



# Analysis of Students' Ability to Understand English Narrative Texts

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine students' ability to understand narrative text at SMPN 2 Susoh. This research used a quantitative research design with the research subject of 68 eighth graders by using a written test. The descriptive analysis indicated that the majority of the students are in the poor category. The findings suggest that limited vocabulary acquisition was a critical factor contributing to their poor performance, as many students struggled to engage with the test material effectively. This lack of vocabulary affected not only their ability to complete the test but also their overall comprehension of the narrative text. Based on the result, this study highlights the urgent need for educational strategies aimed at improving vocabulary acquisition among students at SMPN 2 Susoh. By addressing this deficiency, educators can help students develop better reading comprehension skills, which will ultimately improve their academic performance in English narrative texts.

**Keywords:** analysis, narrative text, vocabulary

## Introduction

Every language has its own rules and skill. When students learn English they will learn the four language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As one of the language skills, reading has an important role to increase our knowledge. For instance, by reading newspaper, magazine, academic books and the others we can get a lot of information, knowledge, and the new thing certainly. Therefore, the ability to read the text in any form will give great advantage in our life. Mark and Kathy Anderson (2003), There are many kinds of reading texts that should be learned by High School in Indonesia. One of reading text types that second year of Junior High School students learn and should be mastered is narrative text. Narrative text is one of text type which tells about story or events to entertain or to inform the reader or listener.

Students' ability to read comprehension requires strategies in reading it. Strategy is the science and tips in utilizing all resources that can be deployed to achieve the goals that have been set. Efforts to achieve the final goal are used as a reference in arranging strengths and closing weaknesses which are then translated into activity programs as strategic thinking. In an effort to gain an understanding of the text, the reader uses a certain method. The choice of strategy is closely related to the factors involved in understanding, namely the reader of the text and the context (Rahim, 2007: 36).

Based on Ministry of Education and Culture about 2013 curriculum (K13), the students are able to apply social functions, structure text, and linguistic elements of oral or written transactional interaction text. It that involves the act of giving and asking for specific information related to narrative text. In narrative text was the students comprehend the purpose, generic structure, language feature, finding main idea, and determine moral value of narrative text. So, the target in reading skill in this school is the students must be able to comprehend of narrative text. The students' difficulties were reflected from their achievement in reading test. Their score of reading ability did not achieve the passing grade.

There are several types of text in English such as: descriptive text, explanation text, recount text, narrative text, report text, news item text, procedure text, dan review text. Here the researchers want to discuss more about narrative text. Narrative text is one a kind of texts that uses simple past tense. According to Syafi'I (2016), narrative text is a narration or storytelling tells a true or fiction story. A narrative text gives a story of one or more experiences. As a result, this text can be enjoyed to read or to write. In other words, it is not easy for the students to comprehend a narrative text. Types of narrative texts include fairy tales, mysteries, horror stories, sci-fi (science fiction), romance, and others. They have to recognize all the elements of the text such orientation, complication, resolution and reorientation.

In Indonesia, the understanding of narrative texts in most schools is still relatively low. We can see in several previous studies, according to the results of the Hikmah & Pranata (2020) research, the ability to understand narrative texts of junior high school students is still relatively low. This reality is shown by the few students who can understand the content of the text, determine the structure of the story, and the moral message of the narrative text. According to Erisa Nurfarihah (2023) emphasized that, students' reading comprehension is very different, from narrative text comprehension. Some students find it easy to understand, while others do not.

The teacher used effective strategies for students to teach and explain texts. The teacher also taught text comprehension. However, in reality, students still experience difficulties in understanding reading materials, especially narrative text. This is because some students do not have dictionaries or vocabularies. Meanwhile,

research conducted by Nadine Cruz Neri et al (2023) shows that, First, students' vocabulary acted as a universal skill that was significant for text comprehension. Second, reading strategy knowledge contributed to students' text comprehension of the narrative text.

Based on the explanation from the previous researchers, we can conclude that, without adequate vocabulary, students cannot understand the text. Thus, vocabulary might act as a prerequisite for deeper text comprehension independent of the genre. Most of the students find difficulties in understanding a text because they have lack of vocabularies in reading a text, especially a narrative text. Arianto (2017) said that, they spend much time to find the meaning of the words in getting information details. So, it is hard for them to comprehend a text because they focus on words. According to Nutal (1985), there are five aspects of reading that help students to understand narrative texts well, they are: main ideas, specific information, references, and vocabulary."

