ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS USING THE STORY FACE STRATEGY: A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH APPROACH

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Abstract - This research aims to describe the improvement in students' reading comprehension by applying the Story Face strategy. The study involved 30 SMA Negeri 1 Soe science students as participants, all from grade XI. The researcher employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the research design, collecting data through tests, including pre-tests, post-tests, and student observation checklists. The study results indicated that the Story Face strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension. The study consisted of two cycles: the first had three meetings, and the second had two sessions. The improvements observed included increased student engagement in the learning process. The results showed that 30% of students passed the pre-test, 43% passed the first post-test, and 80% passed the second post-test. Based on these results, the researcher concluded that students' reading comprehension improved significantly following the application of the Story Face strategy in the teaching and learning process.

Keywords - Improvement, Reading Comprehension, Story Face Strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a process by which the reader understands the message conveyed by the author through written words. It requires the reader to comprehend written words at a glance, allowing the meaning to be easily understood (Samsu, 2013). Most people acquire information through reading.To enhance students' reading improvement, appropriate strategies must be employed. Teachers need instructional strategies that assist in developing both students' skills and character. The Story Face strategy is one such method that can be used to enhance students' reading skills. It keeps students motivated during the learning process by helping them develop ideas from a story map.According to Lusiana and Zainil (2018), the Story Face strategy is a graphic organizer that aids in the comprehension of narrative texts. The Story Face is constructed with two circles representing the setting and main characters (eyes), specific descriptors and secondary characters (eyelashes), the problem (nose), and a series of circles representing the main events that lead to the solution (mouth). This strategy functions as a story map, allowing students to visualize the key components of a narrative text, including setting, main characters, problems, events, and resolution.

Whitten (2009), as cited in Suhaimi (2015), stated that the Story Face strategy involves students reading a story and generating a map of its events, ideas, and key elements. This strategy helps students by providing a visual representation of the text's structure, making it easier for them to identify and understand these elements.By applying the Story Face strategy, students become more diligent and participative in reading classes because the strategy requires active engagement using facial expressions during the teaching and learning process. These reasons encourage teachers to use the Story Face strategy to aid students in reading. The Story Face strategy can be used to develop reading skills, particularly in narrative texts. Additionally, the strategy has various positive effects, such as improving students' reading skills, courage, and self-confidence in reading narrative texts.

According to Linse (2012), students must be able to decode (sound out) printed words and comprehend what they read. Reading is not only about decoding words; the primary objective is comprehension. Therefore, the researcher focuses on addressing students' problems with reading comprehension.To assist second-grade science students at SMA Negeri 1 Soe in reading narrative texts, the researcher seeks effective strategies. Brown and Atkins (1986), as cited in Mufidah (2018), stated that teachers must identify the various types of texts students will encounter and the different reading strategies they might use. Thus, the researcher aims to improve students' comprehension by using the Story Face strategy, which is appropriate for learning narrative texts.Klingner (2014) noted that "The Story Face provides a visual framework for understanding, identifying, and remembering elements in narrative texts." This strategy helps students not only remember but also identify all elements in a narrative text. Based on the discussion above, the researcher is interested in finding out the effect of the Story Face strategy on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The research is titled "The Use of Story Face Strategy to Improve Students' Reading Comprehension in the Second Grade of Science Program at SMA Negeri 1 Soe in the Academic Year 2025/2026."

Based on collaborative teaching, the researcher observed that XI-grade science students often got bored and lacked reading knowledge. These problems were caused by unsuitable teaching strategies. Hence, the researcher applied the Story Face strategy to address these reading issues.Given the reading problems faced by students, the researcher hypothesized that students need to improve their reading comprehension. This study proposed the following research question: How does the Story Face strategy impact reading improvement among science students at SMA Negeri 1 Soe? The study aimed to describe students' improvements after being taught using the Story Face strategy.

