

Improving Reading Comprehension through Comic Strip for Ninth Grade

Fauziyatun Ni'mah¹, Luluk Choirun Nisak Nur², Dina Amaliyah Mushthoza³

^{1,3}English Education, Universitas Qomaruddin, Gresik, Indonesia

²English Education, Universitas KH. A. Wahab Hasbullah, Jombang, Indonesia

*Email: lulkanisa@unwaha.ac.id

Abstract : *This research focuses in reading comprehension of narrative text by using comic strips for the ninth grade students. This research aims to describe the implementation of comic strips to improve the ninth grade students' reading comprehension at MTs Miftahul Ulum Melirang. The result of this research shows that there are two cycles with two meetings in every cycle. In the first cycle, 12 students pass the passing grades with percentages 48%. Therefore, the first cycle is still low to become successful. In the second cycle, 84% or 21 total students achieves the passing grade. Moreover, most of the students in the second cycle pass the passing grade, so this research is categorized successful. It indicates that comic strip is the effective media to improve students reading comprehension for the ninth grade students of MTs Miftahul Ulum Melirang.*

Keywords : *Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text, Comic strip.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading takes very important role in teaching English, especially teaching and learning in the classroom. Through reading, students can get knowledge to help them answer the assignments well (Gallagher, 2023). Next, reading can make the students understand about the materials of learning process. It can also improve students' writing skill because after reading students can write better. As a result, this will make them easier to write down was taught. According to Subadiyono (2014) defined reading refers to understanding written discourse. Reading is an interactive process, which is a process when the reader is involved in the exchange of ideas with the author through the text. Understanding about the importance of reading we may also study about the type of reading.

There are several types of reading activity techniques that can be practiced. The types of reading also need to be adjusted to what conditions from the reading materials. Cartwright (2023) classify kinds of reading into four types. They are reading for pleasure, reading comprehension, thinking skill, and reading faster.

The purpose of reading has been neatly arranged in such a way but there are still obstacles in understanding the reading. Process of understanding the text or reading comprehension has many problems when applied in class. Cronin et al. (2024) said that, there are many and varied factors that can contribute to a child's reading problem, ranging from lack

of positive literacy experiences in the pre-school years, inadequate home support, inappropriate or insufficient teaching in the beginning school stages, and cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motivational problems within the student. In brief, as a teacher must study hard to learn reading comprehension so that the goal of reading is achieved well (Rasyid, 2023).

This research focused in narrative text because of in the second semester of ninth grades material just learned about procedure, narrative and report text. Media used in this research are comic strips. In procedure and report text, comic strip is not suitable because they have the different structure which cannot include in the comic strips, that is why the researcher chooses narrative text. Writing that attempts to tell readers a story is known as a narrative text. It may be fictional or true, based on actual occurrences. By providing a sequence of events including characters and a plot, narrative texts aim to interest, amuse, or entertain their audience. Through the experiences of the characters, a narrative work may, nevertheless, frequently also seek to impart moral principles, cultural themes, or life lessons. Narrative text is a story told from generation to generation which aims to provide a good example for readers called the mandate. According to (Hatavara et al., 2016) states that narrative text is comprehended as a unit whose interpretation and values are given by the composition. This suggestion implies that readers are supposed to follow a narrative and accept it is offered value. In addition, besides having an interesting story, narrative is also useful for giving a good message to the readers. Based on Yuvirawan et al. (2021)) opinion about narrative text, Narrative text is not just a random sequence of events; it requires logical sequencing and selective inclusion or exclusion of events to create coherence and purpose in the story, distinguishing narratives from other types of texts.

In order to teach narrative texts more fun, it is necessary to use a suitable learning media (Udayani et al., 2021). Learning media is very helpful for teachers to make students understand more about the existing content and help the students to understanding reading text. According to Zainuri & Saepuloh (2022) explains that learning media are means that support the learning process, emphasizing principles such as effectiveness (achieving learning goals), efficiency (optimal use of time, cost, and resources), relevance (alignment with learning objectives and content), and productivity (optimal use of available natural and human resources).

