



## Applying Guided Reading Strategies to Improve Students' Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text

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**Abstract:** This research was held to improve the students' ability in reading comprehension of descriptive text by using guided reading strategies. It was a Classroom Action Research which consists 38 students. The data was collected by using task, test, observation checklist, interview and field note, and by using formula of mean score. The result indicates the students' ability in reading comprehension of descriptive text improved in each cycle by using guided reading strategies. It can be seen from the mean score on the first cycle was 73,55 then improved in the second cycle was 82,37. Based on the result, the researcher concluded that the use of guided reading could improve students' ability in reading comprehension of descriptive text.

**Key words:** Reading comprehension, Descriptive text, Guided reading

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is categorized as being one of the most difficult and hardest skills since it requires grammatical accuracy, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary. Hermida (2021) asserted, "Reading is a process shaped partly by the text, partly by the reader's background, and partly by the situation the reading occurs in" (p. 45). Reading is an activity of constructing word meanings in the text, whereby the intention of reading is to understand the text. During the processing of information, the reader uses strategies for understanding what they are reading, a mental process that allows the reader to use their knowledge to gain information towards a target to understand the text.

Anderson (2022) characterized reading as "the process of making meaning from written texts" (p. 30). It involves the alignment of a large number of related sources of information. Reading is creating meaning from the text. Familiarity with words or word identification, creating meaning from them, and building meaning so that reading becomes automatic and accurate. Wixson and Peters (2023) stated that reading involves "the process of creating meaning that involves: (a) the reader's existing knowledge; (b) the text information; and (c) the reading context" (p. 112). During meaning construction while reading, the readers need to draw upon their prior knowledge in order to make those inferences necessary to uncover these underlying meanings from reading context and text information.

Grabe (2020) explained that reading is "an interactive process between readers and texts that results in reading fluency" (p. 89). Reading is an interactive process in which readers

construct a meaningful representation of a text on the basis of successful reading strategies. The readers interact with the text so as to derive meaning and read the text fluently.

Pourhosein Gilakjani (2024) stated, "The primary objective of reading is to achieve the right message from a piece of writing which a writer intends a reader to gain" (p. 56). That is, obtaining sense from written words that authors mean to provide about something or news. What the author tells us in writing can be decided by readers. When they read anything, people will have to understand the general meaning in a passage, understand the general sense of it, pick out particular, individual pieces of information from a text, understand ideas or feelings a writer puts across in a text, recognize and understand the writer's attitudes, beliefs, and arguments, and understand and enjoy a writer's use of language.

Unconsciously, individuals read something every single day: a magazine story, directions, phone messages, notes, advertisements, etc. No matter what they are reading, they have a purpose that influences how they are going to read it, and they read various things differently. The primary purpose in reading is to receive growing comprehension, to understand some message, to discover vital details, and to be entertained. The initial observation to be made on the reading process is reading comprehension. Different scholars have come up with a series of interesting views of reading comprehension concepts. Ness (2023) explained, "Reading comprehension is a process that involves memory, thinking abstractly, visualization, and understanding vocabulary as well as knowing how to properly decode" (p. 102). They believe that reading comprehension is not only a matter of simple decoding but a very complex process involving memory, thinking, visualization, and word knowledge.

Cook and Brown (2022) argued, "Reading comprehension is largely a matter of acquiring suitable, effective comprehension strategies" (p. 75). Reading comprehension is thus far more than decoding. Moreover, successful comprehension must be able to make links between the textual material and one's prior knowledge. Knowing words, sentences, and texts involves more than merely having recourse to one's linguistic know-how.

One of the functions of reading comprehension is that we want to decode other people's minds; were we all alike, there would be no merit in most of our conversation. This means that the background information of the person matters when deciphering text. If the writer and reader share extremely similar backgrounds, education level, attitude, etc., then the reader is probably going to interpret the text with no intentional effort.

Meaning, enjoyment, and education are all final reading goals. Harris (2025) stated, "Reading comprehension is a multicomponent, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use)

as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text types)" (p. 18). Consequently, reading comprehension is a dimensional process whereby the reader tries to recreate a stored message in graphical form by the writer. Reading is an activity of reading a written piece of writing, and the purposes of the act of reading itself are to get information, to gain increasing understanding, to comprehend some message, to gain important facts, and to be entertained. Among the stuff that people mostly read are description texts.

Wardiman (2021) defined descriptive text as "a text that describes the features of someone, something, or a certain place" (p. 22). In descriptive text, individuals are asked to describe the features of someone, something, or a certain place. D'Angelo (2020) defined, "Descriptive text is the way of picturing images in verbal or written form and arranging those images systematically" (p. 40). From this statement, descriptive text is a kind of text that explains something in written form systematically. Descriptive text is text that explains the appearance of things. Descriptive text gives the reader detailed descriptions about how one or something looks.