This research was theoretically grounded in Kurt Lewin's (1946) Action Research Theory, which emphasizes a cyclical process of *planning, acting, observing, and reflecting* to bring about improvement in teaching and learning practices. In line with Lewin's model, the researcher implemented instructional actions, observed their effects through pre-tests and post-tests, and reflected on the outcomes to identify changes in students' reading comprehension. Thus, the study not only measured students' improvement quantitatively but also followed the reflective cycle of action research to enhance the learning process systematically.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a quantitative approach with a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. Burns (2010) stated that CAR is a valuable method for improving teaching skills, classroom practices, and student outcomes. The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Soe, a Senior High School in the South Middle Timor Regency, where English is a requisite subject. The participants were 30 students in the XI-grade science program. Data were collected through observation checklists, pre-tests, and post-tests. The lesson plans and media were collaboratively prepared with the school's English teacher. The results from the pre-tests and post-tests were compared to assess students' reading comprehension.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

First Cycle Findings

Planning

The researcher planned the actions based on the students' reading comprehension problems. A lesson plan and student observation checklist were prepared to assess student performance during the teaching and learning process. Additionally, pre-tests and post-tests were prepared to evaluate students' improvement using the Story Face strategy.

Acting

The first cycle was conducted from October 13 to November02, 2025. The researcher acted as the teacher, implementing the Story Face strategy according to the lesson plan. The process included administering a pre-test on October 13, 2025, where students read a story and answered related questions. After the pre-test, the Story Face strategy was applied as a treatment on october 18 and 20, 2025. A post-test was then administered on October02, 2025, to assess students' reading improvement.

Observing

During this phase, the observer monitored all classroom activities, including students' preparation, performance, methods, activeness, and attention during the teaching and learning process. The observation checklist revealed the following:

1. While some students followed the teacher's explanation, others were distracted, talking with friends or writing unrelated notes. Some even appeared sleepy during the lesson.
2. Students did not actively participate. When asked questions, most remained silent, leading to minimal interaction between the teacher and students. As a result, the teaching and learning process in this cycle was not effective.
3. When given opportunities to practice reading, most students appeared nervous and uncomfortable, further contributing to their lack of engagement. To address these issues, the researcher applied the Story Face strategy to encourage more active participation in reading.

Reflecting

The researcher evaluated the pre-test and post-test results. The mean pre-test score was 46.33, indicating that students' reading comprehension was below the minimum criterion of 72. Only 30% of the 30 students met the minimum criterion, while 70% struggled with reading comprehension.Given the lack of improvement in the first cycle, the researcher re-planned the second cycle by redesigning the lesson plan and modifying the teaching materials and media to make them more engaging and effective.

Pre-Test Results

The assessment of students' initial ability in reading by pre-test is in the table below.

NO	Students initial	Pre-test
1	AT	60
2	AF	100*
3	BS	25
4	BI	35
5	CA	40
6	CB	80*

7	DN	30
8	DM	90*
9	DF	-
10	ES	25
11	ES	25
12	ED	75*
13	HJ	40
14	IB	25
15	JM	100*
16	JM	-
17	JK	25
18	MR	90*
19	MN	25
20	ML	35
21	MT	25
22	MT	25
23	NB	65
24	RN	55
25	RT	75*
26	TB	35
27	TS	100*
28	VO	25
29	YES	70
30	YT	80*
Total		**1390**
Mean		**46,33**
Percentages		**30%**

Table 1 Students pre-test result

*Note: ***)** the students who passed the minimum criterion.*

The results from the pre-test showed that the students' mean score was 46.33, indicating that their reading comprehension was low, as their scores were below the minimum criterion of 72. The researcher found that only 30% of the 30 students in the class met the minimum criterion, while 70% still struggled with reading.

NO	Students initial	Post-test 1
1	AT	80*
2	AF	100*
3	BS	25
4	BI	100*
5	CA	90*
6	CB	100*
7	DN	90*
8	DM	85*
9	DF	-
10	ES	40
11	ES	70
12	ED	25
13	HJ	80*
14	IB	80*
15	JM	90*
16	JM	-
17	JK	40
18	MR	35
19	MN	35
20	ML	40
21	MT	70
22	MT	70
23	NB	85*
24	RN	75*
25	RT	25
26	TB	40
27	TS	25
28	VO	25
29	YES	55
30	YT	90*
Total		**1765**
Mean		**58,83**
Percentages		**43%**

Table 2 Students' post-test 1 result

*Note: ***)**the students who passed the minimum criterion.*

Based on the pre-test results, the researcher planned to apply the Story Face strategy to address the problem. A lesson plan was designed, and materials, along with teaching media related to the strategy, were prepared for use during the first cycle. It was hoped that this would improve the students' reading comprehension.

