

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THINK ALOUD STRATEGY TO IMPROVE  
STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN NARRATIVE TEXT  
STUDY AT THE EIGHTH GRADE OF SMP MUHAMMADIYAH  
LIMBUNG (A *Pre-Experimental Research*)**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The problem of this research consisted of how is the improvement at the students' literal and interpretative reading comprehension through Think Aloud Strategy at the eighth grade of SMP Muhammadiyah Limbung? This research aimed to find out the improvement of the students' literal comprehension and interpretative comprehension. The research is limited to improve the students' comprehension in narrative text through Think Aloud Strategy on literal reading comprehension (the specific information and sequence events) and interpretative comprehension (conclusion and implication). To find out the improvement, the researcher used pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test design. The population was the eighth grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah Limbung. The sample was taken by purposive sampling technique and the total number of sample was 36 students. It employed of six meetings (one meeting for pre-test, four meetings for treatment, and one meeting for post-test). It employed reading test as instrument. The research findings indicated that the application of Think Aloud Strategy was effective in improving the students' literal and interpretative reading comprehension. It was proved by the value of the t-test 19.91, which was higher than the value of t-table (2.030). This indicated that H1 was accepted, and H0 was rejected and there was a significant difference of the students' reading comprehension before and after using Think Aloud Strategy. It was concluded that Think Aloud Strategy improved the students' reading comprehension.*

**Keywords:** Think Aloud Strategy, Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text, Experimental Research.

**INTRODUCTION**

English is one of the interactional languages which has an important role in the world. In some countries the power language is the official language which is used for government education commerce and international communication. In Indonesia English is a foreign language that was taught from elementary school to university. English is a foreign language used a medium of instruction at school, many students think that English is the most difficult subject.

The goal of teaching and learning English is to produce and comprehend language that are spoken and written. Some people think that a successful English

learner is a person who can speak English fluently. They do not know that a person who is said a success English learner is a person who is master in all of English skills.

There are four skills in English, they are speaking, writing, reading, and listening. It is better for English learners to master in all those skill, but the fact is different. Many English learners do not master in all of those skills. For example, some of English learners are good in writing, but not for speaking or vice versa. The other example, some English learners are good in reading, but not well in listening or vice versa. It means that these English learners have different ability in acquiring language.

According to Anderson (1999:15) reading as an active process of building meaning from the reading materials where the meaning does not reside on the printed page, nor is it only in the reader. To sum up reading is a complex process that requires the active participation the reader toward the texts and context in order to convey and interpreting the meaning.

Reading is very important for English learners because reading can enlarge their knowledge, vocabulary, and information. From reading is able to get complete understanding of the text. This might be cause by the fact that many of those students do not know the essential information needed to understand a word, including how a word combines with other words difficultget information from the passage and difficult to make a conclusion of the passage. All of those problems will affect the learner in comprehending the passage and reading achievement. Therefore those students need strategies or technique in order to overcome the problem. With regard to the condition, the researcher decides to use think aloud strategy to solve the problem and help both the teacher and the students to get new knowledge and experience in their teaching learning process and of course to improve the English class, in this case the students' reading comprehension. The research problems are formulated as follows; how is the improvement at the students' literal reading comprehension through think aloud strategy at the eighth grade of SMP Muhammadiyah Limbung? And how is the improvement at the students' interpretative reading comprehension through think aloud strategy at the eighth grade of SMP Muhammadiyah Limbung?

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Haris & Hodges, 2004. The think aloud is a strategy that allows a teacher to verbalize thoughts while reading orally, modelling for students how the prcess of comprehension works. The goal of the think aloud strategy is that eventually students will develop a similiar thinking process when they are reading independently, thereby improving their comprehension. The think aloud strategy asks students to say out oud what they are thinking when they are reading, solving math problem, or simply responding to questions posed by teacher or other students. Effective teacher think out loud on a regular basis to model this process for students. In this way they demonstrate practical ways of approaching difficult

problem while bringing to the surface the complex thinking process that underlie reading comprehension, mathematical problem solving, and other cognitively demanding tasks.