Clouse (2023) indicated, "There are some purposes of descriptive text. They are to entertain, express feeling, experience, inform, and persuade" (p. 67). Descriptive text demonstrates the feeling in the subject. It also tells the experience which would be useful to the reader. It tells the facts regarding a person or a thing and also persuades the reader to accept what is stated in the text. From the above, descriptive text is used to word the feeling to the reader, it tells the reader about useful experience and information, and it persuades the reader to agree in respect to the subject matter in the text.

Wardiman (2021) explained the communicative functions of descriptive text are: 1) To describe a thing, place, and person in detail. 2) To attract a reader's attention. 3) To develop character.

a). The Generic Structures of Descriptive Text : 1) Identification (this is where the person, thing, or place that is being described is introduced). 2) Description (images or features of the person, thing, or place that is being discussed).

b). The Language Features of Descriptive Text. For the language features, descriptive writing is typically concerned with: 1) Specific participants. 2) Utilizing adverbs. 3) Utilizing adjectives. 4) Utilizing nouns. 5) Utilizing simple present tense.

Cook (2021) said, "The procedures followed to guide the students to figure out the signs of reading comprehension of descriptive text are as follows: 1) Finding the generic structures. 2) Finding the social function (information about something). 3) Finding the main idea and supporting ideas. 4) Finding the meaning of vocabularies. 5) Finding factual information

(description, location, etc.)" (p. 35). But to supplement teaching in class, we apply guided reading as a method or tool to enable students to raise the quality of their reading skills in comprehending descriptive text. Fountas and Pinnell (2024) states that, "Guided reading is small-group reading instruction designed to provide differentiated teaching that supports students in developing reading proficiency" (p. 45). The teacher uses a tightly organized structure that allows for the articulation of a variety of research-supported techniques into a cohesive whole. Students are helped by teachers while they read at their level.

Guided reading is about taking the moment for reflective text selection and intentional and intensive practice in systems of strategic action for proficient reading. According to the statement above, guided reading is a learning method that is used to improve the reading strategy at a proficiency level in students. Guided reading strategies are generally used to assist students who struggle with reading comprehension. Cunningham (2022) said, "Guided reading lessons usually have a before-reading phase, a during-reading phase, and an after-reading phase" (p. 33). Depending on the text being read, the strategies being demonstrated, and the level of the students' reading, an incredible variety of before-, during-, and after-reading options are utilized. Guided reading lesson includes reading and talking about an engaging and interesting set of fiction and nonfiction materials.

#### Identification of the Problem

Based on background above, researchers identified some problems :  
Students had difficulties learning Reading. They were lack of interest in English learning and shy using English. Students had limited time and vocabulary. they read slowly and had wrong pronunciation. They did not understand about the text that they already read.

Related to the identification of problems, the researchers limited the problem on student's difficulties in reading comprehension of descriptive Text skills which was solved by using Guided Reading strategies at eighth grade students of junior high school number 4 Tanjungpinang.

Based on the limitation of the problem above, the researchers formulated the research problems as follows;

1) To what extent can Guided Reading strategies improve students' reading comprehension of Descriptive Text skill at eighth grade of SMP N 4 Tanjungpinang? 2) What factors influence change of students' ability in reading comprehension of Descriptive Text after the implementation of guided reading strategies at eighth grade students of SMPN 4 Tanjungpinang?

The Objectives of the Research as follows : 1) To find out the extent of Guided Reading strategies can improve the students' reading comprehension of Descriptive Text skill at the eighth grade students of SMP N 4 Tanjungpinang. 2) To find out the factors influence change of students' ability in reading comprehension of descriptive text by using Guided Reading strategies at the eighth grade students of SMP N 4 Tanjungpinang.

Based on the above discussion, the researchers thought that Guided Reading would be an effective technique for improving students' reading comprehension of descriptive text. Guided reading supported the students in reading comprehension of descriptive text since the students were in a position to take care of their group and their practice activity during group activities. The expected result was that guided reading strategies worked well in increasing students' proficiency in reading comprehension of descriptive text, being a good reader, what's the problem, problem-solving, etc.

## **2. METHOD**

This research was conducted in classroom action research. Ur (2023) explained, "Classroom action research was conducted by teachers on events in their own classrooms" (p. 210). It was primarily designed to improve the process of the teacher-researcher's own instruction and was implemented on the basis of a cycle of re-investigation, action, and investigation by two or more cooperating teachers. Action Research was a process where researchers examined their own practice in a systematic and intentional way using the research methods.