Result of Post-Test 1

The data indicates that the percentage of students passing the pre-test was 30%, while the percentage passing the first post-test was 43%. Since there was minimal improvement, the researcher decided to re-plan and implement a second cycle, redesigning the lesson plan, and adjusting the materials and teaching methods used in the process.

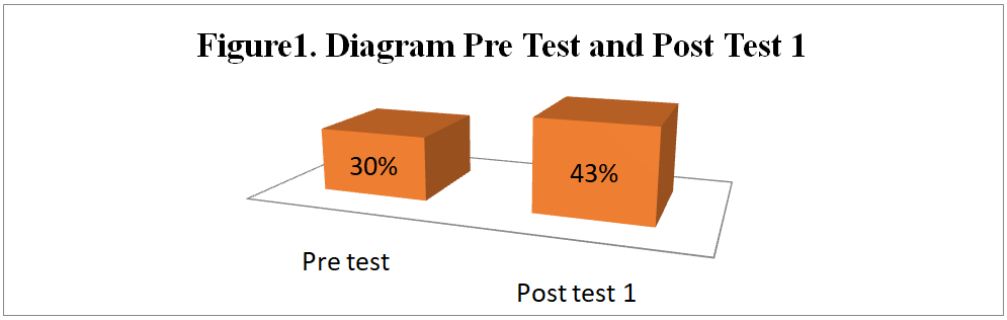


Figure 1. Diagram of Students' Pre-Test and Post Test Percentages

After calculating the data from this cycle, the researcher found that there was no improvement instudents' reading comprehension after being taught using story story-face strategy. Students' percentages in the pre-test were 30% meanwhile students' percentages in the post-test were 43%. Since there was no improvement in this cycle, the researcher decided to re-plan for applying the second cycle, by designing again lesson plan and preparing the material and teaching media used in the teaching and learning process.

Finding of the Second Cycle

Planning

After realizing that students' reading comprehension remained low after the first cycle, the researcher developed a new lesson plan, selected a new narrative text, and modified the teaching materials by incorporating card-based media. An observation checklist was again prepared to assess student performance during the second cycle.

Acting

The second cycle took place on April 8 and 10, 2025. The teacher explained the material using cards and described the Story Face strategy. Students were given a story about Malin Kundang to read and were asked to answer related questions. The researcher, assisted by the school's English teacher, observed the students during the treatment.

Observing

In this phase, the observer monitored all physical classroom activities, particularly focusing on students' performance during the teaching and learning process. The observation results were recorded using a checklist during the post-test of the second cycle.

1. During the teaching and learning process, students participated more actively and paid better attention. They were focused and enthusiastic when the teacher delivered the material, leading to a better understanding of the content.
2. Students also participated actively when the teacher asked questions related to the material, leading to better interaction between the teacher and students. This interaction helped the students understand the material better and improved their ability to read English texts.
3. Students read the text carefully. When asked to answer questions based on the Story Face figure, they responded well, indicating a better understanding of the text.

Reflecting

In this section, the researcher analyzed the results of the second cycle. The data showed significant improvement, with students' scores exceeding the mean score of the previous cycle. The average score was 77, surpassing the minimum criterion. The data also showed that after the treatment, most students demonstrated a good ability to read. They were more active during the teaching and learning process, read the text well, and accurately identified all the elements in the story. This cycle was successful because students showed significant improvement in their scores on the post-test of cycle 2. Consequently, the researcher decided to conclude the Classroom Action Research (CAR) as it had achieved its objectives.

Result of Post-Test 2

The assessment of students' reading comprehension after being taught by using the story face strategy by post-test (cycle 2) is in the table below.

