USING SHORT STORIES TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Sitti Hajrah, 2025. Using Short Stories to Improve Students' Reading Comprehension at Senior High School (Supervised by Muliaty Ibrahim and Hasnani).

This study aims to determine the effect of using short stories on the reading comprehension of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Bantaeng in the 2024/2025 academic year: The research employed a quasi-experimental method with a quantitative approach. The sample consisted of two classes: class X6 as the experimental group and class X2 as the control group, selected through purposive sampling. The research instruments included tests and documentation in the form of pre-tests and post-tests, as well as supporting documentation such as photographs. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, normality and homogeneity tests, and a n independent sample t-test. The results showed that the average pre-test score of the experimental group was 63.73, which increased to 85.07 in the post-test. In the control group, the average score rose from 67.37 to 76.73. The t-test analysis yielded a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_I) was accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of short stories significantly improves students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: Short Stories, Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text, Realistic Fiction

ABSTRAK

Sitti Hajrah,2025.*Using Short Stories To Improve Students Reading Comprehension at Senior High School*.Dibimbing oleh Muliaty Ibrahim dan Hasnani.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh penggunaan cerita pendek terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa kelas X di SMA Negeri 3 Bantaeng pada tahun ajaran 2024/2025. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuasi eksperimen dengan pendekatan kuantitatif. Sampel terdiri dari dua kelas yaitu kelas X6 sebagai kelompok eksperimen dan kelas X2 sebagai kelompok kontrol yang dipilih dengan teknik purposive sampling. Instrumen penelitian ini adalah tes, dan dokumentasi berupa pre-test dan post-test, serta dokumentasi berupa foto sebagai pendukung data.Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas, uji

homogenitas, dan uji-t sampel independen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa skor rata-rata pre-test pada kelas eksperimen adalah 63,73 dan meningkat menjadi 85,07 pada post-test, sedangkan kelas kontrol meningkat dari 67,37 menjadi 76,73, dan hasil analisis uji-t menunjukkan nilai signifikansi sebesar 0,000 < 0,05 yang berarti H_0 ditolak dan H_1 diterima. Oleh karena itu, dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan cerita pendek secara signifikan meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa.

Kata Kunci: Cerita Pendek,Pemahaman Membaca,Teks Naratif,Fiksi Realistis

A. Introduction

Reading is an important language skill that students must develop to share information and expand their knowledge effectively. Despite efforts to integrate English as a foreign language, students still require assistance to comprehend English texts, which is essential for keeping up with global developments (Jannah et al., 2024).In the educational process, reading is not just an activity of recognizing letters or words, but a complex process that involves the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate information from the text. Reading helps students enhance their language abilities while also providing meaningful experiences. Through reading, they can obtain essential information and fresh ideas, allowing them to discover new knowledge. Reading comprehension refers to the process of deriving and building meaning through active interaction with written texts (Ibrahim et al., 2024).

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and interpret the content of the text we read. When reading a text, the reader must understand the content, information, and explanations, and facts that the author wants to convey. In other words, the reading process can be complicated as the reader may have to engage the quality of his/her mind to understand the text. Therefore, to be able to understand, get information, and be able to create meaning from a text, readers must choose good strategies and know how to use them (Irawan & Ahmad, 2024).

In the learning process, teachers play a very important role in guiding students to improve their reading comprehension skills. Teaching this skill is not easy, as it

requires patience, appropriate strategies, and a deep understanding of students' abilities and needs. If students have good reading comprehension skills, they will find it easier to absorb and process information from various sources, both in the form of printed and digital texts. Reading comprehension itself is a complex thinking process because it not only requires students to understand the content of the reading but also to develop the ability to write clearly and think critically about ideas or concepts conveyed orally in the text (Widiatmika, 2015).

Based on the results of the researcher's observations during a visit to SMA Negeri 3 Bantaeng, it was found that the reading comprehension skills of tenth-grade students were still lacking. These students experienced difficulties in English, particularly in understanding reading texts. This issue could be attributed to several factors, such as a lack of interest in reading, limited vocabulary, or ineffective teaching methods. Therefore, innovative learning strategies and approaches were needed to improve students' reading comprehension skills. Many students still struggled to understand reading content, including identifying the main idea, interpreting implied meanings, and drawing conclusions from texts. This low level of reading comprehension was a serious concern in the field of education. To address this issue, the researcher used short stories as a means to improve students' reading comprehension.

Short stories are a form of literary work written in prose and characterized by a relatively short story length. They are designed to be read and understood in a short amount of time, making them suitable for readers who have limited time. In general, a short story can be defined as a work of fiction in the form of prose that conveys a story or event within a limited scope, both in terms of characters, setting, and plot. Although short, short stories are able to present conflicts, emotions, and deep moral messages, just like longer literary works such as novels.Reading short stories provides its own experience for

readers, especially in terms of time management. Because of their short reading duration, readers do not need a long time to understand the content of the story. In fact, this often creates its own attraction, as short and concise stories are often easier to digest and enjoy. Therefore, many readers feel compelled to continue reading other short stories because they can get the satisfaction of reading in a relatively short time (Evenddy et al., 2023).

