

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Through In Role Playing Games At The Eight Grade Students Of SMP Hosana Medan

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Through in Role Playing Games at the Eight Grade Students of SMP Hosana Medan

Yoel Hernandes Silalahi^{a,1}, Ashari P. Swondo^{b,2}

^{a,b}Universitas Potensi Utama, Jl.K.L Yos Sudarso, KM 6,5 No 3A, Medan, 20241, Indonesia
yoelsilalahi98@gmail.com¹, arieswondo770809@gmail.com²

ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve students' reading comprehension skills through the application of narrative texts in the form of role-playing games (RPGs) in the eighth grade of Hosana Private Middle School, Medan. The method used was Classroom Action Research (CAR), which allowed researchers to directly engage in learning activities and assess the impact of RPGs on students' reading comprehension. This activity was carried out in the eighth grade of the school. RPG games themselves are a type of game that focuses on developing storylines and characters, involving elements such as narration, character creation, and problem solving. In this context, RPGs are used as a tool to measure the extent to which students' reading comprehension can be improved. Initial results from the pre-cycle stage showed that only 3 out of 30 students (10%) met the completion criteria, with an average score of 64.66. After the RPG was implemented in Cycle I, the number of students achieving completion increased to 10 (33%) with an average score of 71.35. Further progress was seen in Cycle II, where 25 out of 30 students (83%) successfully achieved completion, with an average score of 81.33. Overall, the increase from pretest to posttest reached 25.78%. The results of this study indicate that RPG has an important role in increasing students' interest, active participation, and reading comprehension of narrative texts. Through RPG, students are encouraged to develop their imagination, descriptive skills, and express their ideas. In conclusion, RPG has proven effective as a learning medium in strengthening the reading skills of eighth-grade students at Hosana Private Middle School, Medan.

Keywords : Role Playing Games, Reading Comprehension

Submitted: 12 Maret 2025

Info Artikel :
Reviewed: 13 April 2025

Accepted : 15 Mei 2025

Copyright © 2025- MELT Journal. All rights reserved.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the four basic language skills, along with listening, speaking, and writing. This activity involves a fluid process, where readers connect the text's content with their existing knowledge to understand its meaning. In language learning, reading plays a crucial role as it forms the foundation for mastering English. Through reading, one can acquire a broad range of information in an efficient and comprehensive manner.

In academic circles, reading is considered a primary way to acquire new knowledge and understand different points of view and interpretations. Reading is considered a key tool for learning new concepts, accessing alternative explanations, and developing critical thinking skills. Therefore, strong reading skills are essential for students' success in learning English. Effective reading comprehension requires the ability to interpret, analyze, and connect ideas within a text.

Reading is an activity that involves interaction to capture and understand the meaning contained in the text. Nunan (2003) stated that reading is a fluid process, in which readers combine information

from the text with their background knowledge to build understanding. This means that there is a reciprocal relationship between the reader and the text that creates the reading experience itself. Meanwhile, according to Catherine E. Snow (2002), good reading skills are the result of a long-term development process. Reading comprehension helps students grasp the essence of the text they read, thereby fostering an interest in reading. Overall, researchers emphasize that reading involves interaction between the writer and the reader, where the meaning of the written form and what is captured by the reader must be truly understood.

Currently, students learn to comprehend reading through a genre-based approach, which includes knowledge of linguistic features, general structures, and other elements that make it a whole. Referring to the School Level Curriculum (KTSP 2006), students are required to be able to understand various types of texts, such as descriptive texts, narratives, recounts, reports, expositions, and so on, which are useful for communication purposes. In grade VIII of Hosana Private Middle School, reading learning focuses on genre-based reading comprehension that has been introduced continuously. Because students are often exposed to texts with a genre approach, they need to be familiar with these types of texts, and ultimately be able to understand narrative texts and other texts. In other words, English lessons emphasize more on the type of text studied.

Based on the researcher's observations, it was discovered that eighth-grade students experienced difficulties in understanding English narrative texts. This was due to students' low interest and motivation in conventional learning methods, which tended to be boring. As a result, their ability to read and understand narrative texts was less than optimal. To address this problem, the researcher planned to implement the use of Role-Playing Games (RPGs) containing narrative texts and dialogue as part of the learning process. RPGs are a type of game that carries a complex storyline and interactions between characters, which can help students understand the context, plot, and characters in a more in-depth and interactive manner. This approach not only provides a fun learning experience but also has the potential to improve students' reading and comprehension skills. It is hoped that this method will be able to arouse students' interest and enthusiasm for learning, so that their understanding of narrative texts in English can improve significantly.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As explained in the previous chapter, the purpose of this research is to improve students' reading comprehension skills. Therefore, the discussion in this chapter will focus on a review of theories relevant to the research topic. The researcher presents the results of a related literature review, including previous research and information supporting the problem formulation. The aspects discussed include: reading, reading comprehension, RPG-themed games, and narrative texts.