Currently, the ability to read narrative text in junior high school southwest aceh is still relatively low, we can see that there has not been much research on narrative text in junior high school in southwest aceh especially in english. One of the previous researchers, Faridah Arianur (2014) studied at SMPN 1 tangantangan showed that, they had difficulty understanding the reading text. In particular, students are still unable to master or respond to the meaning in the text in detail, students still have difficulty in finding the main subject, reference, implied and explicit information in the text. As a result, they fail to get ideas from the text. Therefore, researchers want to see whether the students at SMPN 2 Susoh also have similar ability to understand narrative text or not.

This junior high school has implemented Emancipated Learning Curriculum. The literacy program in Emancipated Learning Curriculum is an educational initiative that aims to improve reading skills. One of the components is understanding narrative text. How can we improve English literacy if only for text literacy many students do not really understand. Therefore, the researcher is interested in measuring the ability to understand narrative text at SMPN 2 Susoh which has never been studied before.

Based on the description above, the problem identification in this research is: "What is students' ability in understanding narrative text at SMPN 2 Susoh?"

## Method

Data were collected using a quantitative type of research. The sample of this study was 68 eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Susoh which was taken using a universal sampling technique because the total number of students was below 100. To collect the data, the researchers used: a test in the form of a question. The data analysis techniques are:

The researchers calculate the average score of students (mean) with the formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N} \quad (\text{Arikunto, 2006})$$

Notes:

M = Mean (average)

$\sum X$  = Total Score/Score

obtained N = Number of Students

To find out the percentage of the test using the formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \quad (\text{Sudjana, 2017})$$

Notes:

P = Percentage

F = Data frequency

N = Number of samples

## Results

After researchers collected data and gave tests to 68 students, it turned out that only 31 were able to complete the test, the rest did not. they couldn't answer in English at all. Therefore, the researchers was only able to analyze 31 data. Here are the results:

Table 1. Individual scores of students in understanding narrative texts

No	Name Code	Scores	Category
1	Student 1	100	Excellent to very good
2	Student 2	95	Excellent to very good
3	Student 3	95	Excellent to very good
4	Student 4	69	Fair to Poor
5	Student 5	84	Good to average
6	Student 6	74	Good to average
7	Student 7	77	Good to average
8	Student 8	77	Good to average
9	Student 9	95	Excellent to very good
10	Student 10	100	Excellent to very good
11	Student 11	87	Excellent to very good
12	Student 12	87	Excellent to very good
13	Student 13	91	Excellent to very good
14	Student 14	45	Very poor
15	Student 15	45	Very poor
16	Student 16	45	Very poor

17	Student 17	45	Very poor
18	Student 18	45	Very poor
19	Student 19	45	Very poor
20	Student 20	45	Very poor
21	Student 21	45	Very poor
22	Student 22	45	Very poor
23	Student 23	45	Very poor
24	Student 24	45	Very poor
25	Student 25	10	Very poor
26	Student 26	5	Very poor
27	Student 27	15	Very poor
28	Student 28	10	Very poor
29	Student 29	10	Very poor
30	Student 30	10	Very poor
31	Student 31	5	Very poor
32	37 other students	0	Didn't answer at all, because of the lack of vocabulary known in English
Total		1691	

The score above is calculated by this formula:

Average student grades

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N} = \frac{1691}{31} = 54,54$$

Calculating the percentage of a student's grade:

a. Excellent to very good

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\% = \frac{8}{31} \times 100\% = 25,80\%$$

b. Good to average

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\% = \frac{4}{31} \times 100\% = 12,90\%$$

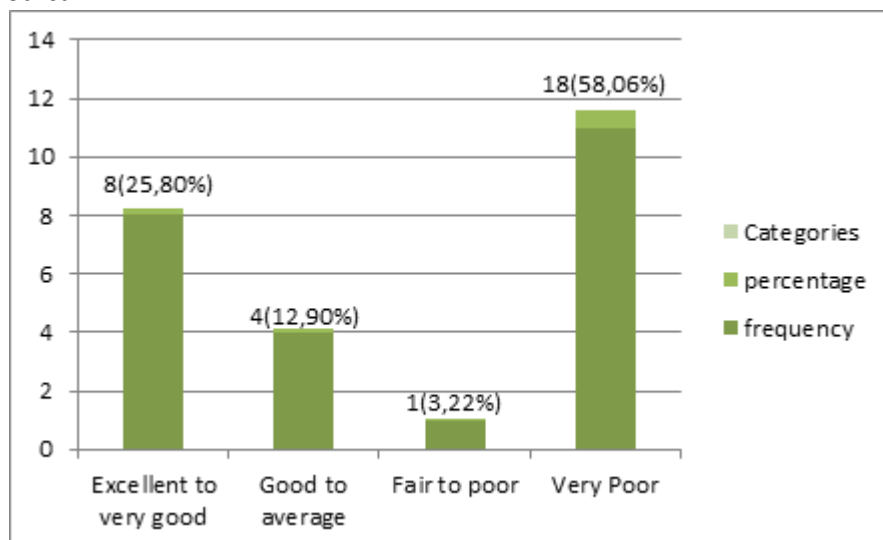
c. Fair to poor

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\% = \frac{1}{31} \times 100\% = 3,22\%$$

d. Very Poor

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\% = \frac{18}{31} \times 100\% = 58,06\%$$