Learning media can be classified into various types, such as non-projected visual media (charts, diagrams), projected visual media (slides, overhead projectors), audio media (radio, tapes), and audiovisual media (videos, multimedia presentations) (Sumiharsono & Hasanah, 2017). Comic Strip is one of visual media that suitable with narrative text (Setyawan, 2018). Comic strips are classified as learning media because they are printed or digital and comprise a sequence of illustrated panels that use a combination of text and images, frequently in speech balloons, to tell a story or impart educational information. They are useful teaching aids in the classroom because they engage students both cognitively and visually, making difficult or abstract ideas more approachable and pleasurable. Comic strips are used in teaching and learning processes to improve language skills such as vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing, and grammar by providing contextualized, meaningful, and visually appealing content that motivates learners. Comic strip is a visual medium consist of the stories and pictures. It

becomes a good medium to improve students' ability in reading process. Based on (Ana, 2015) opinion Comic Strip can increase student interest and motivation, making learning more enjoyable and interactive, which leads to better engagement and improved learning outcomes (Nafisah & Pratama, 2020). Moore et al. (2018) defines comic as a hybrid word and image form in which two narrative tracks, one verbal and one visual, register temporary spatially. Comic moves forward in time through the space of the page, through its progressive counter point of presence and absence: packed panels (also called frames) alternating with gutters (empty space).

The researcher conducted the preliminary research in MTs Miftahul Ulum Melirang, Gresik. In this school, the researcher has observed the media applied by the teacher when teaching narrative text. The teacher does not use media and teach the material of narrative text only by using handbook which makes students feel unmotivated in reading comprehension. There are many reasons why students are low in reading comprehension. First, the students feel bored in reading learning process. Second, the strategy or media used by the teacher is not interesting and make the students cannot understand the reading lesson. So, the teacher must be creative to give interesting strategy for the students. The interesting strategy will help the students to understand the reading learning process. Comic Strip will use as interesting learning media and suitable for reading narrative text.

Using Comic Strip as learning media in the classroom, the researcher also study about the weakness of the class in line with reading ability. Students are difficult to understand the content of the reading text, students are less in vocabulary, student are not enthusiasm to read the reading texts, students think English is difficult and not fun, and English is not their mother tongue. In conclusion, we must teach students with good teaching.

METHOD

This research focused on improving students' reading comprehension by using comic strips based on narrative text of the ninth grades students of MTs Miftahul Ulum Melirang. Since the focused on improving students reading comprehension, so the research was collaborative on action research (CAR).

The setting of the research was at MTs Miftahul Ulum Melirang. There were nine classrooms. Some considerations were taken by the researcher as the place for conducting the research. Because the school was located in the village which the teacher mostly used the mechanical in teaching reading comprehension, especially in teaching reading of narrative text, and the teacher never used comic strips in teaching narrative text.

This research were conducted from planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Before starting the planning preceded by the preliminary study. The process during the research could be seen as below:

