

**IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS OF THE EIGHTH
GRADE OF SMP N 1 KARANG NONGKO BY USING STRUCTURE
STRATEGY IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2015/2016**

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By

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APPROVAL

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**Improving Reading Comprehension Skills of the Eighth Grade of SMP N 1
Karang Nongko by Using Structure Strategy in the Academic Year of
2015/2016**

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Abstract: The objective of this research was to improve reading comprehension skills of the eighth grade students at SMPN 1 Karang Nongko by using Structure Strategy. This research was categorized as Classroom Action Research (CAR) employing the four steps namely: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The types of data were qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data were obtained through classroom observation and interviews. The quantitative data were obtained from the pre-test and post-test. The result showed that the students' reading comprehension significantly improved through Structure Strategy. The strategy facilitated the students in understanding the whole meaning of the text by being aware of the important parts of the text. Moreover, the structure-strategy diagram made the students actively engaged in the teaching and learning process. The actions made significant improvements of the students' reading comprehension in the aspects of vocabulary interpretation, generating main idea, identifying the detail information of the text, and also students' participation during the reading lesson. The findings were supported by the students' mean scores which increased from 55.76 in the pre-test to 65.00 in the post-test.

Key words: reading, comprehension, Structure Strategy, students

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Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk meningkatkan kemampuan reading siswa kelas VIII di SMPN 1 Karang Nongko dengan menggunakan *Struture Strategy*. Penelitian ini dikategorikan sebagai penelitian tindakan kelas yang menggunakan empat langkah, yaitu *planning*, *action*, *observation*, dan *reflection*. Tipe data berupa data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Data kualitatif diperoleh dari observasi dan interview. Data kuantitatif diperoleh dari pre-test dan post-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan reading siswa meningkat secara signifikan melalui *Structure Strategy*. Strategi ini memfasilitasi siswa dalam memahami makna teks secara keseluruhan dengan menyadari bagian penting teks. Lagi pula, diagram strategi ini membuat siswa aktif terlibat dalam proses belajar mengajar. Tindakan yang dilakukan menunjukkan peningkatan kemampuan baca siswa dalam aspek interpretasi kosa kata, mengidentifikasi main idea, mengidentifikasi informasi detail teks, dan juga partisipasi siswa selama pelajaran *reading*. Temuan ini didukung oleh skor rerata siswa yang meningkat dari 55.76 pada pre-test menjadi 65.00 pada post-test. .

Kata kunci :membaca, pemahaman, Structure Strategy, siswa

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Introduction

Everyone knows that English is important to master. Harmer (2001:1) says that English has become a *lingua franca*. It means English is a language accepted for communication between two different native speakers. When there are two speakers on different native languages who meet and want to have a conversation, automatically, they will greet in English.

In Indonesia, English becomes one of the main subjects. The students have to learn this subject from junior high school. As stated in the Ministerial Education Regulation No. 22/2006, there are several objectives in developing the students' communicative competences in oral and written forms to achieve the functional level of literacy. In the Standard Competencies and the Basic Competence, the students are expected to have good ability in reading certain text-types: descriptive, procedure, recount, narrative, report and short functional texts. They are required to comprehend the nature of the texts correctly.

Reading is one of the significant skills in English. It is one of the receptive skills besides listening. This skill enables students to develop their ability. According to Mikulecky & Jeffries (2004:3), reading is one important way which can improve the students' general skill in English like improving their vocabulary and comprehension, increasing their reading speed, gaining more knowledge and finding examples of many different ways people speak and write.

However, comprehending is not a simple matter. Based on the information obtained in the observation in the English teaching and learning process conducted in SMP N 1 Karang Nongko, some problems had been identified related to their reading comprehension. For instance, many of the students had low reading comprehension ability and some of the students had lack of vocabulary. Most students also participated passively in the teaching and learning process. They suddenly felt so demotivated when they found unfamiliar words. As the result, they left the text and jumped to the questions related to details without inferring or understanding the message inside the text. In my opinion, without training themselves to read thoroughly, they found it difficult in finding main idea, inference and some explicit information.

