

Teaching Narrative Reading by Using the Sub-text Strategy for Islamic Senior High School Students

Muhamad Holandyah

State Islamic University of Raden Fatah, Indonesia
muhamadholandyah_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Nova Lingga Pitaloka

Sriwijaya University, Indonesia
novalinggapitaloka@fkip.unsri.ac.id

Wahyudiyanto

Private English Teacher, Palembang
wahyudiyanto.yw@gmail.com

Abstract

The objectives of this study were to find out whether or not there was a significant improvement before and after the treatment on the eleventh grade students' reading comprehension scores at one Islamic senior high school in Palembang by using Subtext strategy and to find out whether or not there was a significant difference on the eleventh grade students' reading comprehension scores between the students who were taught by using Subtext Strategy and those who were not. In this study, Quasi Experimental Design using pretest-posttest nonequivalent groups design was used. There were 60 students taken as sample. Each class consisted of 30 students from class XI IPS 2 as control group and class XI IPS 3 as experimental group. In collecting the data, reading comprehension test was used. The test was given twice to both experimental and control groups, as a pretest and posttest. To verify the hypotheses, the data of pretest and posttest were analyzed by using independent sample t-test and paired sample t-test in SPSS program. The findings showed that the p-output from paired sample t-test (sig2-tailed) was 0.000 which was lower than 0.05 and t-value 11.399 was higher than t-table with $df=29$ (2.0452). The result of p-output from independent sample t-test was 0.001 which was lower than 0.05, and the t-value 3.465 was higher than t-table with $df=58$ (2.0017). It means that teaching reading narrative text by using Subtext strategy had significant effect on the students' reading comprehension scores.

Keywords: narrative text, reading skills, sub-text strategy

Introduction

English is a global language that cannot be separated from our daily life. It becomes an important language since most of the people use English as their daily communication tool (Astrid et al., 2019; Erlina et al., 2019; Marzulina et al., 2019; Mukminin, Ali, & Ashari, 2015). According to Crystal (2003), English is a global language, which is widely used in various countries and in various fields. In addition, Mappiasse and Johari (2014) state that English language is one of the most spoken languages in the world of today. Similarly, Wierzbicka

(2006) also states that English is the most widely used language in the world. It suggests at least 150 million people use English fluently as a foreign language. Besides used in science, knowledge, technology and art, English can be a tool to get the aim at economic trade, international relation, social culture purpose and education with developing career. According to Sharifian (2009), English as an international language refers to a paradigm for thinking, research and practice. This reality encourages many countries to put English into the formal school curriculum that will be taught from elementary schools until universities, and one of those countries is Indonesia (Mukminin, Habibi, Prasojo, Idi, & Hamidah, 2019).

In Indonesia, English is very important to be mastered. Mattarrima and Hamdan (2011) state that English language teaching becomes increasingly important as the first foreign language in Indonesia. Therefore, the government requires that all schools in Indonesia especially at the high school level to make English as one of subjects tested in the national examination (Mukminin et al., 2018). According to Lauder (2008), it is widely recognized that English is important for Indonesia and the reason most frequently put forward to this is that English is a global international language. Reading has an important role in English. According to Anderson (2003), reading is an essential skill for learners of English. For most of learners, it is the most important skill to master in order to ensure success in learning. With strengthened reading skills, learners of English tend to make greater progress in other areas of language learning. In addition, Abdullah, Sabapathy, Theethappan, and Hassan (2012) state that reading is the most integral part in language learning. Students with strengthened reading skills will be able to progress and attain greater development in all academic areas. Furthermore, according to Mikulecky and Jeffries (1998), reading English is important for some reasons, such as: (1) reading in English helps students learn to think in English; (2) reading in English helps students build their English vocabulary; and (3) reading in English makes students more comfortable with writing in English. That is why, by reading students can increase their knowledge and ability in English (Mukminin et al., 2019; Nazurty et al., 2019).