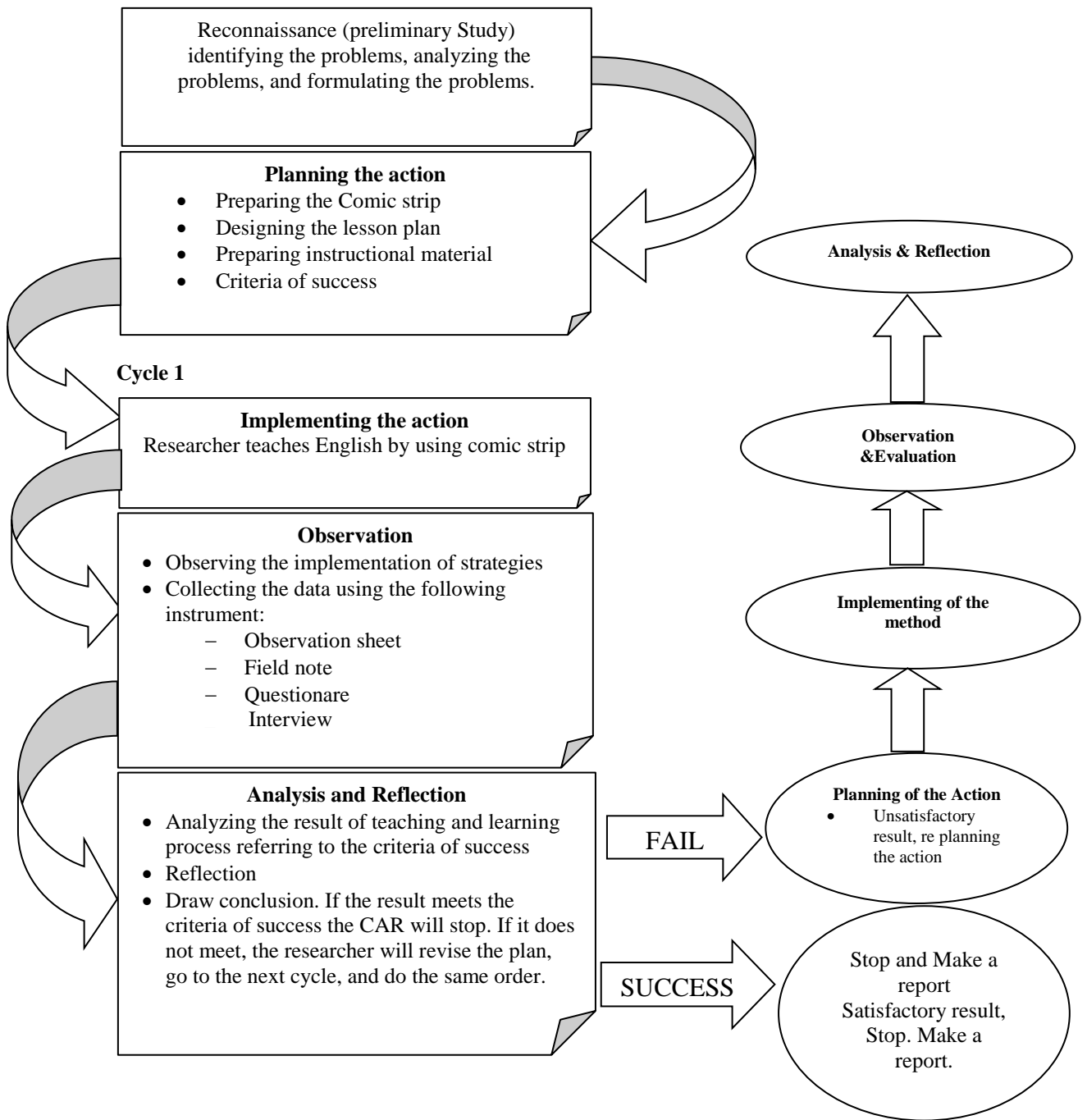


Figure 1. The flowchart of class action research activity

The preliminary studies consisted of identifying the problems, analyzing the problems, and formulating the problems. The planning was carried out on the basis of a preliminary study, in which problems was identified, and comic strip was prepared. It included designing the media of the activity, the lesson plan, the teaching media and the materials, the students' worksheet, and the criteria of success. The second was implementing the action conducted by the researcher in the teaching and learning process. Next, observing the action done by the collaborator to collect the data during the action. Basically, this activity was carried out

simultaneously with media implementation to ensure that the media gone well as planned. The final was reflection that appears the results of the implementation of the media, whether the lesson plans and the media went well as planned. Then the question marks in the figure below showed if the result of the previous cycle were unsuccessful the researcher must rearranged the plan and continued to the next cycle. the researcher analyzed all the data about the learning process that had been done from the first meeting to the end of the meeting. Through the reflection, the researcher knew the result of the students' ability in comprehending reading narrative text based on the worksheet. The students' ability in comprehending the narrative text in this cycle was improved but still low. It meant that this cycle was categorized unsuccessful. So, the researcher would continue to the next cycle.

Because in the first cycle there were many students who had low scores and did not reach the liveliness, the researcher would change the lesson plan and explained the materials easily to the students. The lesson plan changed by the researcher in the second cycle aimed to make the students felt comfortable and easier to understanding the materials in the cycle 2.

The second cycle was held to achieve the improvement score of the students in reading narrative text. The result of the students' worksheet in cycle 2 was most of the students reach the passing grade score 75 or above 75. The mean of the students' worksheet in meeting 2 of second cycle was 84. Mean score in second cycles was better than mean score of the students' worksheet in second meeting of the first cycle. On cycle 2 the mean of the students' worksheet showed significance improvement from 70,8 to 84. From this result, the researcher decided to end the observation because it can be categorized successful.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Result

The researcher conducted the observation sheet, field note when teaching learning process, students' worksheet, interview and questionnaire. The results of the data were collected as the data studied by the researcher. She used comic strips as a fun media to make students more focused and interested.