Oster, 2001. Defines think aloud strategy as a reading method where students can verbalize their thought as they read, and thus bring into the open strategies they are using to understand the text. Within the think aloud method we can mention some reading comprehension strategies like predicting and visualizing. Focus on important information; to make predictions, to ask questions, to evoke background knowledge with the text and to express their personal reaction. Likewise we are talking about modeling reading strategies to help students to be aware of strategies they use in their native language (L1) to facilitate transfer into the target language (L2).

Afflerbach and Johnston cited by McKeown (2007), claim that think-aloud serves firstly as a method of measuring the cognitive reading process, then as metacognitive tool to monitor comprehension. In that sense, the think aloud is appropriate for this study because through this strategy the students can monitor their comprehension process. In this research, it was decided to implement the think-aloud strategy because it was used as an instructional approach, and also because this strategy helped readers to comprehend more easily what was being read by them.

### **Reading Comprehension**

Based on McNeil (1992:16) comprehension is making sense out of the text. From an interaction perspective, reading comprehension is acquiring information from context and combining disparate elements into a new whole. According to Cahyono et al. (2011:55) reading is a means of transferring information between the writer and the reader. Therefore reading comprehension understands a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible (Grellet,1981:3).

Reading comprehension is very importance for everyone who to enlarge their knowledge and information. Sometimes some learners feel difficult to comprehend the text that they have read, so they get nothing from the text. So the teachers have to be more concern about the problem.

### **Teaching Reading**

In teaching reading, the teachers have to concern about the material that is used. The topic and type of reading texts are worth considering too. This topic and reading texts should depend on who students are. If the students are science students, reading scientific text many be a priority. If the students are junior high school students, reading narrative text may be a priority.

According to Mukhroji (2011), teaching reading is more influence by interactive strategies. Teachers teach skill directly, especially in the beginning and provide plenty opportunities for the students to experience by having them read

whole books. In regard, the teaching of reading indicates process interactive models of reading.

In reading class, the teachers have to decide what the purpose in reading will be done. It is reading for pleasure or reading for getting understands the passage. If the purpose of reading that will be done is for pleasure, the topic of reading text can be free, such as narrative. If the purpose of reading text that will be done is for getting understands the passage, the topic of reading text should be prepared before.

### **Narrative Text**

Meyers (2005:52) states that narrative is one of the most powerful ways of communicating with others. A good written story let your reader response to some event in your life as if it were own. They not only understand the event, but they can almost feel it. The action, details, and dialogue put the readers in these seem and make it happen for them. Moreover, Anderson (1997:8) states that narrative is a piece of text tells a story and, in doing, entertains or informs the reader or listener.

From the definition above, narrative story is a story that tells us about something interesting has purpose to amuse, entertain or the readers. You are using narrative when you tell a friend about something interesting that happen to you at work or at school, when you tell someone a joke.

### **METHODS**

This experimental design used pre- experimental research design (one group pretest-posttest design) that consist of pre-test, treatment and post-test. The success of the treatment is determined by comparing the pre-test and the post-test scores.

**Table 1.** Pattern of on group Pre-test Post-test design

<b>Pre test</b>	<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>Post test</b>
<b>X1</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>X2</b>

(Ary in Nikmah 2014:30)

### **Research Instrument**

The instrument used in the research was reading test with essay form. This instrument aimed to find out the result of students' improvement in reading especially in reading narrative text. To know students' ability in reading narrative text, the researcher gave essay form about 4 items. The test consisted pre-test and post-test. The researcher gave pre-test before apply the treatment which consist of several questions. It aimed to know students' prior knowledge in reading. While,

the post-test used to finding out students' improvement in reading after giving treatment.

### Data Collection

Data collection was the procedure used by the researcher to collecting the data. In conducting the test in the classroom, the researcher will do the following procedure.

#### 1. Pre-test

Before doing the treatment, the research gave pre-test to the students. It was conducted to know how far the student scores in reading. This test aimed to know how far the students ability in reading of narrative text. The pre-test comprised 4 items in the form of essay test about narrative text, after that the students read and answer the question. The result of pre-test will compare with result of post-test after doing treatment.

#### 2. Post-test

After the treatment, the researcher gave post-test to the students (the procedure was same with pre-test). The researcher distributed the instrument to the students, and the researcher asked the students to answer the questions based on the narrative text.