According to the percentages above, 18 students (58,06%) received scores of 25-54 (Very Poor), 1 student (3,22%) received scores of 55-69 (Fair to poor), 4 students (12,90%) received scores of 70-84 (Good to average), and 8 students (25,80%) achieved scores classified as (Excellent to very good). Those that are considered good are those from the good to average and excellent to very good categories. Thus, it can be conveyed that those with a score of 70 and above are considered can.



The average score was found by dividing the sum of all students' ability scores in writing narrative texts was (54.54). This is more clearly shown in the chart, below:

The graph shows that most students, especially the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Susoh, obtained low scores in understanding narrative texts. Based on the average percentage above, it was found that there were 18 students who obtained very poor scores (58.06%), 1 student obtained fair to poor scores (3.22%), 8 students got excellent to very good scores and 4 students obtained good to average scores. The average score also shows that it is very bad (54,54). This shows that SMPN 2 Susoh students have very poor competence in their ability to understand narrative texts in English learning. This can be caused by the fact that SMPN 2 Susoh students have low competence and interest in English, especially in students' ability to understand narrative texts

## Discussion

Before giving the test, the researchers gave an explanation of the narrative text. Based on the average percentage above, it was found that there were 18 students who got very poor grades (58.06%) and 1 student got fair to poor grades (3.22%), 8 students got excellent to very good scores and 4 students got good to average scores. The category that can understand narrative texts well is in the excellent to very good category, and those who cannot understand narrative texts well are in the very poor category where the number of students reaches 54.

Referring to the results that SMPN 2 Susoh students have very poor competence in the ability to understand narrative texts when learning English, only some students do not have difficulty in understanding narrative texts. This happens because of the lack of vocabulary that they master. Vocabulary is a very important component and can even be called the key in learning foreign languages, because the richness of a person's vocabulary also determines the quality of the person's language skills. Of the 68 students, only 31 took the narrative text writing exam. Of the 31 students, only 13 students managed to achieve it.

Meanwhile, the other 37 students did not take the test because they did not know vocabulary in English at all. The reason for students' low scores in understanding narrative texts was identified as a lack of mastery of English vocabulary, which resulted in them not taking the test.

Tarigan (2008: 12) stated about vocabulary, namely "language ability cannot be separated from vocabulary mastery". Soedjito (2011: 12) expands the meaning of vocabulary or vocabulary as follows: (1) All words contained in a language, (2) The richness of words owned by a speaker or writer, (3) Words used in a field of science, (4) A list of words compiled such as a dictionary and explanations briefly and practically.

According to Sheptya et al, five factors cause students' difficulties in understanding reading in narrative texts. These factors are: lack of motivation, inadequate instruction provided by teachers, lack of vocabulary, home environment and school environment. David P & Tandai, S (2001) said that students still have difficulties with understanding the idea of the text. There are several factors that cause students to have difficulty understanding the text: (1) lack of student vocabulary and grammar, (2) students' interest in reading texts, (3) teachers' inability to guide and manage the class, (4) inappropriate reading strategies. Based on the findings of some of the studies above, it can be concluded that the main reason why students cannot understand narrative texts well is because of the vocabulary that students do not master so that there is a lack of vocabulary known in the narrative text.

In this section, the author reviews the results of the data analysis. The discussion of data analysis obtained from the writing test aims to describe the ability possessed by eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Susoh in understanding narrative text. The level of students' understanding in analyzing narrative text is very poor due to the lack of vocabulary owned by students.

Tanduk (2009) states that the majority of students lack interest in vocabulary and are not interested in learning about reading. The limited vocabulary makes them unfamiliar with the terms in the text or passage. The author's research is also in line with Alerty's research (2005) which states that the factors that influence students' reading comprehension are student factors (attention, interest, and participation) and teacher factors (material selection and classroom management).

## **Conclusion**

The researchers concluded that the comprehension of grade VIII students of SMPN 2 Susoh in understanding narrative texts is “very poor”. It is evident that almost all students have minimal knowledge of narrative texts, which requires further interventions in improving their understanding of narrative texts. In particular, helping students to increase their vocabulary mastery may be an option to increase their comprehension of narrative texts.

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