In relation to this, however, comprehending a reading text is not an easy activity. Patel and Jain (2008) argue that reading is perhaps the most difficult language skill to teach for each involves so many different elements such as mechanical eye movement, grammar, vocabulary, and intellectual comprehension. Similarly, Cornoldi and Oakhill (1996) also state that a typical characteristic of children is often difficulty in understanding a written text. They do not seem to grasp the most important elements, the connection between the different parts, or to be able to search out the pieces of information they are looking for. In reading activities, students not only “read” but also do other activities unconsciously, such as thinking, interacting, speaking, listening, and writing. Difficulties and obstacles faced in the process of teaching and learning reading cannot be considered as the only reason for students to not be able to master their reading skills.

In Indonesia, reading still becomes a problem for the students. World Bank and IEA (2008) describes that in East of Asia, Indonesian people had the lowest level in reading English text (as cited in Furqon, 2014, p. 3). Indonesian students’ reading skills is lower than other countries. The mean score of Indonesian students’ was 397 while the OECD average score was 493 (OECD, 2016). The position rank of Indonesia in PISA reading is 62th out of 70 countries participating reported from Program for International student Assessment (PISA) 2015. The data show that Indonesian’s reading skill is still poor. It means that Indonesian students need a strategy to improve their reading skill. Problems in narrative reading comprehension also

happened to the eleventh grade students' of MA Patra Mandiri Palembang, one Islamic senior high school in Palembang. Based on the informal interview with the teacher of English and the eleventh grade students, there were many problems that students faced in learning reading. The problems were: (1) the students had lack of motivation in reading English text; (2) the students had poor vocabulary, so they were not able to guess the meaning easily; (3) the students could not predict the content of the narrative text; (4) the students got difficulty to identify the character of the narrative text; and (5) some of the students took too much time in comprehending the text. It happened because there was no interesting way to attract their interests in narrative reading text. Therefore, the students felt bored in reading narrative text and lazy in comprehending narrative text. Besides, the average score of students' comprehension in narrative reading text was lower than report and analytical exposition texts. In relation to the use of Subtext strategy, a study by Sasra (2013) showed that the use of Subtext Strategy successfully improved the students' reading comprehension skills. In addition, the second study written by Adela (2014) also reported that there was a significant effect of using Subtext Strategy on reading comprehension of the students' senior high school. This study was designed to know whether or not there was significant improvement of the eleventh grade students' narrative reading comprehension achievement who are taught by using Subtext strategy; and to know whether or not there was significant difference of the eleventh grade students' narrative reading comprehension achievement between those who were taught by using Subtext strategy and those who were not.

Literature Review

Reading comprehension and narrative text

Reading comprehension is the main purpose of reading activity. All readers intend to have connection to the material that they read. Of course, the process of reading comprehension is also complex and it takes time for a reader to acquire the meaning of a reading material. According to Dorn and Soffos (2005), comprehending involves interpreting and synthesizing ideas in ways that influence the reader's mind. The readers need to be able to figure out the author's purpose presenting the material, comprehending some valuable information stated in the passage in relation to comprehending the overall content of reading materials. Furthermore, Westwood (2008) states that reading comprehension can be defined as an active thinking process through which a reader intentionally constructs meaning to form a deeper understanding of concepts and information presented in a text. Reading comprehension is reading the text to get the meaning and understanding of the text. Woolley (2011) explains that reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from the text. Reading comprehension is reading the text to get the meaning and understanding of the text. From the definition above, it can be assumed that reading comprehension is an interactive process between reader and text to comprehend the writer's message.

Narrative is text type that tells about story whether true story (problematic personal experience) or fictional. However, the general purpose of narrative text is to entertain and engage the reader in an imaginative experience but actually there are many other purposes of narrative text. It is supported by Knapp and Watkins (2005) who adds that narrative has a powerful social role beyond that of being a medium for entertainment, and it is also a powerful medium for

changing social opinions and attitudes. Langan (2005) explains that narrative is storytelling, whether relating a single story or several related ones. Through narration, a statement can be clear by relating in detail with something happened. Even though there are many kinds of narrative texts (fairy tales, mystery story, novel, etc.), most of narrative texts include common structure and text feature. Dole, Donaldson, and Donaldson (2014) state that narrative has been proven to be essential to comprehension because the distinctive and identifying characteristics of a narrative is that it has a “chain of events” things that happen in a certain predictable chronological order. Chains of event are familiar to everyone within the culture because they are part of life experience.