### Data Analysis

The data will be collected through quantitative analysis. The researcher used a procedure as follow:

#### 1. Scoring the result of the students' test will be classified as follows:

The researcher will correct the students reading comprehension based on the analogies scale for reading

##### a. Literal comprehension

**Table 2.** Criteria of Literal Comprehension

Criteria of literal comprehension	Score
Clearly identified the specific information and sequencing events by providing strong evidence details relating to the text	40
Identified the specific information and sequencing events by providing adequate evidence, details relating to the text	30
Limited specific information and sequencing events by providing limited evidence details relating to the text	20
Did not identify the specific information and sequencing events or provide any evidence details relating to the text	10

(Layman in Rusdi 2013:42)

b. Interpretative comprehension

**Table 3.** Criteria of Interpretative Comprehension

Criteria of interpretative comprehension	Score
Conclusion and implication are reflects resource reading in development of idea it is excellent	40
Conclusion and implication are reflects reading in development of idea it is good	30
Conclusion and implication are reflect only reading in development of idea it is poor	20
Conclusion and implication do not reflect any reading of resources in development idea	10

(Clarke in Rahmawati, 2014:27)

2. Scoring the students correct answer at pre-test and post-test by using this formula:

$$Score = \frac{Correct\ answer\ score}{Maximum\ Score} \times 100$$

(Sudjana in Harfiah, 2015:31)

3. Classifying the students' score answer into the following criteria:

**Table 4.** Classifying the Students' Score

Score	Categories
96 – 100	Excellent
86 – 95	Very Good
76 – 85	Good
66 – 75	Fairly good
56 – 65	Fair
36 – 55	Poor
0 – 33	Very poor

(Layman in Supardi, 2014:34)

4. Finding out the mean score of the students' answer by using formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where:  $\bar{X}$  = Mean score  
 $\sum X$  = The total scores  
 N = The number of students  
 (Gay in Harfiah, 2015:31)

5. The percentage of the students' reading comprehension is identify by using the formula as follow:

$$P = \frac{X2 - X1}{X1} \times 100\%$$

Where: P = The percentage of the students' improvement  
 X1 = The mean score of pre-test  
 X2 = The mean score of post-test  
 (Arikunto in Supardi, 2012:43)

6. Finding out the significant differences between pretest and posttest by calculating the value of the test

$$t = \frac{\frac{\sum D^2 - \frac{(\sum D)^2}{N}}{N(N-1)}}{\bar{D}}$$

Where: t = Test of significance  
 $\bar{D}$  = The mean Score  
 $\sum D$  = The sum of differences  
 $\sum D^2$  = The square of  $\sum D$   
 N = the total Number of students

(Gay in Harfiah 2015:31)

## DISCUSSION

### **The Improvement of the Students' Literal Comprehension in Reading**

#### a. Specific Information of Student's Literal Comprehension

The indicator of sequential events of the students' literal reading comprehension has improved from pre-test to post-test. The improvement can be seen after testing the students where the mean score of the students' sequential events in pre-test ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 36.80 and post-test ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 65.97. The improvement is 79.26%. It indicates that the mean score of post-test greater than mean of pre-test. It means that theory of Oster (2001) relevant with the result of the data analysis.

After calculating the score the writer found the students' improvement in the literal reading comprehension has improved 64.26% from mean score 41.56 of pre-test to 67.70 of post-test. It is supported by the mean score post-test of students' improvement in the literal reading comprehension is higher than pre-test.

#### b. The Sequential Events of Students' Literal Comprehension

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### **The Improvement of the Students' Interpretative Comprehension**

#### a. The Conclusion of Students' Interpretative Comprehension

The data on Table 2 show that the improvement in conclusion has improved from pre-test to post-test. The improvement can be seen after testing the students where the mean score of the students' conclusion in pre-test ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 42.36 and post-test ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 62.5. The improvement is 32.22%. It indicates the mean score of post-test is greater than the mean score of pre-test.

#### b. Implication of the Students' Interpretative Comprehension in Reading

The data on Table 2 show that the students' improvement in implication has improved 57.63% from score 35.41 of pre-test to 55.55 of post-test. After calculating the score the writer found the students' improvement in the interpretative reading comprehension has improved 44.92% from mean score 38.88 of pre-test to 59.02 of post-test. It is supported by the mean



score post-test of students' improvement in the interpretative reading comprehension is higher than pre-test.

