

## **APPLYING STORY PYRAMID STRATEGY IN COMPREHENDING RECOUNT TEXT**

**By: S. B. Panggabean<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

Membaca teks adalah salah satu ketrampilan yang harus dikuasai oleh siswa. Guru telah menggunakan banyak perbedaan strategi dalam mengajar yang bertujuan untuk mencapai kemampuan dalam memahami bacaan. Tulisan ini menyajikan *story pyramid strategy* dalam memahami *recount text*. Siswa yang diajarkan dengan strategi ini memiliki motivasi lebih tinggi dalam memahami bacaan. Strategi ini membantu murid – murid menunjukkan sesuatu dengan tepat sebuah teks *recount*. Strategi ini membantu siswa. *Story pyramid* membantu siswa dengan rangka berpikir untuk mengidentifikasi *generic structure* dalam *recount text*, kemudian strategi ini menolong siswa untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca.

Key words: *story pyramid*, *recount text* dan membaca.

### **A. Introduction**

Reading is one of the most important skills because by reading a text, students can broaden their knowledge. Then, reading is also one of the most important skills in language learning besides listening, writing and speaking. In reading, students are expected to be knowledge and familiar with what the teacher has explained in the context.

Reading is related to the text, so it is very important to introduce reading well to the students and to make it interesting activities in the classroom. Reading English text is one of the most important skills for students. Students have to read for information that has been researched, organized and documented. Each type of text they are supposed to read, normally, has its own particular way of sentences and paragraph construction in the text.

Text is a discourse or composition on which a note or commentary is written; the original words of an author, in distinction from a paraphrase, annotation, or commentary. There are many kinds of english text. Those are

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<sup>1</sup> Writer is a English lecturer of FDIK, UIN SU

recount, report, discussion, explanation, exposition, new item anecdote, narrative, procedure, description, and review. But in this research the text just focused on recount text.

Recount text is kind of text that tell us about what had happened in series of events in sequence. Its function is to tell an even in the past time chronologically. It retells a past even. The recount has a title, with summaries. To increase the students' ability in comprehending recount texts, the students must be supported by good ability in reading.

This research deals with the recount text. So, the researcher wants to use story pyramid and story mapping strategy in teaching learning process especially in comprehending recount texts. So, it is expected by applying story pyramid strategy and story mapping strategy the students can recognize this text well. Ideally, if the teacher has used different strategies in teaching, the students' ability will high and the ability in comprehending recount texts will be higher too. But in reality they have low ability in comprehendinhg recount texts. It can be seen by the mistakes they made.

On the fact, based on first experiment, it was found that almost students got difficulties in getting information or the main idea of a text especially about recount text in their textbooks. It caused by some factors such as; students had too little recognized words or sight vocabulary and they got difficulties in recognizing new words.

Besides that, the students also lack of prior knowledge about the recount texts, so that they found difficulties in predicting the content of the passage. Most teachers only ask the students to translate the recount texts and find difficulties words. The teacher did not ask the students to find information or main idea from recount texts, so the students did know what is exactly written in the recount texts.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **1. Reading**

Reading is an active cognitive process of interacting with print and monitoring comprehension to establish meaning.<sup>2</sup> Reading is the instantaneous recognition of various written symbols, simultaneous association of these symbols with existing knowledge, and comprehension of the information and ideas communicated. When, a reader interacts with print, his prior knowledge combined with the print and the visual information results in his comprehending the message.

On the other hands, reading is a thinking process.<sup>3</sup> The act of recognizing words requires interpretation of graphic symbols. In order to comprehend a reading selection thoroughly, a person must be able to use the information to make inferences and read critically and creatively – to understand the figurative language, determine the author’s purpose, evaluate the ideas presented, and apply the ideas to actual situations.

The definition above explains that reading is the combination of word recognition, and intellect, and emotion interrelated with prior knowledge to understand the message communicated.

Here some points for students to be able to do to read effectively.<sup>4</sup>

1. They need to develop new schemata about what reading is and how it is done effectively in English
2. They need to break the habit of reading every word
3. They need to learn how to tap their background knowledge in order to better employ top – down processing
4. They need to acquire those reading skills which will enhance the interaction of top – down and bottom – up processing modes
5. They need to learn to read in English for pleasure.