Allwright (2021) affirmed, "A research centers on the classroom, and simply tries to investigate what actually happens inside the classroom" (p. 15). It considers classroom interaction as virtually the only thing to be studied. This implies the practice and the activity performed by the instructors in their own classrooms or issues related to how teachers respond to students' errors, how interaction occurs within classrooms, students and teachers' mood during or after lessons, etc.

With the application of Classroom Action Research, the teacher was able to improve the process of learning study within the classroom. In this research, the researchers also acts as the practitioner who taught reading comprehension of descriptive text. They makes a lesson plan and test in each end cycle. And also, the researchers collects and computes the data then reports the outcome of the study. Whereas, the collaborator (the English teacher) acts as the observer who oversaw the application of the action.

As Kemmis et al. (2022: 328) explain that Classroom action research is conducted by teachers to research and improve their own teaching practices through planning cycles, With the aid of Classroom Action Research, the teacher was able to improve the process of reading study in class. The researchers in this case are the practitioners who taught reading comprehension of descriptive text. they prepares lesson plan and test in each terminal cycle. And also, the researchers collects and analyzes data then reports the study's result. Meanwhile, collaborator (English teacher) becomes the observer who observed action implementation.

### 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### Finding

##### The data of cycle 1

In cycle 1 The researcher did 3 meetings, the first meeting for introduction about material and second meeting for explaining main idea and supporting detail and gave task and third meeting for test, the data included task, test, observation, interview and field note.

Table 1

The students' test score and their ability in cycle 1

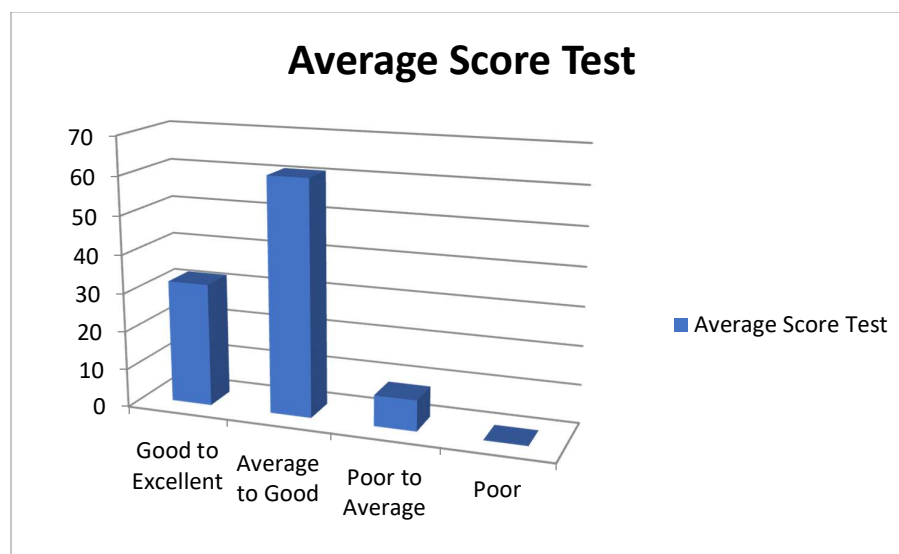


Diagram 1

From the chart above, we could see that 32% student's good to excellent, 60% student's average to good, 8% students poor to average and 0% students got to poor. Then, the researchers calculated the mean score of the students. She used the formula below :

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

Where  $\bar{x}$ : Mean

$\sum X$ : Individual score

N: Number of students

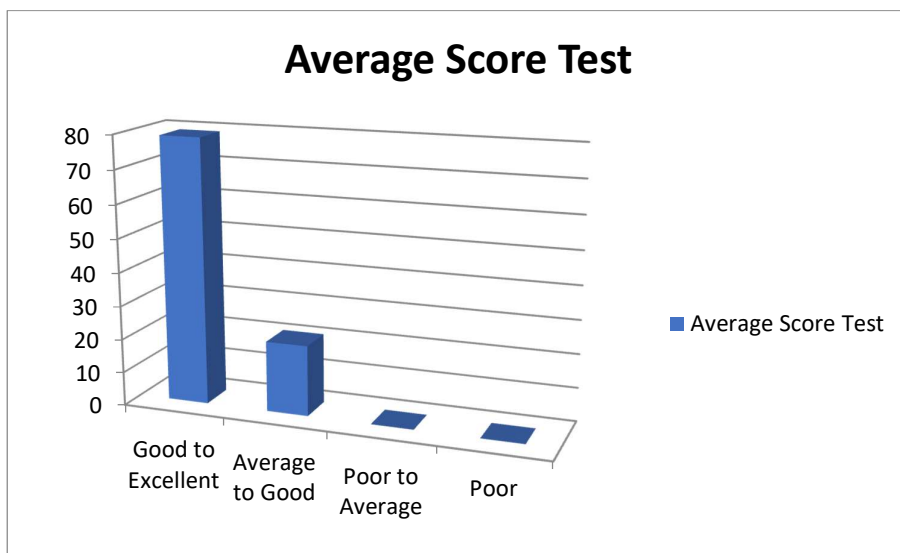
The calculation of the mean of the students scores in reading comprehension Test in cycle 1. It was derived from:

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{x} &= \frac{\sum X}{N} \\ &= \frac{2795}{38} \\ &= 73,55\end{aligned}$$

Based on the result of students' reading comprehension ability, the mean score of the test in cycle 1 was 73.55. The highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 50. The minimum mastery criteria at the eighth grade students of junior high school number 4 Tanjungpinang were 75. From the test in cycle 1, there were 12 students that passed minimum mastery criteria.

### **The data of cycle 2**

The research was conducted for 3 meetings. In this meeting the researcher focused to improve students' reading comprehension of descriptive text by using guided reading strategies. The researchers also gave task and test to collect the data of students. . The result of task 1 and 2 in cycle 2:



**Diagram 2** The Total Test in cycle 2

From the chart above, we could see that 79% student's good to excellent, 21% student's average to good, 0% students poor to average and 0% students got to poor. Then, the researchers calculated the mean score of the students. She used the formula below:

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

Where  $\bar{x}$ : Mean

$\sum X$ : Individual score

N : Number of students

The calculation of the mean of the students scores in reading comprehension Test in cycle 2. It was derived from:

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{x} &= \frac{\sum X}{N} \\ &= \frac{3130}{38} \\ &= 82.37\end{aligned}$$

Based on the result of students' reading comprehension ability, the mean score of the test in cycle 2 was 82.37. The highest score was 95 and the lowest score was 75.

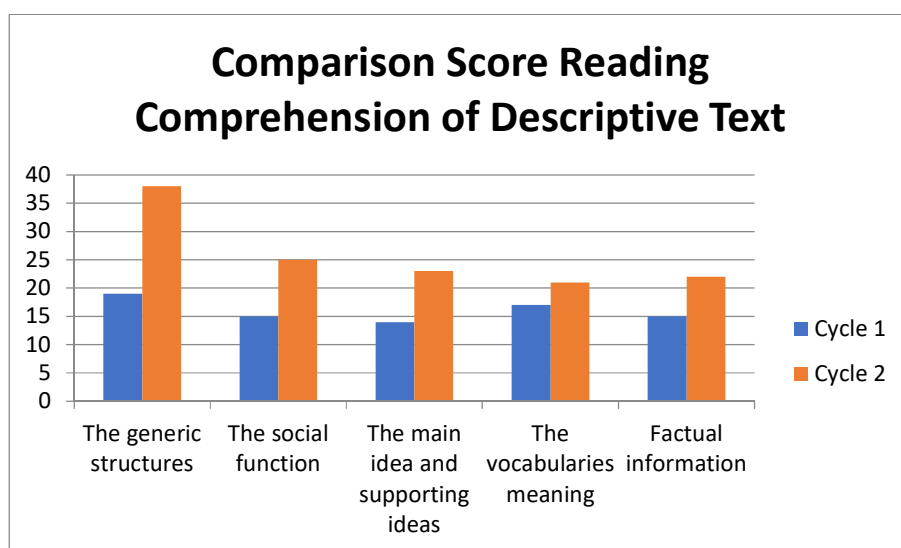


The minimum mastery criteria at the eighth grade students of junior high school number 4 Tanjungpinang were 75. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that the students' reading comprehension ability in descriptive text improved and successful.

Comparison total students in reading comprehension of descriptive text of test in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

**Table 1**

No	Indicator	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
1	The generic structures	19	38
2	The social function	15	25
3	The main idea and supporting ideas	14	23
4	The vocabularies meaning	17	21
5	Factual information	15	22



**Diagram 3**

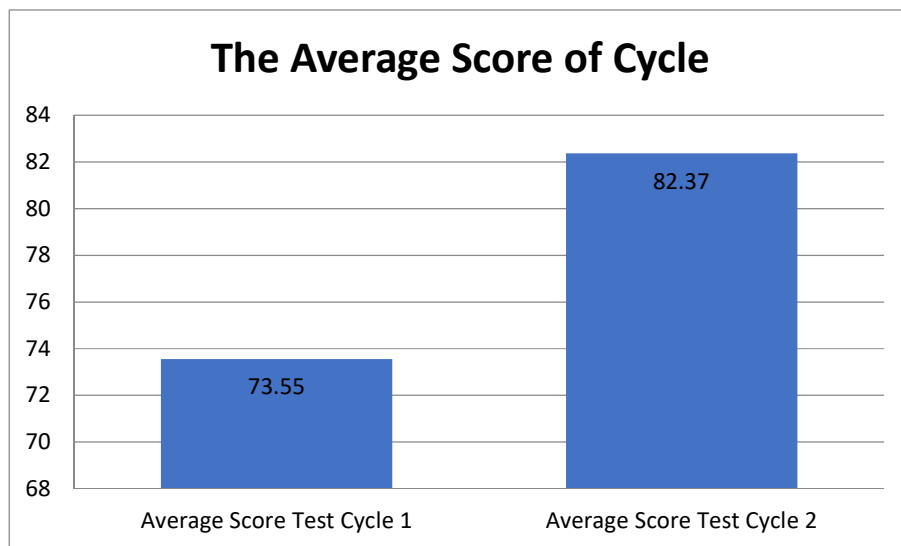
Comparison Score Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text

From the chart above, we could see some significant improvements in cycle 1 up to cycle 2. In cycle 2 students can answer the question were better than the cycle 1.

The average score of Test in cycle 1 and cycle 2

**Table 2**

Average Score Test Cycle 1	Average Score Test Cycle 2
73.55	82.37

**Diagram 4**

#### The Average Score of Cycle

The result of test above showed some significant improvement of the students' ability in reading comprehension of descriptive text. in cycle 1, the mean score of the test was 73.55. The students' mean score got better in test cycle 2, the mean score of the test was 82.37. Based on the analyzing the result of students' reading comprehension ability, there was improvement of Classroom action Research in improving students' reading comprehension ability through guided reading technique ran well and successful.

#### Discussion

The classroom action research had been conducted in two cycles that consisted of six meetings. In each cycles while conducting the research, there were four stages: Planning, action, observation, and reflection. The English teacher acted as collaborator who observed and kept monitoring the process of the research, while the researcher applied the technique in the classroom based on the planning which had been designed by the researcher. During research, the collaborator collected data by using fieldnote, observation checklists. Observation checklist and fieldnotes were used to record the process in classroom, while the test of reading comprehension of descriptive text used to measure the students'.

Since the students faced problem in reading comprehension of descriptive text, the researchers tried to solve the problem by a technique which was believed had power to solve the problems. The researchers chose guided reading as a technique which was appropriate to solve the students' problem in reading comprehension of descriptive text.

Based on the observation in the classroom, the activities did not run smoothly. Because the students still had difficulty in answering the question because they feel difficult to understand the text and the question.

In cycle two, the students showed progress and improvements in the activities. The researchers acted as facilitator and motivator. The students knew what they had to do, they more active and felt confident. The students were active study about the material. The all the students were more focus to join the lesson. They were more active in learning with their group and they can work together with the group well.

All of problem could be solved by the students. From the result of reading comprehension ability in cycle 2, the students could understand the material well. In conclusion, the result of research showed that action was accepted. It was able to improve the students' reading comprehension skill where the students could understand the text and answer the question correctly. In addition, this technique also could help students to overcome their problems especially in reading comprehension.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

##### **Conclusion**

The results of this research showed that the average score test from cycle 2 was better than the average score test from cycle 1. It could be seen by comparing their average. In the cycle 1 the average score test was 73.55 and in the cycle 2 average score test was 82.37. The different between the two means were 8.82. It means that guided reading is one of all technique could improve students' reading comprehension of descriptive text. It also could make the students interest and enjoy in teaching and learning process.

Some factors influenced to improvement reading comprehension of descriptive text were material, media, classroom activities, classroom management, teacher approach and teacher strategy. In teaching material, the teacher must used media so the students interested and enjoy in material. If the teacher could not make management the classroom, it could make classroom activities would not be fun so the students would feel bored with activities of the classroom. The most influences factor in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text was teacher strategy, because by using good technique the teaching and

learning process would be more fun and interesting so the students could be understand easily with materials. The situation and condition in class was good and the students more active learning with their group and they can work together with their group well.

### **Suggestion**

The English teacher in junior high school should give attention to the English subject, especially in comprehending reading text. In teaching reading, the teachers should select the good technique and strategy to motivate the students in learning reading, specially guided reading technique to improve student's reading comprehension skill.

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