A. *The Definition of Reading*

Reading is a crucial skill that plays a significant role in developing language skills. Through reading, students can enrich their vocabulary, understand sentence structure, and become familiar with various writing styles that support the language acquisition process. Exposure to various vocabulary forms and sentence structures in texts helps improve comprehension and expand knowledge of the meaning of words and phrases.

Grabe (2009) states that reading is a strategic process involving various skills. Readers must strive to predict information in the text, identify key points, organize and summarize information mentally, monitor comprehension, correct misunderstandings, and align their understanding with the purpose of reading.

Based on these definitions, researchers conclude that reading is not simply a process of recognizing words, but also encompasses in-depth comprehension, analysis, and critical thinking skills. When readers interact with texts, they not only hone their language skills but also develop cognitive abilities that are essential for both academic and everyday life.

B. Narrative Text

Narrative text is a form of writing that conveys a story or a series of events in sequence. This type of text is not always based on facts and can be written from the perspective of a character in the story. According to Anderson, narrative text aims to entertain readers, encourage them to think about an issue, convey a moral message, or evoke emotion. In other words, narrative text is a form of retelling a story, either from the main character's experience or from another person's perspective.

Anderson & Anderson (1997), narrative text is a text that presents a story with a structured sequence of events to entertain or provide information. Gerot & Wignell (1994) also stated that narrative text functions to entertain and involve readers in imaginative experiences through structures such as orientation, complication, and resolution. In addition, Knapp & Watkins (2005) explained that narrative is a basic way for humans to think and communicate, where events are arranged chronologically with a cause-and-effect relationship.

C. Role Playing Games (RPG)

RPG (Role-Playing Game) is a genre of game that offers a deep gaming experience with a focus on character development, world exploration, and a complex storyline. In this game, players can explore a vast world, interact with various characters, and make decisions that affect the storyline. RPGs are also known for their varied combat systems, from turn-based to real-time action, as well as leveling mechanisms that allow characters to develop over time.

According to Demon Salvatore (2010), a role-playing game (RPG) is a type of game in which players assume the role of imaginary characters and work together to develop a storyline. Each player determines their character's actions based on their traits or roles, while the success of each action is determined by the game's rules.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is classroom action research. Classroom Action Research (CAR) is a type of research conducted by teachers to improve practices that have been carried out and gain a deeper understanding. Classroom Action Research can also be interpreted as research in classroom learning activities that aim to solve learning problems through various structured actions, then analyze their impact. Thus, Classroom Action Research is used in the classroom as an effort to solve learning problems in order to improve the quality of the learning process.

The study will be conducted at SMP Hosana Medan. This school located in Jl. Platina III, Titi Papan. The subject of this study is the eighth grade students of SMP Hosana Medan. This participant of the class consists of 30 students. The instruments of this research will given pretest are narrative test and questionnaire. In this research, the students' test before the giving is called pre-test. While the post-test will be applied to the students' reading comprehension on narrative text after giving. After the post-test, the researcher will give questionnaire to know the students responses toward Role Play Games (RPG) in Narrative text.

Research procedures are a series of activities carried out systematically to collect data to achieve research objectives. In Classroom Action Research (CAR), there are stages that occur in a cycle, including:

1. Planning

Planning is used so that researcher can design the use of RPG games containing narrative text and dialogue as part of the learning process. This learning plan includes the selection of appropriate materials, the form of the game to be used, and the steps for integrating the game into classroom activities. In addition, researcher will also prepare research instruments, such as comprehension tests, questionnaires, and observation sheets, and determine the group of students who will be used as samples.

2. Action

Action is the embodiment of teaching theories and techniques. The goal is to solve the problem. The researcher will conduct learning using RPG games as a medium to improve students' reading comprehension. Each learning session will integrate narrative texts and dialogues in the RPG game, followed by in-depth discussions and reading activities. Evaluation of comprehension will be carried out through reading comprehension tests, and additional data will be collected through observations and questionnaires to see students' involvement and reactions to the methods applied.

3. Observation

Observation is the process of collecting data and information that can be used as considerations in reflecting on the actions taken. Subjects in this observation process include students and teachers. Observations are conducted using pre-prepared instruments, involving English teachers as collaborators. Researchers will analyze the results of the observations and comprehension tests to assess whether the actions taken have successfully improved students' reading comprehension.