NO	Students initial	Post-test 2
1	AT	60
2	AF	100*
3	BS	70
4	BI	85*
5	CA	90*
6	CB	85*
7	DN	100*
8	DM	75*
9	DF	-
10	ES	75*
11	ES	85*
12	ED	85*
13	HJ	70
14	IB	100*
15	JM	60
16	JM	-
17	JK	100*
18	MR	80*
19	MN	85*
20	ML	80*
21	MT	90*
22	MT	100*
23	NB	70
24	RN	100*
25	RT	85*
26	TB	90*
27	TS	90*
28	VO	100*
29	YES	90*
30	YT	100*
Total		**2310**
Mean		**77**
Percentages		**80%**

Table 3. Students' post-test 2 result

*Note: ***)**the students who passed the minimum criterion.*

After getting the data above, the researcher drew the diagram below to see students' improvement in pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2.

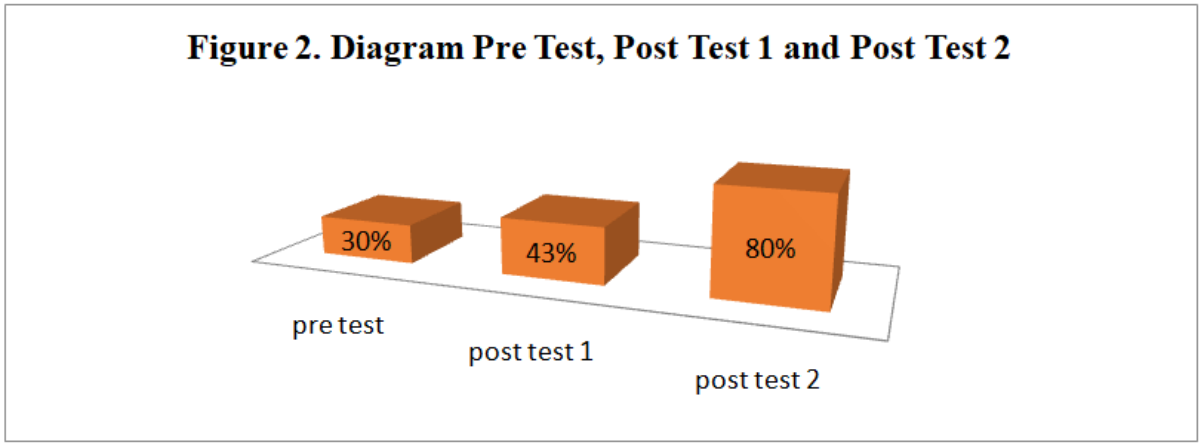


Figure 2. Diagram 2 of Students ' Test, Post-Test 1, and Post-Test 2

Based on the percentage improvements illustrated by the researcher, 30% of students passed the pre-test, 43% passed the first post-test, and 80% passed the second post-test. This data indicates that students'

reading comprehension significantly improved after being taught using the Story Face strategy.

IV. DISCUSSION

In the first cycle, before the treatment, the researcher administered a pre-test to determine the student's initial abilities. The pre-test results showed that the average reading score was 46.33, with only 30% of students meeting the minimum criterion. This meant that only 9 out of 30 students passed the minimum criterion.After assessing the students' initial reading abilities, the researcher taught the students using the Story Face strategy. A post-test was then conducted to evaluate the student's improvement after the treatment. The mean post-test score in the first cycle was 58.83, indicating some improvement from the pre-test, but still below expectations. The percentage of students meeting the minimum criterion increased from 30% to 43%, with only 13 out of 30 students passing the criterion.Several factors contributed to the limited success of the first cycle. The observation during the teaching and learning process revealed low student engagement. Specifically:

1. Although some students followed the teacher's explanation, others were distracted, engaging in unrelated activities like talking with friends or writing notes unrelated to the lesson. Some students even appeared sleepy during the explanation. In the learning process, students must pay attention to the teacher's explanation. A lack of attention can result in students missing key points about the material. Robert (1992), as cited in Edu (2018), stated that "students' attention during the learning process has always been a central concern of educators. Attention is the ability to focus the mind, a prerequisite to learning, and a basic element of classroom motivation." Therefore, students need to focus and pay attention during the learning process.

2. Students did not participate actively. When the teacher asked questions related to the material or solicited their opinions, most students remained silent, failing to provide any answers. The lack of interaction between the teacher and students hindered the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Herawati (2015), as cited in Edu (2018), emphasized that "a learning process is effective and efficient if all students, or at least 75% of them, participate actively, both physically, mentally, and socially.

3. When allowed to practice their reading, most students appeared nervous and uncomfortable, struggling to read the text fluently. To address these issues, the researcher applied the Story Face strategy in the teaching and learning process, aiming to make students more active and engaged in reading.According to Staal (2004), as cited in Suhaimi (2019), the Story Face Strategy is a graphic organizer that aids the comprehension of narrative texts. It functions like a story map, allowing students to visualize the key components of a narrative text, including the setting, main characters, problems, events, and resolution. However, based on the observations in the first cycle, the Story Face strategy was not entirely effective in improving students' reading comprehension. Students were still hesitant to think critically and explore their ideas when practicing with the Story Face strategy.

In the first cycle, many students continued to struggle with identifying the main character, secondary characters, and the problems in the story or text they read. As a result, the effectiveness of the Story Face strategy in improving students' reading comprehension was still limited. Given the lack of improvement in this cycle and the decrease in students' reading scores, the researcher decided to re-plan and implement a second cycle. This involved redesigning the lesson plan and modifying the teaching materials used in the second cycle to better address the student's needs and improve their comprehension.

In the second cycle, data were collected using students' observation checklists and a post-test. The post-test 2 data revealed an improvement in reading comprehension, with the mean score rising to 71. This represented an increase in reading scores of 66.19%. The percentage of students meeting the minimum criterion also improved significantly, from 30% in the first cycle to 66.19% in the second cycle. This meant that 24 out of 30 students in the class met the minimum criterion.

The researcher combined the test results with the observation results to highlight the factors contributing to students' improvement in the second cycle. The following observations were made:
1. Increased Attention:During the teaching and learning process, students paid more attention and were more enthusiastic. Their focus and interest in the material led to a better understanding of the content. Luna (2015), as cited in Betty (2019), noted that "when students are learning, whether it involves listening, speaking, reading, or writing, they need to focus. If they do not focus on the lesson, their knowledge will not increase."
2. Active Participation: Students participated actively when the teacher asked questions related to the material. This interaction between the teacher and students facilitated better understanding and improved the students' ability to read English texts. Nove (2017) emphasized that "interaction in the learning process is crucial. It helps students improve their language learning ability and enhances their social skills."
3. Careful Reading: Students read the text carefully. When asked to answer questions based on the Story

Face figure, they provided accurate responses, demonstrating a better understanding of the text.

Based on the results of the second cycle, it was evident that most students had developed good reading skills. They were more active during the teaching and learning process, understood the entire text, and were able to summarize the story effectively. The post-test of the second cycle met the target for improving students' reading comprehension. Consequently, the use of the Story Face strategy to improve students' reading comprehension was deemed successful, and further cycles of Classroom Action Research (CAR) were not continued.

V. CONCLUSION

The two cycles of Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in this study were completed. The research, which began on October 11, 2025, and concluded on November 1, 2025, aimed to improve students' reading comprehension in the XI grade of the science program at SMA Negeri 1 Soe using the Story Face strategy.The results of the research indicated that the Story Face strategy effectively minimized students' reading problems. Based on the findings, 80% of students met the minimum criterion, while 20% did not. The students who failed to meet the criterion were primarily those who were distracted or engaged in other activities when the teacher was explaining the material.Using the Story Face strategy, students were able to read and comprehend the text or story effectively. The strategy also contributed to increased student knowledge, self-confidence, and the ability to explore ideas based on the text.

Based on the research findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The use of the Story Face strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension.
2. For English teachers, incorporating the Story Face strategy in reading classes can be beneficial in enhancing students' reading comprehension. This strategy can stimulate students to be more active in class and boost their self-confidence in reading English texts or stories.
3. For students, this research demonstrates that the Story Face strategy can help minimize reading difficulties and provide valuable experience in learning English, particularly in improving reading comprehension.
4. For other researchers, this study focused on improving students' reading skills in English, especially in narrative texts. However, challenges remain, such as students' difficulty in concluding the text and their lack of focus during the teaching and learning process. The results of this study can serve as a reference for future research related to the use of the Story Face strategy in improving students' reading comprehension.

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