher decides to use narrative text as teaching material for teaching reading comprehension because the students will be more interested, easy to study it is stories in the narrative can make students enjoy reading.

A narrative is a piece of text that tells a story and, in doing so, entertains or informs the reader or listener. Furthermore, narrative text is a text that tells a story and, in doing so, entertains or informs the readers or listeners". The narrative draft presents in a written or spoken form, either in a foreign or local story. There are some

stories that we have already heard either from local or foreign contexts such as myths, folktales, fairy tales, legends, and fables.

METHOD

This study is action research (Morgan, 2012). The English teacher and the eleven grade students of class A at Ensino Secundário São José Operário were subjects of the research. The class consisted of 30 students. The researcher chooses class A because their teacher stated the students in this class had the lowest achievements in English subjects. These data collection techniques are questionnaires, observation, interviews (Marvasti, 2018; Durmuş, 2016).

This study aimed to show the process of improvement of the students reading comprehension. In this study, the researcher collaborated with all of the other research team members. In this scheme, the researcher and collaborators found a problem, planned a possible solution, implemented and observed the actions, and reflected on the outcome of the study. The procedure consisted of the following four steps, that are Pre Cycle (In this step, the researcher observed the place were carried out the study (Greenwood, 2015).

The researcher interviewed the English teacher and the grade eleven students class A and carried out classroom observation of the English teaching and learning process. The first step researcher collaborated with the English teacher to conduct research. The second step is to focus on the English teaching-learning process. Its basis on the problems defined in the previous step. First, the researcher conducted Cycle one. In this Cycle, the researcher presented the topic of a narrative text entitled *Jaka Tarub*.

The researcher evaluated processes by interviewing at the end of the Cycle. Interviewing was conducted with the students and the teacher about the class activities. The researcher focused on the learning process. The reflection was useful to show the effectiveness of the actions conducted in the teaching and learning processes. It was to find out whether the learning was successful or not. The technique of data analysis is: scoring the students' work. This technique is a step to obtain quantitative information from each student. The formulation as follows:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{the number of correct answer}}{\text{the number of question}} \times 100 \%$$

The second Technique Comparing the Mean analyzes the mean score of each test to find out the general improvement of all the students' achievement in their reading

comprehension. The formulation as follows: $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$.

Criteria of Assessment The students' success and failure in doing the activities planned above will be access by referring to the creation issued by the Minister of Education in Timor Leste. The criteria say that students can be successful if the student achieves 60% of the material. It means a class can well master in learning if reached 85%.

FINDING

Pre-Cycle

The researcher started the research on Tuesday, 23 August 2018. In this pre-cycle, the researcher gave a pre-test in the beginning before the researcher implemented action using narrative text. The function of this activity was to check student's originality of their reading comprehension before giving them reading. The instrument used in this pre-test was a questioning task by using narrative text with the title Cinderella. The result of the test was $152:30 = 5.1$.

The total score in this test was 152. The average score of students' mean score was 5.1. Therefore, the researcher determining the action to overcome the problems. After having discussions with the English teacher, the researcher finalized some actions expected to offer some solution. There were six actions planned in this study, such as narrative text, pictures to help students activate prior knowledge, pre-teaching vocabulary keys, using skimming, and scanning strategies, asking the students to involve and checking the students' worksheets.

Cycle 1

a. Planning

After determining the problems related to the teaching of reading comprehension, the researcher and the collaborator that was the researcher's colleague planned the actions to solve the problem. Plan to improve students' reading comprehension by using narrative as teaching material. Based on the discussion with the collaborator, the researcher implement Cycle I. The action planned of (Brown et al., 2014). I was using narrative text as teaching material, using pictures to help students activate prior knowledge, asking the students to do exercise, and checking the students' worksheet.

The first action done was using narrative text as teaching material. This action aimed to promote the interaction between the teacher and the students in the teaching-learning process. By using this action, the researcher could build the students' motivation, attract the students' interest in reading, and give chances to the students to express their ideas related to the topic of the text. The second action was using pictures. The process was stimulating the students to activate their previous knowledge related to the topic. Pictures as mediate in the teaching of reading in the classroom.

b. Actions and Observation

The actions spared into two meetings. It was conducted on August 29th and 31th 2018. In this Cycle, the researcher presented a narrative text with the topic Legend and History of Timor Leste. All activities were using this topic during two meetings. Before researching in the classroom, there was no interaction between the researcher and the students. The teacher dominated the whole session of the class on the student. Students were only reading aloud, translating the text, and answering the questions based on the reading. The students had only little chance to express their ideas related to the topic. In this action, the researcher tried to build an interaction with the students (Strickland & Xie, 2012). As the researcher acted as the teacher in the class, the researcher considered the students' activities before reading.

In the next step, before the researcher did the actions, in the teaching and learning process of reading, the English teacher used limited media to teach the students. The teacher just gave the students a text taken from the textbook and then asked the students to read. After reading, the students have to answer the questions based on the reading. Therefore, in this study, the researcher used pictures as media to help the students activate their prior knowledge about the text. The researcher utilizes pictures to encourage students to read. It encourages students to stimulate their prior knowledge about the topic (Spector & Kim, 2014; Costa, 2018). In this activity, the observer was the English teacher to know the effectiveness of this media. The results of Cycle I was $174:30 = 5.8$

The total number of students that passed was 17 while failed was 13. The total score from 30 students above was 174. Therefore, the average score that reached in this cycle was 5.8. Based on the passing grade in Ensino Secundário São José Operário the mean score above still not obtained the minimum passing grade score.

c. Reflection

First, the use of narrative text was successful in promoting interaction between the students and the teacher and building the students' interest in reading. In this Cycle, most of the students were enthusiastic to share their ideas related to the topic but they still used *tetum* when sharing ideas. Based on the discussion with the English teacher and the collaborator, the researcher decided to ask the students to use English when they were sharing ideas (Malaklolunthu & Rengasamy, 2011). It would be beneficial for the students when they read a text if they brainstormed ideas and made a prediction in English. Second, the use of a picture as the media also helps the students activate their prior knowledge before reading. They also felt curious, challenged, and satisfied to read the text. The pictures used in the teaching and learning process were limited (Spector & Kim, 2014). The researcher only used one picture for each text to stimulate the students before reading. The picture could not help the students to recall their prior knowledge about the topic.

Therefore, even the researcher has overcome the problem, but there were existed difficulties that need to solve. The teacher dominated the whole session of the lesson and only give little chance for the students in expressing ideas is the problem. Then, the teacher never gave the students feedback. The teacher never modeled how to use efficient reading comprehension strategies. The teacher only focused on testing students' ability to translate the text and answer the questions based on the text. Based on the reflection of Cycle I above, in the next Cycle, the researcher would use more pictures in Cycle II to stimulate the students in the before-reading stage.3.
Cycle 2

a. Revised Plan

The first action was using narrative text as teaching material. This action was the same as Cycle I. The difference with Cycle I was that the researcher tried to minimize the use of Tetum in expressing their ideas. In Cycle II, the students had to use English as much as possible. The second action was using pictures to activate the students' prior knowledge. Here, the researcher used more pictures. The use of a series of pictures was useful effective since it could help the students to recall what

they have known about the topic. The action in Cycle II included was pre-teaching the keys vocabulary in every meeting. These actions aimed at providing enough background to the students about the reading. The procedure used in the Cycle was the same as the previous one. The fourth action was using strategies in reading as skimming and scanning. The students would scan the text for finding the answers to their questions in the previous column. Then the students would skim the reading for finding the main ideas, text value, and social function of the topic. Lastly, the sixth action was checking the students' reading comprehension (Department of Basic Education, 2016). The researcher asked the students to respond to the question based on the text.