4. Reflection

Reflection is the stage of analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating all information obtained from observations of the implementation of the actions. At this stage, researchers draw conclusions from the research results and provide suggestions for improving more effective learning based on the findings. This cycle can be repeated to ensure that the methods used are truly effective in improving students' reading comprehension. If problems remain unresolved, researchers will proceed to the next cycle.

4. RESEARCH AND FINDING DISCUSSION

The data collected in this study were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data were obtained from the average student scores on each reading test, while qualitative data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. This study was conducted in one of the eighth grade classes at Hosana Middle School, Medan, with 30 students. The study was divided into two cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. Both the first and second cycles were carried out in two meetings each. Before the first cycle, the researcher first gave a pre-test to students. Meanwhile, a post-test was administered at the end of each meeting in each cycle. Thus, two types of data were obtained that could be compared: the pre-test and post-test results.

The information in this study was obtained from the results of tests administered to students. Each test was designed to align with the topics taught and discussed in class during each learning cycle. The study consisted of two cycles, each with four meetings. Tests were administered at the end of each cycle to measure student achievement. The results of the student test scores are presented in the following table:

Tabel. 1 The Students Score in Pre-tes of Cycle 1 and Post-tes of Cycle 1 and 2

No.	Initial of Students' Names	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
1.	ASD	65	80	90
2.	AWN	55	65	80
3.	BRG	60	60	70
4.	CAN	70	65	80
5.	CSA	65	70	85
6.	CRU	70	80	90
7.	DJS	65	80	90
8.	DPP	50	75	80
9.	DKL	60	70	75
10.	FAN	70	70	80
11.	GPU	85	80	90
12.	IMK	65	85	90
13.	JOL	70	70	80
14.	KLP	50	60	70
15.	MNU	40	60	70
16.	MMA	60	70	80
17.	MDP	70	70	80
18.	MRP	65	70	80
19.	POU	60	70	90
20.	PKL	80	80	90
21.	RTS	65	70	80
22.	RMV	70	65	75
23.	SIS	70	70	80
24.	SNN	70	70	85
25.	TCD	90	90	90
26.	USM	55	60	70
27.	VFI	60	75	80
28.	YWD	70	80	90
29.	WIW	50	60	70
30.	ZMS	65	70	80
$\sum x$		1940	2140	2440
$\bar{X}$		64,7	71.3	81.3

From the data above, the researcher found an increase on student vocabulary mastery. It could be seen from the average test result value (pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2). From the table, the researcher also found student achievements from:

1. The pre-test was done before the Classroom Action Research (CAR) as a preliminary study to find out the students' actual abilities and problems in reading. In the pre-test, there were 25 questions, with 10 multiple-choice questions and 15 matching questions. To get the result of pre-test, firstly the researcher calculated the mean score:

$$X = (\sum x)/N$$

$$X = 1940/30$$

$$X = 64,7$$

Then, to the percentage of students who passed the KKM score, the researcher used the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}P &= f/n \times 100\% \\P &= (1 \times 100\%) / 30 \\P &= 3\%\end{aligned}$$

Based on the pre-test results, it could be seen that the average students value was 48.3 from the 30 students only 3 or 3% of the student who got the score above the Minimum Mastery Criterion Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM). From the analysis, it could be seen that almost all of eighth grade students of SMP Swasta Hosana Medan still have very low reading comprehension.

2. In Post-test I, after the application of the Role Play Games (RPG) in Narrative text method, the students were more enthusiastic about finding out the meaning of new vocabulary, and always wanted to ask the teacher. The result of post-test I showed the mean score of the students increased in to 73.6 which meant there were 18 students who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion or KKM =75.

The mean score derived from the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}X &= (\sum x) / N \\X &= 2.140 / 30 \\X &= 71.3\end{aligned}$$

Then, to measure the percentage of students who passed the KKM score, the researcher used the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}P &= f/n \times 100\% \\P &= (10 \times 100\%) / 30 \\P &= 33.3 \%\end{aligned}$$

3. In the second post-test, the student's score improved. After using the RPG in Narrative text method, the classroom conditions were very good. All the students actively participated in the activities provided by the teacher. This made the students interested and engaged in the lesson. The students were able to compare and identify different types of nouns and adjectives. From the table score of students, the total score of students is 2.687 and to see average score from students in the exam, the researcher applied the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}X &= (\sum x) / N \\X &= 2.440 / 30 \\X &= 81.3\end{aligned}$$

Then, to measure the percentage of students who passed the KKM score, the researcher used the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}P &= f/n \times 100\% \\P &= (25 \times 100\%) / 30 \\P &= 81.3\%\end{aligned}$$

This shows that in post-test 2, the score obtained was 84.3%, which means that more than 50% students could improve their reading comprehension.