The researcher chose realistic fiction short stories as research media at SMA Negeri 3 Bantaeng was a good idea because it was by the level of understanding of students. Narrative short stories, especially realistic fiction, had a simple language style and easy-to-understand language so that students had no difficulty in understanding the story. In addition, realistic fiction also contained moral messages that could help students develop their characters, such as honesty, hard work, and helping each other. This was important because school education emphasized the development of students' attitudes and values in addition to academic knowledge (Moloi, 2024). The use of narrative short stories could also increase students' creativity and responsiveness. By reading interesting stories, they were more motivated to understand the reading and might even consider writing their own stories. Despite these difficulties, narrative short stories were very useful in research at SMA Negeri 3 Bantaeng. Besides helping to improve students' understanding of the material, short stories could also be an effective tool to enforce moral principles and increase their self-confidence. Based on the above problems, the researcher was interested in conducting research with the title "Using Short Stories to Improve Reading Comprehension in Senior High School".

B. Research Methodology

This research used a quantitative approach as a type of quasi-experimental research. Quantitative research is a type of research that uses numerical data collection and analytical

techniques to test hypotheses, assess results, and understand the relationships between the variables being studied (Susanto et al., 2024) . This research was important because it examined the use of short stories as a tool to improve students' reading comprehension. By understanding how short stories could effectively engage students and improve their critical thinking and interpretation skills, this research contributed to the development of innovative teaching methods that engaged students.

This research used a case research design that allowed for in-depth exploration of learning phenomena using short stories as a medium to improve reading comprehension in students, especially grade ten at SMA 3 Bantaeng. A case research design helped in understanding complex phenomena in real contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and contexts were unclear. Therefore, this research aimed to explore the cause-and-effect relationship between the two variables. The independent variable (X) was the use of short stories, while the dependent variable (Y) was reading comprehension. Furthermore, the students were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group.

C. Findings and Discussion

This research aimed to determine the extent to which short stories could improve students' reading comprehension, as measured by pre- and post-test results. The researcher also compared the scores between the experimental class and the control class to clarify the difference in the results.

Tabel 1 : The statistict results pretest, postest and N-Gain control and experimental class student's SMA NEGERI 3 BANTAENG.

Kelas Eksperimen						
N	*Pretest*		*Postest*		*N-Gain*	
30	63,73	63,73	85.07	85.07	80.25	80.25

Kelas Kontrol						
N	*Pretest*		*Postest*		*N-Gain*	

30	67.37	67.37	76.73	76.73	42.66	42.66

Table 1 showed that the data of the experimental and control classes consisted of 30 students, the total of all data, which was divided with the number of data points determined as the mean pre-test score from the experimental class was 63,73 and N-Gain score was 80.25, and from the control class was 67.37 and N-Gain 42.66. Then the total of all data which was divided with the number of data, determined as the mean post-test score from the experimental class, was 85.07. and from the control class was 76.73 and The N-Gain scores was same.

These findings were consistent with the study by Lutfia, which reported that the use of short stories in reading lessons significantly improved students' comprehension scores (p < 0.001) (Lutfia et al., 2023). The results also aligned with Zainal, who found that using both original and local short stories had a positive effect on students' reading comprehension, although original short stories tended to produce higher improvement(Zainal et al., 2022). Furthermore, the success of using short stories to enhance students' motivation and engagement aligned with the findings of Pratiwi, who discovered that short story implementation significantly increased students' reading motivation (pre-test = 67.64; post-test = 94.11;

improvement ≈ 39.13%) (Pratiwi et al., 2020).

Although this research demonstrated the effectiveness of the short story method, it had certain limitations, such as the relatively small sample size and short treatment duration. Future studies were recommended to use larger samples, compare local and international short stories, and incorporate additional strategies such as intensive vocabulary instruction or group discussions to further optimize learning outcomes.

E. Conclusion

The researcher sought to ascertain whether employing the Short Stories method had a noteworthy impact on the students' reading comprehension, in accordance with the research problem outlined in the preceding chapter. Pre-test and post-test results for the experimental and control groups were used to derive the conclusions from the quantitative data.

Compared to the pre-test (63.73), the experimental class, which was instructed via short tales, had a higher post-test mean score (85.07). Without the use of short stories, however, the control group improved less, going from 67.37 to 76.73. This improvement was further validated by the statistical analysis. The data satisfied the requirements for parametric testing, according to the results of the normality and homogeneity tests. A Sig. (2-tailed) value of less than 0.05 was found by the independent sample t-test, indicating that H_1 was accepted and H_0 was rejected.

experimental class, the students found it easier to understand how to share and talk about themselves, used the correct vocabulary, used grammar, and were more correct in the way of pronunciation of vocabulary, and most importantly, they are no longer embarrassed when they talk about themselves using English.

Through the use of short stories, students might have developed a better understanding of English reading texts, especially in identifying main ideas and supporting details.

Short stories could have served as interesting materials that potentially supported the development of students' reading comprehension.

Using stories that were relevant to students' daily experiences might have helped them engage more actively during the lesson.

This research might have been used as a reference by those interested in exploring strategies to improve reading comprehension. Future research might have further investigated the use of short stories in different levels of education or combined them with other teaching methods. In addition, this research provided an overview of how literary texts might have contributed to improving students' interest and understanding in reading English.

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