a. Observation Sheet and Field Note

In the observation and field note showed that the teaching learning activity was late because there were students outside the classroom. During the teaching learning process most of the students still remembered what the researcher taught and most of the students gave right answer when the researcher asked about the materials. When reviewing the worksheet in the first meeting nobody asked to the researcher. During learning processes, the researcher asked the students whether worksheet in the last meeting difficult of not. The students said that the comic strips narrative text better than ordinary narrative text. Because the students did the assignment with their partner the class condition become noisier and took long time to finish the worksheet. Before did the worksheet, the researcher had given the vocabulary but the students still asked about the meaning of the questions word. They said, "Miss what the meaning of express?", "Miss what the meaning of awestruck? "Miss can you translate the point A B C D of the tenth

number?" . Although they were made noise, they looked happy when doing the assignment with their partner. So, it can be concluded that in this meeting there was an improvement of their reading comprehension and the students' active score was 75%, the score was higher than in the cycle 1.

In the second meeting of cycle 2, the students came to the class ontime. When reviewed the worksheet, there was student asked about the last worksheet "Miss why the number four the answer was B? Why not A?". After one student asked about the number four, most of the students also showed that their answer was wrong. And then the researcher answered the student questions well. When explained the material there were some students who still talked to their friends, so the researcher pointed several students to answer the researcher questions about the example of narrative text. All of the students who had pointed by the researcher to answer the question were got correct answer. The students' more focused and understood the material given by the researcher. When did the exercise, the students looked quite and did not make noisy. There were students asked about the meaning of the English word but not as much as the last meeting. They asked "Miss what is the east, south, and west?", "Miss what the meaning of glad?". Then the researcher translated the word into Indonesian and written to the white board in front of the classroom. Next, they were serious did the worksheet and made them collected the worksheet before the times up. The activity of did the worksheet becomes faster than in the first meeting of cycle 2 From the result of learning process and the field note above, the total score of students' activities was 85%. It could be showed from the students' behavior in the class. They were focused on listened the researcher in the class, answered the questions well and finished the worksheet before times up.

b. Questionnaire

Based on the questionnaire filled by the students, there were six students who disliked the comic strip media. Nine students liked and ten students sometimes liked it. It can be seen that most of the students disliked reading skill even when using comic strips. In the other hand, there were eighteen students who understand the content when using comic strips as the media in teaching reading. Three students did not understand and four students sometimes understood the content. This questionnaire also proves that most of the students understood the content of comic strips even when they disliked reading comic strips

c. Students' Worksheet

The result of the students' worksheet in the second cycle of the first meetings showed that the total score of the students was 1770 and the students mean score was 70,8. There were 11 students who pass the passing grade and 14 students did not pass the passing grade from the 25 students in the classroom. In the second meeting, the total score of the students was 2100 and the mean score was 84. There were 20 students who pass the passing grade and 5 students did not pass the passing grade from the 25 students in the classroom. In conclusion, there were improvements of the students score from the first meeting until the second meeting in this cycle.

d. Interview

The data of the score above was also supported by the interview with the teacher. The researcher asked the teacher about the student improvement in this cycle. The teacher said that, *"seeing the students answers and their responses, they understood the content. When using comic strips as the learning media they were more interested". "the improvement that the student experiences was about their reading understanding about narrative text, because during reading text using comic strips they could answer the questions of the narrative text better"* .

In addition, the researcher concluded that there was improvement of the students reading comprehension of narrative text by using comic strips. It was known from the students' improvement based on the students score after interviewed with the English teacher, the students' active in the class reach 75% and most of the students passed the passing grade in the last meeting of cycle 2. It could be concluded that, this research was categorized as successful and the researcher could stop at this stage.

2. Discussion

Based on the teaching learning process done by the researcher, students' understanding of the material in the first cycle was good. However, the students' understanding in the second cycle was no less good than the first. The improvement of students' understanding in the second cycle was much better than the first one. After doing the action in cycle 1, the results showed that there were improvements of the students' reading comprehension in narrative text through comic strips. The students' improvement could be seen from their reading comprehension. Their reading comprehension was better after the treatment. Although the students' reading comprehension was better, but there were many students who unsuccessful in their worksheet and their activity score.

Then in cycle 2, the result showed that the students made better improvement on doing the worksheet. There were just 5 students who were unsuccessful on their worksheet. It could be concluded that the students score in cycle 2 was better than their score in cycle 1. Based on the findings of the first cycle, the students had some difficulties in reading comprehension. Those were the problems with their vocabulary, motivation, interest and understanding. So that, teaching reading by using comic strips maybe could reduce the problems faced by the students.