Sub-text strategy

Several theories about Subtext Strategy have been stated by a number of experts. Leland, Lewison, and Harste (2014) define that Subtext strategy helps students to identify meanings that are not explicitly stated in text. It asks students to think about the various characters in a story and write down what they say, as well as what they are thinking. In addition, Clyde (2003) states that Subtext strategy engages in making personal connection, developing increasingly strategic inferencing skills, emphasizing with characters, and understanding perspectives different from their own. Subtext strategy enables students to reflect critically on texts and writing by delving deeply into their own thoughts and feelings as they consider the situations of characters.

According to Whitten (2009), Subtext strategy is appropriate for grade level in K-12, it is equal with senior high school level in Indonesia, this strategy can be applied in fiction texts, it could be also be applied to some nonfiction readings, such as history or social studies text. Because of that this strategy can be applied in fiction and nonfiction text. One strategy above can be said as a strategy which allows the students to contribute to other students about some information from what they are reading. The information can be derived from what they understand and their background of knowledge. Then the students can get additional information about the reading topic in order to attach the new information of the similar topic being read. Leland, Lewison, and Harste (2014) proposed that the steps of Subtext strategy are: (1) Students read the story and identify the various characters, (2) Teacher gives a note of each color for each main characters, and designates one color for ‘saying’ notes and the other color for ‘thinking’ notes, (3) Students create two notes for each main character. On one note they write what the character ‘saying’ and the other what the characters ‘thinking.’ (4) Students use these ‘saying’ and ‘thinking’ notes to identify larger issues.

Methods

Research design, research site, and participants

This study used a quasi-experimental design, pretest-posttest non-equivalent group design. There were two groups, experimental and control group which was given the same pretest and posttest. The experimental group was given treatment by using Subtext strategy but the control group was not. The population of this research was eleventh grade students of MA Patra Mandiri Palembang, one of Islamic senior high schools in Palembang. Meanwhile, the samples were taken by using convenience sampling. Just as Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) claim that

a convenience sampling is a group of individuals who are (conveniently) available for study. The samples of this study were XI IPS 2 and XI IPS 3. The writer selected class XI IPS 2 and XI IPS 3 as sample, because when the writer was conducting an observation there, the teacher of English said those classes were averagely the same level and they were available to be studied. The total number of samples was sixty students, thirty students from each class.

Data collection and analysis

In this study, we used reading comprehension test in the form of multiple choice to collect the data. The test items in the pretest were the same as those of posttest, because the purpose of giving them was to know the progress of students' reading comprehension scores before and after treatments. Pretest was given before the treatment. The purpose of giving pretest to the students was to know the students' English reading comprehension scores before implementing Subtext strategy. Meanwhile, posttest was given after the treatment. The posttest was administered to know the students' English reading comprehension scores after implementing Subtext strategy. The result of this test was compared to the result of pretest in order to measure the students' progress taught by using Subtext strategy. The data analysis technique used was qualitative. In analyzing the data, data obtained from quasi experimental design were calculated by means of SPSS 20 software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In order to see whether there was a significant improvement before and after they were treated by using Subtext Strategy, T-Test was used as inferential statistical analysis.

Findings

Distribution of frequency data

In distribution of frequency data, score, frequency, and percentage were analyzed. The scores were obtained from; (1) pretest scores in control group; (2) posttest scores in control group; (3) pretest scores in experimental group; and (4) posttest scores in experimental group

Table 1. Distribution of frequency data on students' pretest score in control group

Scores	Frequency	Percentage (%)
32.50	2	6.7
40.00	3	10
42.50	2	6.7
45.00	2	6.7
47.50	4	13.3
50.00	3	10
52.50	1	3.3
55.00	3	10
57.50	3	10
60.00	4	13.3
62.50	1	3.3
65.00	1	3.3
70.00	1	3.3
Total	30	100

Based on the result analysis of students' pretest scores in control group, it shows that two students got 32.5 (6.7%), three students got 40 (10%), two students got 42.5 (6.7%), two students got 45 (6.7%), four students got 47.5 (13.3%), three students got 50 (10%), one student got 52.5 (3.3%), three students got 55 (10%), three students got 57.5 (10%), four students got 60 (13.3%), one student got 62.5 (3.3%), one student got 65 (3.3%), and one student got 70 (3.3%).