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<sup>2</sup> Sukirah Kustaryo. *Reading Techniques For College Students*. Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi. Proyek Pengembangan Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan. Jakarta : 1988. p.2

<sup>3</sup> Burns and Roe and Ross. *Teaching Reading in Today’s Elementary Schools*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston: 1984. p.10

<sup>4</sup> Beatrice S. Mickulecky. *A Short Course in Teaching Reading Skills*. Addison – Wesley Publishing Company. USA: 1989. p.10

Based on above, we can conclude that second language students used to learn to think in English in order to read effectively in English.

There are several important points to emphasize in considering comprehension. First, as we just pointed out, comprehension is a matter of language understanding, not a unique feature of reading. Thus, the acquisition of reading comprehension skill includes two highly general components: the application of nonlinguistic (conceptual) knowledge and the application of general language comprehension skills to written texts. An important question for instruction is the extent to which either of these applications needs to be targeted in the classroom. The research literature is clear in showing profound effects of specific conceptual knowledge on the comprehension of texts. Knowledge is a matter of general education, inside and outside the classroom, and has little specific claim on reading, however. Its contribution, as important as it is to every comprehension event, is not an intrinsic component of reading, which includes mechanisms that can compensate to some extent for limited knowledge.

However, some general models of comprehension describe in detail how the comprehension of text can be built up over the reading of successive words and sentences, from the bottom up. Thus, comprehension includes guidance from knowledge outside the text, but even this influence can be understood in part by how the meanings of words actually read in the sentence trigger such knowledge. Even reading comprehension begins with the word.

Accordingly, accessing word meaning in context, parsing sentences, and drawing inferences are all part of the overall process of comprehension. In addition, the skilled reader monitors his or her comprehension to verify that the text is making sense. When readers have problems in comprehension, the source might be any of these processes.

Indeed, the interdependence among the components of comprehension means that multiple problems are likely to be observed in such cases and that finding a single cause of comprehension failure, as a general case, is unlikely. For example, because the higher levels of processing rely on output from lower levels, an observed problem in text comprehension can also result from lower-level

processes, including word identification, basic language processes, and processing limitations.

For comprehension to succeed, readers must import knowledge from outside the text. Thus, a powerful source of individual differences in comprehension skill is access to knowledge needed for a given text. However, readers of high skill compensate for lack of knowledge to some extent. It is the reader who lacks both knowledge and reading skill who is assured failure. Moreover, the deleterious effect of low reading skill (and its motivational consequences) on learning through reading creates readers who lack knowledge of all sorts.

There are four level of reading comprehension; they are literal reading, interpretive reading, critical reading, and creative reading.<sup>5</sup>

Reading for literal comprehension which involves acquiring information that is directly stated in a selection, is important in and of it and is also a prerequisite for higher level understanding. Examples of the skills involved are the ability to restate the author's material in other words.

Recognizing stated main ideas, details, causes and effects, and sequences is the basis of literal comprehension, and a thorough understanding of vocabulary, sentence meaning, and paragraph meaning is important.

Interpretive reading involves reading between the lines or making inferences. It is the process of deriving ideas that are implied rather than directly stated. Skills for interpretive reading include: inferring main ideas of passages in which the main ideas are not directly stated, inferring causes and effect relationship when they are not directly stated, inferring referents of pronouns, inferring referents of adverbs, inferring omitted words, detecting mood, detecting the author's purpose in writing and drawing conclusions.

Readers make inferences consistent with their schemata, yet it is important to realize that children have less prior knowledge than adults and do not always make inferences spontaneously, even when they possess the necessary

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<sup>5</sup> Burns and Roe and Ross. *Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary Schools*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston: 1984. p.177

background knowledge. Using a group setting in which children heard about each other's experiences, listened to each other's predictions about a story, and then wrote down their own experiences and guesses. Primary – grade children were able to increase their ability to make inferences about the story.

