

## **Using Short Story To Improve Students' Reading Skill At VIII Grade Of SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Babar**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Short stories can be effectively used in classroom reading activities, as demonstrated by a Classroom Action Research study conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Babar. This study aimed to determine how short stories improve reading skills among eighth-grade students and to gauge their responses to this method. The research involved two cycles, each comprising four meetings that included planning, action, observing, and reflecting. Data was collected through tests, questionnaires, and observations, with the involvement of an English teacher from the school. The results indicated that incorporating short stories significantly enhanced students' reading skills, as evidenced by their increased engagement and enthusiasm. In Cycle I, 60% of students met the minimum competency standard (KKM), and this figure rose to 90% in Cycle II.

***Key Words:*** *Reading Skills, Short Story*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reading is essential for gaining knowledge and broadening one's understanding of various topics. It involves recognizing words, interpreting their meanings within sentences, and comprehending the structure of the text. Through reading, individuals extract messages and information that writers convey through different media. This process not only enhances readers' ability to grasp the content but also allows writers to communicate their ideas and messages effectively. Juel (2005) describes reading as the act of recognizing words, linking their meanings to sentences, and understanding various reading structures. The ultimate goal is for readers to distill the essence of the text they are engaging with. By doing so, readers gain a deeper understanding of both the meaning and structure of the material. This comprehension is crucial for effectively processing and interpreting the information presented in any text.

Tarigan (2014) emphasizes the importance of cultivating students' interest in reading from the beginning. Engaging students voluntarily with books and using

storytelling as a tool can be very effective. Stories not only make reading activities more enjoyable but also provide positive role models through the characters and narratives. This approach helps stimulate students' interest and encourages them to engage more deeply with the reading material.

Short stories, as noted by Nurgiyantoro (2010), are valuable in enhancing students' reading skills. They are complete literary works that include elements such as themes, characters, and settings, which can capture students' attention and make the learning process more engaging. Ceylan (2016) and Al-Nafisah (2011) have observed that short stories can improve students' focus and reading abilities. By using short stories in the classroom, educators can better assess and develop students' reading efficiency, especially when students have low reading skills.

A recent study at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Babar highlighted a significant gap in students' exposure to effective reading materials. The reliance on notes and news articles, rather than diverse texts, hindered students' understanding and engagement. To address this issue, researchers introduced short stories as a new strategy to enhance reading skills and foster interest in learning. This approach aims to create a more engaging and practical reading experience, addressing students' dissatisfaction with traditional methods and improving their overall reading abilities.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

As per Kamhi and Catts (2008), comprehension, accurate sound recognition, and inference represent interconnected elements within the process of reading. These skills, when effectively applied in a reading context, enable the reader to grasp the content. Factors such as one's reading attitude, reading purpose, familiarity with the text, text structure, and vocabulary knowledge significantly influence the reading process's success. Moreover, the reader's engagement with the text plays a pivotal role in achieving comprehension (Yldrm, 2010).

In addition, Lubis (2016) posited that reading comprehension serves as a strategy or approach employed by teachers to facilitate students' learning by guiding them toward relevant passages in reading materials. Reading comprehension aids in the growth of language proficiency, as may be inferred from the information given above.

### ***Definition of Short Story***

The term "short story" is rather self-explanatory. It denotes a work of fiction, an imaginative narrative that is concise in length. The genre itself encompasses such a wide array of variations that it defies a singular, definitive definition. One key

aspect to consider is the question of length – how brief is "short"? Some short stories may consist of just 1000 words, while others can be twenty times longer. According to Edgar Allan Poe (1976:175), "A short story should be short enough to be read in a single sitting." Naturally, each reader will take a different amount of time to finish a short story. According to Munaris (2007), the fundamental elements of a short story in a work of fiction encompass character and characterization, plot, and setting. A short story comprises various distinct components.

### ***Using Short Stories to Improve Reading Skills***

According to Jeni (2020), reading short stories helps pupils improve their reading comprehension because it is appropriate for them. Reading habits, interest in reading, and understanding are all related. She underlines that the teacher must use the method to assist children in improving their reading comprehension for this reason. The primary objective of reading is to uncover the intended meaning of the author.

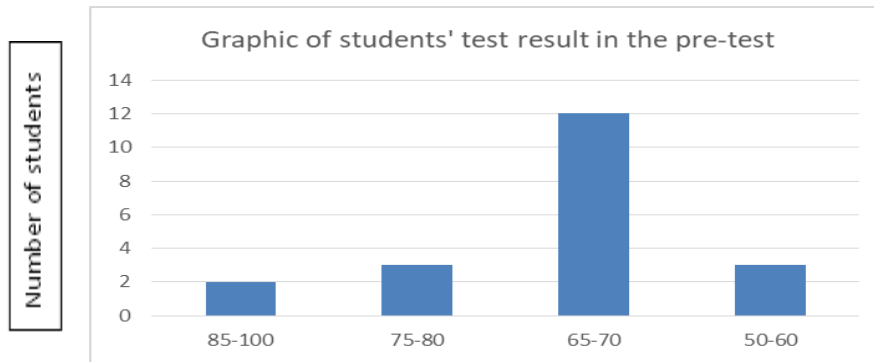
Moreover, the reader's task entails not only comprehending the information presented in a book or story but also integrating it with their existing knowledge (2013) Pourkalhor and Kohan. On efficient comprehension, reading in a second language poses a difficult challenge that calls on a variety of skills and abilities.