Table 2. Distribution of frequency data on students' posttest scores in control group

Scores	Frequency	Percentage (%)
40.00	1	3.3
47.50	1	3.3
50.00	1	3.3
52.50	1	3.3
55.00	5	16.7
57.50	1	3.3
60.00	5	16.7
62.50	2	6.7
65.00	6	20
67.50	2	6.7
70.00	3	10
72.50	1	3.3
75.00	1	3.3
Total	30	100

Based on the result analysis of students' pretest scores in control group, it shows that one student got 40 (3.3%), one student got 47.5 (3.3%), one student got 50 (3.3%), one student got 52.5 (3.3%), five students got 55 (16.7%), one student got 57.5 (3.3%), five students got 60 (16.7%), two students got 62.5 (6.7%), six students got 6.5 (20%), two students got 67.5 (6.7%), three students got 70 (10%), one student got 72.5 (3.3%), and one student got 75 (3.3%).

Table 3. Distribution of frequency data on students' pretest scores in experimental group

Scores	Frequency	Percentage (%)
32.50	1	3.3
35.00	5	16.7
37.50	3	10.0
42.50	1	3.3
45.00	2	6.7
47.50	2	6.7
50.00	5	16.7
52.50	1	3.3
55.00	4	13.3
57.50	1	3.3
60.00	2	6.7
62.50	1	3.3
65.00	1	3.3
67.50	1	3.3
Total	30	100

Based on the result analysis of students' pretest scores in control group, it shows that one student got 32.5 (3.3%), five students got 35 (16.7%), three students got 37.5 (10%), one student got 42.5 (3.3%), two students got 45 (6.7%), two students got 47.5 (6.7%), five students got 50 (16.7%), one student got 52.5 (3.3%), four students got 55 (13.3%), one student got 57.5 (3.3%), two students got 60 (6.7%), one student got 62.5 (3.3%), one student got 65 (3.3%), and one student got 67.5 (3.3%).

Table 4. Distribution of frequency data on students' posttest scores in experimental group

Scores	Frequency	Percentage (%)
50.00	1	3.3
52.50	1	3.3
60.00	4	13.3
62.50	3	10
65.00	5	16.7
67.50	1	3.3
70.00	4	13.3
72.50	2	6.7
75.00	5	16.7
77.50	1	3.3
80.00	3	10
Total	30	100

From the analyses above, it was found that there were one student got 50 (3.3%), one student got 52.5 (3.3%), four students got 60 (13.3%), three students got 62.5 (10%), five students got 65 (16.7%), one student got 67.5 (3.3%), four students got 70 (13.3%), two students got 72.5 (6.7%), five students got 75 (16.7%), one student got 77.5 (3.3%), and three students got 80 (10%).

Descriptive statistics

In the descriptive statistics, the total of sample (N), minimum and maximum scores, mean score, standard deviation were analyzed. The scores were obtained from; (1) pretest scores in control group; (2) posttest scores in control group; (3) pretest scores in experimental group; and (4) posttest scores in experimental group

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the students both of group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest Control	30	32.50	70.00	50.9167	9.29598
Pretest Experiment	30	32.50	67.50	48.0833	10.10043
Posttest Control	30	40.00	75.00	61.0000	7.81246
Posttest Experiment	30	50.00	80.00	68.0000	7.83449
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Normality test

In measuring normality test, *1 Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov* is used. The data is normal since the p-output is higher than 0.05.

Table 6. Normality test of students' pretest and posttest scores in control and experimental group

No	Group	N	Kolmogrov Smirnov	Sig.	Result
1	Students' Pretest Control Group	30	0.565	0.907	Normal
2	Students' Pretest Experimental Group	30	0.836	0.487	Normal
3	Students' Posttest Control Group	30	0.707	0.700	Normal
4	Students' Posttest Experimental Group	30	0.634	0.816	Normal

Homogeneity

In measuring homogeneity test, *Levene statistics* was used. The data is homogeneous since the p-output is higher than 0.05.