Critical reading is evaluating written material comparing the ideas discovered in the material with known standards and drawing conclusions about their accuracy, appropriateness, and timeliness. The critical reader must be an active reader, questioning, searching for facts, and suspending judgment until he or she has considered all of the material. Critical reading depends upon literal comprehension and interpretive comprehension, and grasping implied ideas is especially important.

Critical thinking can also be promoted at an early stage through critical reading of pictures. If children are shown pictures that contain inaccuracies, they can identify the mistakes. To foster critical reading skills in the classroom, teachers can encourage pupils to read with a questioning attitude.

Creative reading involves going beyond the material presented by the author. It requires readers to think as they read, just as critical reading does, and it also requires them to use their imaginations. It is concerned with the production of new ideas, the development of new insights, fresh approaches, and original constructs. Teachers must carefully nurture creative reading, trying not to ask only questions that have absolute answers, since these will tend not to encourage the diverse processes characteristic of creative reading.

When we talk about ability, we also talk about an action, mentally and physically. Mental action only cannot be called ability either can physic action only. Intention without application is not ability, because everyone can have intention, but not everyone can realize it. Therefore, ability is an action of mental and physic all together.

Hornsby in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* states that ability is potential capacity or power to do something well.<sup>6</sup> According

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<sup>6</sup> Hornby. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English with Current English*. Oxford University Press, London: 1995. p.721

to Martin ability is skill or power.<sup>7</sup> In addition, according to Ellyn and Bacon says that ability is potential capacity or power to do something physical or mental or special natural power to do something well, talent.<sup>8</sup>

From the definition above, it can be concluded that ability is power of skills that are needed to do something. Then, ability is the quality of being able to perform; a quality that permits or facilitates achievement or accomplishment. Based on the quotation above, the students' ability is very important to purpose the aim of education, the term ability in this writing is the power of the students to understand the material given by the teacher in the classroom. The ability of the students learns about the materials of course, there must be some changes in behavior and knowledge from not knowing become knowing.

## **2. Recount Text**

Many factors influence the students' ability in learning, the main factor is the students' themselves and the other factor are internal factor (students) and external factor (out of the student's factor) such as school, environment factors influence to their ability.

A text is passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive.<sup>9</sup> For a text to be coherent, it must be cohesive, but it must be more besides. It must deploy the resources of cohesion in ways that are motivated by register of which it is an instance. It means that text is a discourse or composition on which a note or commentary is written; the original words of an author, in distinction from a paraphrase, annotation, or commentary.

In the most general terms, there are two other components of texture. One is textual structure that is internal to the sentence: the organization of the sentence and its part in a way which relates it to its environment. The others is the macro structure of the text that establishes it as a text of a particular kind.

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<sup>7</sup> Martin H. Manser. *Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 1991. p.1

<sup>8</sup> Allyn and Bacon. *Psychology the Science of Behavior*. Longman, London: 1964. p.2

<sup>9</sup> J.R. Martin. *English Text: System and Structure*. Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, USA: 1992. p. 381

In English, there are many kinds of English text. Those are recount, report, discussion, explanation, exposition, new item anecdote, narrative, procedure, description, review, etc. But in this research just focused on recount texts.

Reading skill activities prove less successful than anticipated because the topic is not appropriate or because students are not familiar with the genre they are dealing with. If students are not interested in a topic, or if they are unfamiliar with the test genre we are asking them to work, they may be reluctant to engage fully with the activity. To solve such the problem, it is needed to think about how the teacher choose and use topics and approach different reading genre. In this research, the writer will apply the story pyramid and story mapping strategy with genre of recount text.

Recount text is kind of text that tell us about what had happened in series of events in sequence. Its function is to tell an even in the past time chronologically. It retells a past even. The recount has a title, with summaries. Past tense verb are use, and frequent use is made of word which link evens in time, such as next, later, when, then, after, before first. Recount describe events, so plenty of use is made of verb (action word), and adverb (which describe or add more detail to verb).