## **METHOD**

Researchers use classroom action research. Classroom Action Research, according to Mills (2003:1) is a strategy used by researchers to gain insights into the dynamics of the teaching and learning process inside the classroom, including the techniques used by teachers. In this particular study, the teacher collaborated with an observer to facilitate the observation of the learning process while implementing this methodology. As articulated by Arikunto (2011:5) Action Research in the classroom entails the concurrent planning and execution of educational activities within the classroom setting.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Results of Pretest (first cycle)

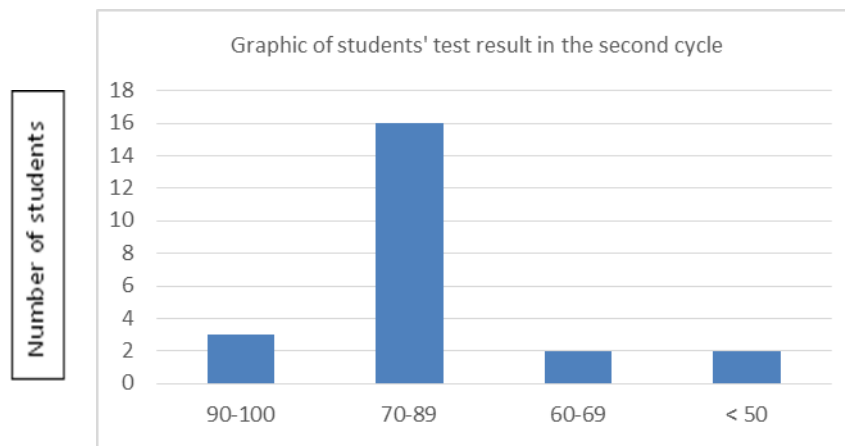


*Graphic 1. Result of Pre-test*

All students were ready when the researcher arrived. The researcher greeted them and explained that a reading ability research would take place. Short stories would be used, and the students were given a pre-test with five multiple-choice questions to complete individually. The data presented above indicates that while the students aimed to meet the success criteria (85-100), their actual scores fell short of 85. This discrepancy can be attributed to their feedback, where they mentioned encountering challenges in responding to certain sections of the test.

### Results of Posttest (second cycle)

Cycle 2 comprises the stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. During the initial cycles when students faced challenges, the researcher identified the issues at hand. Subsequently, the researcher would initiate additional cycles to enhance and build upon the previous ones.



*Graphic 2. Result of Post-test*

Students scored between 65 and 95. Following the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM), 90% (20 students) passed Post-test 2, while 10% (five students) did not. This indicates a notable improvement in overall student performance in cycle 2.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study utilized classroom action research over two cycles to enhance students' reading skills using short stories. Conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Babar. Each cycle included two meetings, each lasting 45 minutes. The research followed a structured process involving planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, with lesson plans created to manage the teaching activities effectively. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to evaluate the students' reading proficiency before and after the intervention. During Cycle 1, a pre-test was used to establish a baseline for students' reading abilities. Short stories were introduced as part of the instructional strategy, and a post-test was conducted to measure any improvements. While there was some positive change, only 60% of students achieved the desired success criteria. Feedback from this cycle highlighted specific challenges students faced, particularly in responding to certain sections of the test, indicating that modifications were necessary for the next cycle.

The planning phase of Cycle 1 began when the researcher introduced themselves, checked attendance, and created lesson plans and teaching materials. The second meeting involved introducing students to short stories and using a silent reading strategy. Despite active student engagement and progress monitoring, the first cycle's post-test results showed room for improvement, leading to the need for adjustments in teaching methods.

In Cycle 2 the researcher refined the approach based on the previous cycle's feedback. The planning phase included creating revised lesson plans and materials, incorporating insights gained from Cycle 1. In the fourth meeting, the research saw students being reintroduced to short stories with improved instructional techniques. Students' progress was carefully monitored, and corrections were made during the reading sessions to address any misunderstandings. The results of Cycle 2 were significantly better, with 90% of students passing the post-test compared to 60% in the first cycle. This improvement indicated that the revised approach was effective in enhancing students' reading skills. The use of short stories proved to be a successful strategy, fostering greater engagement and comprehension. Overall, the study demonstrated that well-implemented short stories can effectively improve students' reading abilities and encourage deeper interaction with literature.

## CONCLUSION

The Classroom Action Research conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Babar confirms that using short stories in classroom reading activities can effectively enhance students' reading skills. Over two research cycles, significant improvements were observed in student engagement and reading proficiency. In Cycle I, 60% of students achieved the minimum competency standard, but this figure rose to 90% in Cycle II. These results indicate that short stories successfully captured students' interest and facilitated better comprehension of reading materials.

The study's findings highlight that integrating short stories into reading instruction not only boosts students' reading abilities but also makes learning more engaging. The positive shift in student performance between the two cycles demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach, suggesting that incorporating diverse and captivating reading materials can foster a deeper connection with literature and improve overall reading outcomes.

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