Table 7. Homogeneity test of students' pretest scores in control and experimental group

	Group	N	Levene Statistics	Sig.	Result
Pretest	Control Group	32	0.291	0.591	Homogen
	Experimental Group	32			
Posttest	Control Group	32	0.085	0.772	Homogen
	Experimental Group	32			

Result of hypothesis testing

In this study, Paired sample t-test used to measure significant improvement on students' narrative reading comprehension achievement score taught by using Subtext strategy at one Islamic senior high school in Palembang before and after treatment. Independent sample t-test was used to measure a significant difference on students' narrative reading comprehension achievement score taught by using Subtext Strategy and those who were not.

Table 8. Result analysis of paired sample t-test from students' pretest to posttest scores in experimental groups

	Paired Sample t-Test			Ho	Ha
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Using Subtext Strategy at MA Patra Mandiri Palembang	11.399	29	0.000	Rejected	Accepted

Based on the table analysis, it was found that the p-output is 0.000 with $df=29$ (2.0452), and t -value= 11.399. It can be stated that there is a significant improvement from students' pretest to posttest scores in experimental group taught using Subtext Strategy since p-output is lower than 0.05. It can be stated that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted.

Table 9. Result analysis of independent sample t-test from students' posttest scores in experimental and control groups

Using <i>Subtext strategy</i> and Teacher's Method	Independent Sample t-Test			H_0	H_a
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	2.986	62	0.004	Rejected	Accepted

From the table analysis, it was found that the p-output was 0.001 and the t -value was 3.465. It can be stated that there was significant difference on students' reading comprehension scores taught by using Subtext Strategy since the p-output was lower than 0.05 and the t -value was higher than t -table ($df\ 58 = 2.0017$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted.

Discussion

Based on the findings above, some interpretations were made as follows: After conducting the research, it was found that there was a significant improvement from students' pretest to posttest scores in experimental and control group from the result of Paired Sample T-test analysis. In other words, students' reading comprehension achievement in experimental group improved after they were taught by using Subtext strategy. Meanwhile, students' reading comprehension achievement in control group also improved but not as significant as the experimental group did. At the beginning, the pretests in both control and experimental were conducted. After the students' pretest scores obtained from control and experimental groups, we chose XI IPS 2 as a control group and XI IPS 3 as experimental group. It was because the students' scores in control group were higher than the students' scores in experimental group. It was also proven by the means of pretest in XI IPS 2 which was higher than XI IPS 3. It could happen because the students of XI IPS 3 seemed bored in doing the test. They were lazy to read the provided texts in the test. Thus, they answered the questions without comprehending the texts.

In addition, we found that the students faced difficulties before the treatment in experimental group. The problems were (1) the lack of students' motivation in reading English text; (2) the students got difficulty to identify the characteristics of the narrative text; (3) the students had poor vocabulary; (4) they could not understand the content of the narrative text; and lastly, (5) some of the students got difficulties in comprehending the text. To solve these problems, Subtext strategy was conducted to help students in teaching and learning process of narrative reading. When we did the treatment in experimental group, there were significant improvements through Subtext Strategy after 12 meetings.

Finally, based on the explanations above, Subtext Strategy was successfully applied to the eleventh grade students of one Islamic senior high school in Palembang. The statement was

supported by two previous related studies Sasra (2012) and Adela (2014). The previous related studies found that Subtext strategy is effective to improve students reading comprehension achievement. In addition, it was also found out that there was a significant difference on student's narrative reading comprehension scores between the students who were taught by using Subtext strategy and those who were not. Therefore, the teacher of English can use Subtext strategy in teaching and learning process to improve the students' narrative reading achievement.

Conclusions

There are some conclusions that can be drawn from this research referred to the findings and interpretation presented in the previous chapter. First, based on the result of pretest to posttest, Subtext Strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension score to the eleventh grade students of one Islamic senior high school in Palembang. Second, there was significant difference on students' reading comprehension score to the eleventh grade students who were taught by using Subtext Strategy and those who were taught by strategy that was usually used by the teacher of one Islamic senior high school in Palembang. Therefore, it can be inferred that the teaching reading comprehension in narrative text by using Subtext strategy can be considered as an alternative strategy that can be used.

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