Based on the previous study, Nadiyah et al. (2019) defined the advantage and disadvantage of using comic strips. The advantages were it builds students skills in finding the text meaning and students' vocabulary. In other side comic strips can entertain the students so raised student motivation to reading text and building students love of reading. It is appropriate media to increase Indonesian reading interest. In teaching learning, teacher should use variety media to make students impressed and raised the student motivation. It could significantly raise the students' achievement. Using comic in the classroom is one alternative media that teacher can use in the classroom. However, although there were many advantages, students still did not understand if there were difficult words, because they will only be understood what was told in the comics.

CONCLUSION

In this research, there are two cycle that must be done by the researcher. The two cycles are related to the students' reading comprehensions. Based on the finding, it showed that comic strips are the effective media in teaching reading comprehension at the ninth-grade students of MTs Miftahul Ulum Melirang. Using comic strips can improve the students reading skill especially in reading comprehension. Before the comic strips are distributed by the researcher, the students' reading comprehension is not good and still had many mistakes. It was very different after the researcher distributes the comic strips media on the students' narrative worksheet. The researcher finds the improvements between the first worksheet in the first cycle and the last worksheet in the second cycle. It proves that applying comic strips in teaching reading comprehension more effective to make the students understand the materials.

The students' improvements can be seen through the students' score. Based on the finding, it is reported that in cycle 1 52% or 13 total students were successful in their worksheet. The students' score was 23% lower than passing grade. The students mean score was 67, it was 8 score lower than the passing grade. Moreover, the significance improvements could be seen in this cycle. Meanwhile, the total score of students passed the passing grade was 84% or 21 total students pass the passing grades in the second cycle, it was 9% higher than the passing grade and 32% higher than the total percentage of the students in the first cycle. The final mean score of the students was achieved 78, it was 3% higher than the lowest required passing grade. In conclusion, using comic strips for the ninth-grade students of MTs Miftahul Ulum Melirang can improve students reading comprehension of narrative text.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cartwright, K. B. (2023). *Executive skills and reading comprehension: A guide for educators*. Guilford publications.
- Cronin, L. P., Kervin, L., & Mantei, J. (2022). Transition to school: children's perspectives of the literacy experiences on offer as they move from pre-school to the first year of formal schooling. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 45(1), 103-121.
- Gallagher, K. (2023). *Deeper reading: Comprehending challenging texts, 4-12*. Routledge
- Moore, A. B., Nowostawski, M., Frantz, C., & Hulbe, C. (2018). Comic strip narratives in time geography. *ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information*, 7(7), 245.
- Nadiyah, S., Wijaya, F. Y., & Hakim, A. R. (2019). Desain komik strip matematika pada materi Statistika untuk kelas Vi tingkat sekolah dasar. *JKPM (Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Matematika)*, 4(2), 135-146.
- Nafisah, B. Z., & Pratama, A. (2020). Using comic strips to improve students' motivation and reading comprehension at MA Raudlatu Shiblyan NW Belencong. *PALAPA*, 8(2), 404-417.
- Rasyid, F. (2023). Learning Styles, Self-Regulation and Reading Achievement: Evidence From Indonesia. In *Conference on English Language Teaching* (pp. 257-273).

- Setyawan, F. H. (2018). The effectiveness of using comic in teaching reading narrative text. *JET (Journal Of English Teaching) Adi Buana*, 3(1), 67-75.
- Subadiyono. 2014. *Pembelajaran Membaca*. Palembang : Noer Fikri Offset
- Sumiharsono, R., & Hasanah, H. (2017). *Media Pembelajaran: Buku Bacaan Wajib Dosen, Guru dan Calon Pendidik*. Pustaka Abadi.
- Udayani, N. K. R. T. K., Wibawa, I. M. C., & Rati, N. W. (2021). Development of e-comic learning media on the topic of the human digestive system. *Journal of Education Technology*, 5(3), 472-481.
- Yuvirawan, M. F., Listia, R., & Amelia, R. (2021, February). Students' Problems in Reading Narrative Text. In *2nd International Conference on Social Sciences Education (ICSSE 2020)* (pp. 95-98). Atlantis Press.
- Zainuri, A., & Saepuloh, S. (2022). Evaluasi Manajemen Media Pembelajaran Pada Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 3(3), 255-263.