5. CONCLUSION

This study produced qualitative and quantitative that showed the improvement of students' reading comprehension through narrative text in role play games. The quantitative data showed the following progress:

- Pre-cycle: 10% students were passed (3 students), 90% students were failed (27 students), with an average score 64.66
- Cycle I: 33% of students were passed (10 students), 67% students were failed, with an average score 71.35
- Cycle II: 83% of students were passed (25 students), 17% students were failed, with an average score 81,33

Qualitative data were obtained through observations and interviews. The results show that the use of role play games increased students' interest and activeness in learning English. Role play games helped students develop their imagination, critical thinking, and comprehend the text based on a series of narrative text test given. In conclusion, Role play games proved to be effective in improving students' reading comprehension through narrative text of the eighth grade students at SMP Swasta Hosana Medan.

Based on the result of the study, the use of role play games proved to be effective in improving students' reading comprehension through narrative text of eighth grade of students at SMP Swasta Hosana Medan. The researcher proposed the following suggestion:

- For the teacher

It suggest teachers to encourage to incorporate role play games into their teaching strategies, especially when teaching narrative texts. Role play not only helps improve students' reading comprehension but also makes the learning process more engaging and interactive. Teachers should design role plays that are closely related to the narrative texts studied in class to maximize students' understanding and participation.

- For Students

Students should actively participate in role play activities as a way to enhance their reading skills. By engaging in role plays, students can better understand the plot, characters, and moral values of the narrative texts. They are also encouraged to practice reading various narrative stories outside the classroom to further strengthen their comprehension abilities.

- For another researcher

Future researchers are encouraged to explore the use of role play games in other language skills, such as speaking or writing, and with different types of texts. Conducting similar studies in different educational contexts or with a larger sample size could provide broader insights and strengthen the findings regarding the effectiveness of role play games in language learning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher deepest gratitude is expressed to the people who always helped the researcher in accomplishing her study by spending their precious time in giving the guidance, encouragement, suggestions and comments until this study could completed.

REFERENCES

- [1] Anderson, M., & Anderson, K. (1997). *Text Types in English 1*. South Yarra: Macmillan Education Australia.
- [2] Anderson, M., & Anderson, K. (1997). *Text types in English 2*. Macmillan Education Australia.
- [3] Bos, C. S., & Vaughn, S. (2009). *Strategies for Teaching Students with Learning and Behavior Problems* (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- [4] Brassell, D., & Rasinski, T. (2008). *Comprehension That Works: Taking Students Beyond Ordinary Understanding to Deep Comprehension*. Huntington Beach, CA: Shell Education.
- [5] Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman.
- [6] Depdiknas. (2006). *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP)/Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs)*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional.
- [7] Duffy, G. G. (2009). *Explaining Reading: A Resource for Teaching Concepts, Skills, and Strategies* (2nd ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.
- [8] Emilia, E. (2011). *Pendekatan Genre-Based dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris: Petunjuk untuk Guru*. Bandung: Rizqi Press.
- [9] Gerot, L., & Wignell, P. (1994). *Making Sense of Functional Grammar*. Sydney: Gerd Stabler.
- [10] Gee, J. P. (2007). *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [11] Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a Second Language: Moving from Theory to Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [12] Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2011). *Teaching and Researching Reading* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- [13] Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4th ed.). Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- [14] Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., & Boardman, A. (2007). *Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Difficulties*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- [15] Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., & Boardman, A. (2015). *Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Difficulties* (2nd ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.
- [16] Knapp, P., & Watkins, M. (2005). *Genre, Text, Grammar: Technologies for Teaching and Assessing Writing*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.

- [17] Nunan, D. (1991). *Language Teaching Methodology: A Textbook for Teachers*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- [18] Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [19] Peterson, M. (2013). The use of role-playing games in language learning: Enhancing reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. *Language Learning and Technology*, 17(3), 56-69.
- [20] Pressley, M., & Afflerbach, P. (1995). *Verbal Protocols of Reading: The Nature of Constructively Responsive Reading*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- [21] Salvatore, R. A. (2010). *The Roleplaying Game Primer and Old School Playbook*. Self-published.
- [22] Smith, F. (1985). *Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [23] Snow, C. E. (2002). *Reading for Understanding: Toward an R&D Program in Reading Comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- [24] Zakky, M. (2013). *RPG: Role Playing Game: Sebuah Panduan Dasar*. Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo.