

# Making Connections : A Teaching Strategy to Foster Junior High School Students' Reading Comprehension

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## Abstract

This research aimed at finding out the enhancement of students in reading comprehension through making connections strategy to eleventh grade students of SMP N 3 Galesong Utara which refers to the familiarity of subject matter of the narrative text in terms of literal comprehension covering main idea and supporting details. The researcher applied pre-experimental design and VIII A class consist of 18 students with 5 men and 13 women as a research subject. The Result of this research was in main idea, the students' mean score achievement in pre-test was 42.78 becomes 65.83. So, the enhancement of students' reading comprehension achievement from pre-test to post-test was 53.88%. In supporting details, the students' mean score achievement in pre-test was 31.39, becomes 44.17. So the enhancement of students' reading comprehension achievement from pre-test to post-test was 40, 71%. And the mean score of students' reading comprehension in main idea and supporting details in pre-test 37.08 becomes 55. So the enhancement of students' reading comprehension achievement from pre-test to post-test was 48.33%

## Keywords :

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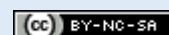
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## Introduction

There are four language skills in learning English, namely: listening, speaking, reading and finally writing. Reading is one of the most important of the three existing skills. According to Tarigan (2008) reading is a process which is done and used by the reader to get a message which is delivered by the writer through written language. Reading is the process of getting and understanding information from a text. The reading process occurs because the reader is connected to the words and illustrations provided by the author.

There are 4 types of reading namely 1. Independent Reading Students read quietly by themselves and at their own way. The teacher should see the students' reading level in process of selecting books. 2. Reading Aloud, it's means that the students' can up their voice in the process of reading but in this case the teacher still tell them the way of reading aloud process. 3. Guided Reading, The teacher as a facilitator, assist students in reading process. 4. Shared Reading Student and teacher will read the same book.

There are 5 Aspects of Reading namely 1. Main Idea, the core point in the text is main idea. Main ideas can be in the form of complete sentences which contain part of the topic of conversation. Main idea is called the topic sentence. It tells the content of the paragraph. In other word, the main idea is the important ideas that is developed by the writer throughout paragraph and sometimes are available in key words and explicit or implicit message. For example: The topic is the story of "Cinderella". From the topic the writer delivered his/her idea about the story by giving one main idea in one paragraph. 2. Specific information or supporting idea is developed from the main idea by giving the specific definitions, examples, facts, comparison, cause and effect that is related to the topic sentence. 3. Reference, Reference is the words or a phrase that is used either before or after the reference in the reading material. The purpose of using it is to evade unnecessary repetition of words or phrases. It means that such words are used to be a signal to the reader to find the meaning elsewhere in the text or sometimes is called pronoun. 4. Interference, When a reader adds information that he or she already knows to what is stated, the reader is making an inference. In other words, the readers can make conclusion after reading the text. 5. Vocabulary, Barnhart (2008: 697) states that vocabulary is a stock of words are used by person, class of people, profession. Concerning with the statements indeed vocabulary is fundamental for everyone who wants to speak or to produce utterance for reading.

According to Cowell (2012), "comprehension in reading is a process in which the reader constructs meaning while, or after, interacting with a text through the combination of prior knowledge and prior experience, information in text, the stance he or she takes in relationship to the text, and immediate, remembered, or anticipated social interactions and communications."

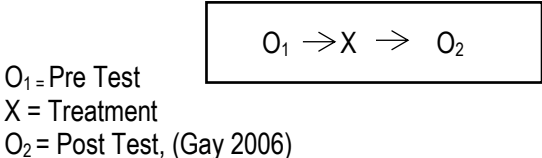
Based on the research observation at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 3 Galesong Utara, have some problems. Students' lack of understanding is the first problem. Next is the students are not interest in reading. To solve those problems, the English teacher should choose the appropriate strategy for the process of learning. The English teacher is needed to improve their reading comprehension. Making connections strategy is the strategy that can be used in the learning process. The practice of making connections encourages the make the text more meaningful for them. Making connections will help them to comprehend the text, gaining information from the text and engaging with the text more easily.

Efforts are needed to guide the students to create purposeful connections. Demonstrating how to do it will provide the students clear picture of what they should do. There are three steps to go in applying this making connection strategy. Teachers may find text-to-self as the easiest to go through first since in this step students are asked to link the reading with what they have experienced in the past. "This reminds me of..." can be the magic words that helps the students to recall their past memory. Moving on, teachers may stimulate the students to remember the other texts they have read and might have some similarities with the text they are currently reading. The last, teachers asks the students to make connections between the text and their

surroundings. Making text-to-world connections enables the students to establish comprehension by linking the information in text with the real situations around them. In completing these steps, students might have some difficulties, so the teachers should be ready to assist the students' learning process. Based on the introduction above, the reserchers formulate the problem statements of the study as " Is Making Connections strategy effective to improve students' reading comprehension"?

## Method

These research applied *pre-experimental research* consisting of one group pre test and post test design, this design involved one group that pre test (O<sub>1</sub>), expose to treatment (X) and post test (O<sub>2</sub>). The objective of this research is Aiming to find out whether there is an improvement in students' comprehension after applying making connection strategy, this research employed pre-experimental method with one group pre-test and post-test design, as follow:



This research took place at SMP N 3 Galesong Utara. The subject of this research was the second grade students in class VIIIA in the 2021-2022 academic years. The class consisted of 18 students.

This research applied making connections strategy. The making connections strategy consisted of 3 main connections namely text to text, text to self, and text to world.

## Results

This chapter consists of the finding of the research and discussion that contains of data analysis in detail. The findings of the research cover the result of the data pre-test and post-test about students' reading comprehension

### 1. The Enhancement of the Students' Reading Comprehension

The application of making connections strategy in enhancing the students' reading comprehension is dealing with main idea and supporting details. The enhancement of the students' reading comprehension can be seen clearly in the following table:

Table 1: The Enhancement of the Students' Reading Comprehension

| Variables             | The Improvement of Students' Score |           | Improvement |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
|                       | Pre- Test                          | Post-Test | %           |
| Main Idea             | 42.78                              | 65.83     | 53.88       |
| Supporting Details    | 31.39                              | 44.17     | 40.71       |
| Reading Comprehension | 37.08                              | 55        | 48.33       |

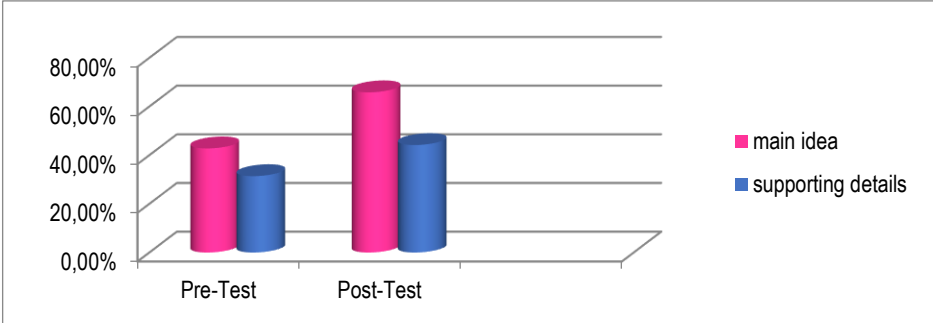
The table above indicates that there is enhancement of the students' reading comprehension achievement, in main idea from pre-test to post-test, where post-test is greater than pre-test, in pre-test the students' mean score achievement in main idea is 42.78, but after evaluation in post-test the students' reading comprehension achievement in main idea becomes 65.83, so the enhancement of students' reading comprehension achievement in main idea from pre-test to post-test is 53.88%.

There is also enhancement of students' vocabulary achievement in supporting details from pre-test to post-test, where post-test is greater than pre-test, in pre-test the students' reading comprehension achievement in supporting details is 31.39 and in post-test is 44.17. So the enhancement of reading comprehension achievement in from pre-test to post-test is 40.17%.

So, enhancement of the reading comprehension achievement from pre-test to post-test, where post-test is greater than post-test, in pre-test the students' mean score achievement is 37.08, but after evaluation in post-

test the students' reading comprehension achievement becomes 55, so the enhancement of students' reading comprehension achievement from pre-test to post-test is 48.33%.

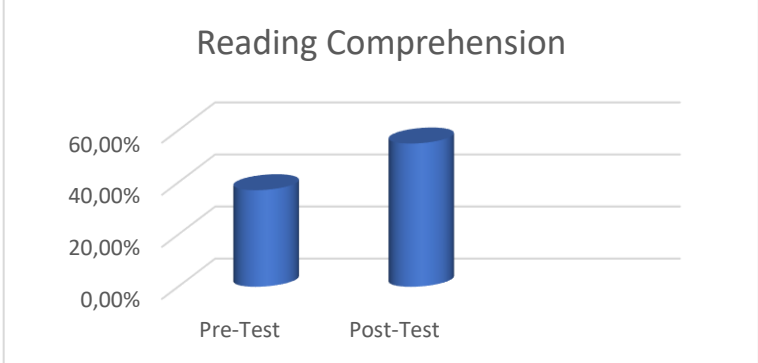
To see clearly the enhancement of the reading comprehension achievement, the following chart is presented:  
 Figure 1: The Enhancement of the Students' Reading Comprehension (Main Idea and Supporting Details) Achievement



The chart above shows the enhancement of the students' reading comprehension achievement in main idea in Post-test is higher 53.88% than in Pre-test. It also shows that after evaluation in Post-test, there is an enhancement of the students' reading comprehension achievement in main idea that shown clearly in the chart after taking an action through making connections strategy.

The chart above shows the enhancement of the students' reading comprehension achievement in supporting details in Post-test is higher 40.71% than in Pre-test. It also shows that after evaluation in Post-test, there is an enhancement of the students' reading comprehension achievement in supporting details that shown clearly in the chart after taking an action through making connections strategy

Figure 2: The Enhancement of the Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement



The chart above shows the enhancement of the students' reading comprehension achievement in Post-test is higher 55% than Pre-test 37.08% It also shows that after evaluation in Post-test, there is an enhancement of the students' reading comprehension achievement that shown clearly in the chart after taking an action through making connections strategy.

## Discussion

In this part, the discussions deal with the elaboration of the research findings about the observation result of the students' reading comprehension achievement, consisting of main idea and supporting details.

Woolley (2011) defines that the aim of reading comprehension is to understand the whole of the text rather than obtaining meaning from isolated words. There are five skills in reading comprehension discuss in this study includes; main ideas, reference and vocabulary. It means that if the the students understand well about what they read, they also understand about the parts of text include of main idea, supporting details, and vocabulary.

Related to this research in improving reading comprehension by using the making connections strategy, it is found that there was the enhancement of students' reading comprehension. This is proved by seeing their average score that has any enhancement from pre-test to post-test. In the main idea, the pre-test score was 42.78 became 65.83 in post-test so the improvement was 53.88%. In the supporting details, the pre-test score was 31.39 became 44.17 in post-test so the improvement was 40.71%.

According to Coe & Glass (2014) concluded that students comprehend better when they make different kinds of connections. Furthermore, the making connections strategy consisted of 3 main connections namely text to text, text to self, and text to world. Related to this research, the making connections strategy can be used to enhance students' reading comprehension. This is proved by seeing their average score that has 48.33 % enhancement. Based on this result we can use this strategy to enhance students' reading comprehension especially in the main idea and supporting details.

## Conclusion

Based on the data of the students' learning enhancement in Pre-test and Post-test, the researchers concluded:

1. One of effective strategy to improve the students' reading comprehension achievement of the eleventh year students, first semester class VIIIA of SMP Negeri 3 Galesong Utara in academic year 2021/2022 is Using making connections strategy. It was proved by the mean score after they are taught from pre-test to post-test.
2. In main idea, the students' mean score achievement in pre-test was 42.78 becomes 65.83. So the enhancement of students' reading comprehension achievement from pre-test to post-test was 53.88%.
3. In supporting details, the students' mean score achievement in pre-test was 31.39, becomes 44.17. so the enhancement of students' reading comprehension achievement from pre-test to post-test was 40.71%
4. So, the mean score of students' reading comprehension in main idea and supporting details in pre-test 37.08 becomes 55. so the enhancement of students' reading comprehension achievement from pre-test to post-test was 48.33%

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