The indicator also supported by the result of the data analysis on the Table 3 show that from the level significance ( $p$ )= 0.05 and degree of freedom ( $df$ ) = 36 which got from formula  $df = N - 1$  with t-table 2.030 the value t-test of reading comprehension higher than t-table ( $19.91 > 2.030$ ).

Thus, teaching reading comprehension using Think Aloud Strategy is effective. It is means that Think Aloud Strategy can improve the students' Literal and Interpretative reading comprehension.

## RESULT

### The Improvement of the Students' Literal Comprehension and Interpretative Comprehension in Reading

The result of the data findings find that teaching reading comprehension in narrative text through think aloud strategy can improve the students' achievement in reading of literal comprehension and also can improve the students' achievement in reading of interpretative comprehension. In the further interpretation of the data analysis were given below.

**Table 5.** The Improvement of the Students' Reading in Literal Comprehension

No	Indicators	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Improvement (%)
1.	Specific Information	46.52	69.44	49.26
2.	Sequential Events	36.80	65.97	79.26
	$\Sigma X$	83.32	135.41	128.52
	$\bar{x}$	41.66	67.70	64.26

The data on Table 1 shows that the score of sequential events has improved (79.26%) from the mean score of 36.80 of pre-test to post-test of 65.97, than the score of specific information has improved (49.26%) from the mean score in pre-test of 46.52 to post-test 69.44

### The Improvement of the Students' Interpretative Comprehension in Reading

The improvement of the students' reading achievement in interpretative comprehension, which focused on conclusion and implication as indicator in Eighth Grade of SMP Muhammadiyah Limbung as result of the students' assessment of pre-test and post-tests can be seen clearly in the table below:

**Table 6.** The Improvement of the Student's Reading in Interpretative Comprehension

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Pre - Test</b>	<b>Post-Test</b>	<b>Improvement (%)</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	42.36	62.5	32.22
<b>Implication</b>	35.41	55.55	57.63
$\Sigma X$	77.77	118.05	89.85
$\bar{x}$	38.88	59.02	44.92

The data on Table 2 shows that the students' improvement in the interpretative reading conclusion score has improved (32.22%) from the mean score of 42.36 of pre-test to post-test of 62.5, and then the score of implication has improved (57.63%) from the mean score in pre-test of 35.41 to post-test 55.55. Based on the result above, it can be concluded that the Think Aloud Strategy is effective to apply in teaching and learning process especially in teaching interpretative reading skill (44.92%).

### **T-test Value**

Analyzing t-test is used to find out the significant difference of the students' result of pre-test and post-test. In order to know the level of significance 5% (0.05), degree of freedom  $df = N-1$  ( $df$  is  $N - 1 = 36 - 1 = 35$ ) it is found that the t-table value is 2.030 the result of the calculation is shown as follows:

**Table 7.** T-test of Value of the Students' Reading Comprehension

<b>Variables</b>	<b>t-test</b>	<b>t-table</b>
<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	19.91	2.030

The Table 3 shows about the comparison between the students' T-test and T-table to improve literal comprehension and interpretative comprehension after using Think Aloud Strategy. The value of the T-test is greater than T-table. The score in variable of Reading Comprehension ( $19.91 > 2.030$ )

It can be concluded that there is significant difference between the results of the students' reading comprehension before and after using Think Aloud Strategy. This also means that the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted where the use of Think Aloud Strategy does effective in improved the students' literal and interpretative reading comprehension at the Eighth Grade of SMP Muhammadiyah Limbung.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the finding and discussion in the previous chapter, concludes follows:

1. Think Aloud Strategy can improve the students' literal comprehension (which include specific information and sequence events) at the eighth grade of SMP Muhammadiyah Limbung is 64.26%.
2. Think Aloud Strategy can improve the students' interpretative comprehension (which include conclusion and implication) at the eighth of SMP Muhammadiyah Limbung is 44.92%.
3. Think Aloud Strategy can improve the students' literal and interpretative reading comprehension in narrative text. It is proved by the result of statistical analysis in Table 3 level of significance 0.05 which indicates that the value of the t-test is greater than t-table. The score in variable of reading comprehension ( $19.91 > 2.030$ ) with degree freedom (df) is 35. It can be concluded that there is significant difference between the results of the students' reading comprehension before and after using Think Aloud Strategy.

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