b. Actions and Observations

The II Cycle actions were conducted into two meetings on September, 2nd, and 3rd, 2018. The materials of Cycle II were narrative text. The topic was a fairy tale entitled "turtle and rabbit". The English teacher assisted research as an observer. She took notes in the back of the class to observe the teaching-learning processes. The data about II Cycle collected through classroom observations and interviews. The results showed that students' interaction, motivation, and interest had improved after the implementation of narrative text in every meeting in Cycle I. The procedures of doing the actions were the same as the first Cycle but in Cycle II, the researcher tried to ask the students to use English in expressing ideas. In the first meeting, they seemed shy to speak. Furthermore, the researcher tried to make sure that making mistakes was not a matter, the student wanted to try to share ideas using English. In the second meeting, the students began to use English when they were expressing their reason (Tamcke et al., 2013). From the students' responses, it indicated that not only did the teacher dominate the whole lesson. However, the students' interest and motivation also were improved.

In this Cycle, the researcher used more pictures to help the students activate their prior knowledge since the text used was narrative. The use of pictures could create the context for the students and help the students to imagine the situation where the story took place. After implementing, it showed that the use of pictures could help the students to create a context in their minds about the situation in the story. It could help to provide a background to the students so that they could make meaning of the text easily.

After all the actions, the researcher asked the students to check their reading comprehension after reading. This action could help the students to evaluate their comprehension. Here, the students had to check their thinking-process before, during, and after. The researcher also added an action. Here, the researcher asked the students to make a reflection after completing the test. The students' reflection helps them to reflect on what they have learned (dos Santos et al., 2016). After collecting the students' worksheets and analyze them, the result of the score showed as follows $191: 30 = 6.36$.

The total score was 191, therefore the average score that reaches by students in Ensino Secundário São José Operário was 6.36. The result of this score showed that the second-grade students of class A reached the minimum criteria of the passing grade. Reflections after accomplishing Cycle II, the researcher, and the English

teacher had final reflections. The reflections based on the classroom observations also interviews. Based on the discussion with the English teacher in a democratic and dialogic atmosphere, the reflections be summarized in the following description.

First, the use of narrative text as teaching material seemed to be significant to improve the students' motivation and interest in reading. It was expressed from the students' enthusiasm to explore their background knowledge about the topic. Most of the students felt curious about the topic, challenged to find the answers to their questions.

Second, the use of pictures in the teaching and learning of reading was efficient to help the students in previewing the text. It could stimulate the students to recall any information stored in their memories before reading. It also helped the students to create a context for them and provide any background knowledge so that the students create meaning of the text easily. Besides, the use of more pictures in the teaching of narrative text could help them to imagine where the story took place. This could help them to understand the text easily because of visualization.

The third, researcher was using pre-teaching vocabularies to help the students to understand the reading. It encouraged them to create context before reading. Here, the students' low vocabulary mastery is solved through pre-teaching, some vocabulary. When the researcher asked students to focus on the keywords was effective.

The last, the use of skimming and scanning strategy was effective for the students to get the general and specific information efficiently. After the implementation of using skimming and scanning while reading in Cycle II, the students were familiar with the strategies. There was an improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II because the students could easily use the strategy to help them find general and specific information from the text. Therefore, the students had better improvement in understanding the text

4. Post - Test

Conducting post-test on September, 5th 2018. The aim of conducting this test was the researcher would make sure the students' achievement during two cycles. This test as evidence whether the second grade of class A in Ensino Secundário São José Operário able to defend their score in the last cycle (cycle 2). The instrument used by the researcher in this test was the same as the instrument in the pre-test. After gave the test, collected, and analyzed, then the result of students' scores showed that $241:30 = 8.03$

Based on the result in the table above, then the researcher found that there only two students that failed the test (Soleymanpour, 2014). Twenty-Eight others succeed in testing. There was an improvement in students' total scores and average scores. The total score in this post-test was 241. The average of students' score was 8, 03. Based on the Education curriculum in East Timor the second grade of Ensino Secundário São José Operário has success reaching the maximal passing grade. It means also that, using narrative text was effective in improving their reading comprehension.

RESULT

In this research, there was not only presented quantitative data but the researcher also presented qualitative data in observation and interview (see appendix) that involve the English teacher as an observer. The goal of took qualitative data as well as to measure the validity of the method used was narrative text and to support the quantitative data. Based on the observation and interview the results of the research as the following.