There are various kinds of strategies in reading that can be implemented to support the students in comprehending texts; one of them called Structure Strategy. This strategy includes the students to analyze units of structure of a text. It also involves the students to separate the structure of the text and arrange the information in a diagram to help them in comprehending the text efficiently. The use of the diagram is also expected to motivate the students in participating in the lessons.

Meyer, Brandt, and Bluth (1980, in Meyer and Ray, 2011:128) say that readers who apply a "Structure Strategy" seek to identify and use the organization of the author to organize their understanding. The Structure Strategy facilitates comprehension by helping the readers to organize concepts based on the explicit or implied relationships that are communicated by the text.

Furthermore, Lorch and Lorch (1995, in McNamara, 2007:356) defines Structure Strategy is one of the strategies which focuses on seeking coherence among text ideas. This strategy highlights the connection among sentences in a paragraph and grasps the interrelation of it to know the writer's flow of thoughts, so students are able to understand how the writer organize his idea.

Research Method

The research was categorized as Classroom Action Research (CAR). It was conducted in the second semester of SMP N 1 Karang Nongko in the academic year of 2015/2016. The subjects of the research were 27 students of Grade VIII B. The research procedure followed the model of action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns (2010: 9). The steps were planning, action, observation, and reflection. There were two kinds of the data in this research. They were qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were obtained by doing observation, interviewing both students and collaborator, making field notes, and having discussion with the collaborator as the observer. The quantitative data were obtained from the pre-test and post-test. The validity of the data was obtained by applying democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, catalytic validity, and dialogic validity.

Research Findings

This action research study was carried out in two cycles. The research findings and the discussion show that the students' reading comprehension of Grade VIII B at SMP N 1 KarangNongko improved through Structure Strategy. The students understood the story easily because they were trained to be aware of the important parts of the story. The students were also trained to practice on how to guess the meanings of the unfamiliar words. This action was not successful enough because the students could not solve some problems. However, training the students about the steps in this practice made them possible to practice this action in the future classes.

During the implementation of the strategy, the students showed their active participation. The classroom interaction also improved. The steps of the strategy were conducted both in pair and in group. These activities allowed students to interact with their classmates. The researcher also could interact closely with the students when she gave guidance and assistance during the discussion activities.

After the implementation of the research, the students showed their changes. This following table shows the changes of the students' comprehension.

Table 1: The Changes of the Students

No	Before the Actions	After the Actions
1.	The students' motivation of reading got dropped when they found unfamiliar words and long texts.	The students began to enjoy reading texts. They were less complaining when they faced unfamiliar words.
2.	The students took a long time to understand the meaning and the content of the texts.	Having been trained with Structure Strategy, the students easily understood the meaning of the texts
3.	The students had difficulties in finding te detailed information from the texts.	Having been trained in using Structure Strategy diagram, the students easily spotted the detailed information from the texts
4.	The students' mean in pre-test was 55.75 (before the actions).	The student's mean in posttest was 65.00 (after the actions)

The changes of the students in the classroom were also supported by the quantitative data. It was obtained by conducting reading comprehension tests. The scores improvement influenced the mean of the both tests. The pre-test mean was 55.75 and the post-test mean was 65.00. In the other words, the students' reading comprehension improved.

Conclusions and Suggestions

With regard to the findings, the implementation of Structure Strategy improved the students' reading comprehension. SS facilitate the students in improving their understanding of the whole meaning of the story by being aware to the important parts of the story and what the content of each part of the story was.

The structure-strategy diagram made the students actively engage in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the practice on how to guess the meanings of the words facilitated the students in facing the unfamiliar words in the text and the group discussion helped all the students actively participate during the reading practice.

In brief, students' reading comprehension improved as shown in the increase of the score gained by deducting the mean score of the pre-test from the mean score of the post-test. Therefore, it is suggested that the English teachers use Structure Strategy in their teaching and learning process of reading.

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