First, the narrative text technique is effective to improve the interaction between the students and the teacher. Previously, the students were shy and did not want to ask a question when they found difficulties. Besides, the students had only a little chance to share ideas in the classroom. This technique allowed the teacher to make the students active in reading by focusing on the process before, during, and after reading (Herman, 2014).

Second, the narrative text technique is effective was to improve the interest in reading. By doing interactive text-preview, the interest in reading contributes to the understanding of the text. Before the action, the students did not consider the process before reading that was previewing the reading.

Third, using narrative text technique to improve the students' ability this finding general and specific information and find the meaning of difficult words in the text efficiently. Formerly, the students had difficulties in finding the main ideas, detailed information, and the meaning of the strange words in the reading. The students had to read the whole reading and translate it to understand it. They rarely practiced and taught how to read efficiently. By using this technique as teaching material in reading, the students were able to find main ideas, detailed information, and the meaning of difficult words in the text by the use of efficient comprehension strategies such as skimming and scanning

DISCUSSION

This study focused on improving students' reading comprehension using narrative text technique. The researcher utilized this technique in both the first Cycle and the second Cycle. The findings of the research showed that teaching students using narrative text was successful in improving the students' reading comprehension (Guthrie et al., 2009). The researcher conducted the teaching-learning process using narrative text by using a picture, pre-teaching vocabulary, skimming, and scanning strategy as well. The use of that strategy could help the students to preview the text and assess their comprehension by recording all the process of reading. Based on the finding, it helped them in the process of reading comprehension. Besides that, the use of narrative text could also build a good interaction between the students and the teacher. When created a good interaction, the students would have a closer relationship. They also had an opportunity to share their knowledge among the students (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

Using narrative text allowed the students to understand the entire reading. During the process of reading, they read and connected it with their background knowledge. Thus, they also established their background knowledge and related it with the information in the text. It means that there was an interactive process during reading. Finally, the use of narrative text could also help the students to use efficient

comprehension strategies such as skimming and scanning. The use of the plan to help the students read the reading efficiently. They could find the general and detailed information in the text without reading it as a whole. All the results above proved the improvement of students' average scores in every activity. It started on the pre-test, cycle I, cycle II, and finally post-test. The comparison of scores showed in the table below.

Table Comparison of students' score in the pre-test, cycle 1, cycle 2, and post-test

No	Students' Name	Students' Score			
		Pre - Test	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Post - Test
Total Score		152	174	191	241
The Average Score (%)		5,06	5,8	6,36	8,03
Indicator Level		Poor	Poor	Sufficient	Very Good

Based on the table above, the total score in the pre-test was 152 by an average score of 5.1. The indicator level was low. In the first cycle, the total score was 174 by the average score of 5.8, and the indicator level was low as well. Next, in cycle II the total score was improved become 191 with the average score 6, 36, and the level indicator was sufficient. The last after the post-test, the total score was 241 with the average score 8, 03, and indicator level good. Therefore, based on the results the researcher concludes that using narrative text able to improve reading comprehension among the second-grade students of Ensino Secundário São José Operário.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding in the previous chapter, the researcher takes the conclusion that the second-grade students at Ensino Secundário São José operário are the total score in the pre-test was 152 with the average score 5.1 and the indicator level was low. In the first cycle, the total score was 174 by an average score of 5.8, and the indicator level lowed as well. Next, in cycle II the total score was improved become 191 with the average score 6, 36, and the level indicator was sufficient. And the last after the post-test. The total score was 241, with an average score of 8.03. It indicated a high level. Therefore, based on the final results could conclude that using narrative text able to improve comprehension reading the second-grade students in class A of Ensino Secundário São José operário. There are some suggestions for the English teacher and the other researchers. It suggested to the English teachers for building the students' comprehension of the text. It was considering the process before, during, and after reading. Besides that, the English teachers need to use more media like pictures in the teaching of reading. It can attract the students' attention to the text. It helps the students recall the information stored in their memory.

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