Recount is the most common type of nonfiction wring and includes regular news or diary writing, accounts of outings and holiday activities, true stories of events in history and accurate reporting of classroom activities in science or other curriculum areas. Common forms of recount text, they are as follows:

1. Letter
2. Biography or Autobiography
3. Diary or Journey
4. Newspaper or Magazine Report
5. Non Fiction Book
6. Encyclopedia Entry
7. Write Up of A Trip or Activity
8. Account of Science Experiment<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Sue Palmer. *How To Teach Writing Across The Curriculum: Ages 6-8*. David Fulthorn Publisher, Great Britain: 2001. p.45

By making the common features of particular text types known to students, teachers, are providing tools for the students to construct their own text in a culturall appropriate way. Genre should not be seen as an inflexible set of rules. As a product of social interaction it is subject to change, if there is a more efficient way to achieve the purpose of the communication.

a. Orientation

In orientation, the writer at least introduces the setting of the story, the main character(s), the location and the time. To make it easier we can answer the question: (a) who were involved in the story? (b) Where it happened? And (c) when it happened?

b. Series of events

In series of events, the writer writes the event chronologically. It begins from the first event, followed by the second event to the last event. The sum of event depends on the creativity of the writer in the each events, usually there is any problem happened.

c. Reorientation

In reorientation, the writer draws a conclusion or gives comment about the story. In the reorientation the writer also describing the solution of the problem of the story. Not all recount text closed by reorientation. It is optional.

### **3. Story Pyramid Strategy**

Students who are thought with a strategy are more highly motivated than those who are not and can be lead to a more effective learning. The reason why it is effective because in strategy includes: what a teacher does, the way an instruction is organized, how much the students are involved actively in learning, how much the students are responsible for the learning, and how learning is assessed.

Strategy is a bow line to action order to teach a certain objective. “It is connected to learning teaching process, strategy can be meant as general pattern of teacher –students’ activity in realization learning teaching activity to gain starched

purpose. According to Syaiful Bahri Djaramah and Aswan Zein there are four basics of strategy in teaching learning, they are:<sup>11</sup>

1. To determine of specification and qualification of behavior of change.
2. To choose the approach of system in teaching learning
3. To choose the procedure, method and technique in teaching learning
4. To apply of norm and activity successful of criteria in teaching learning

Douglas Brown said that, “strategy is specific method of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned design for controlling and manipulating certain information.”<sup>12</sup> In addition, according to David Nunan, “strategies are the mental and communicative procedures learners use in order to learn and use language.”<sup>13</sup>

A strategy in teaching is one of the most important elements in teaching a language; it determines to get success in teaching language in the school or course. Strategy plays important role in guiding students to gain their objectives in learning, because strategy of teaching can influence that result of teaching. That is way teacher should use an effective strategy for teaching material. In other words by applying suitable strategy the students will be more easy to understand what the teacher conveyed, the students can be motivated to learn the material that taught by teacher, and the students are not boring or surfeited.

In teaching learning process, the teacher should apply many strategies in transferring knowledge to the students, because by using various strategies the students will be easy to understand the material and the teacher can help students to manage and make easier his or her activity in classroom. In other words, the students’ ability in mastering material or subject will determine by the teacher’s teaching strategy.

A story pyramid is a strategy that uses a structure with a square base and four sloping triangular sides that meet at one point to help students learn the

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<sup>11</sup> Syaiful Bahri Djaramah and Aswan Zein. *Strategi Belajar Mengajar*. Rieka Cipta, Jakarta: 1997. p.1

<sup>12</sup> H. Douglas Brown. *Principles Of Language Learning And Teaching*. Longman Inc, New York: 2000. p.113

<sup>13</sup> David Nunan. *Second Language Teaching And Learning*. IOP An International Thomson Publishing Company Boston. p.88

elements of a book story.<sup>14</sup> It means that students have to complete each line of the pyramid with a different piece of information from the text.

Students can create a story pyramid to assist them in outlining a story and developing their comprehension skills. A story pyramid lists the following items, in order:

1. One word name for a character
2. Two words that describe the character
3. Three words that describe the setting
4. Four words that describe a problem in the story
5. Five words that describe one event
6. Six words that describe a second event
7. Seven words that describe a third event
8. Eight words or a final event that provide a resolution to the problem<sup>15</sup>

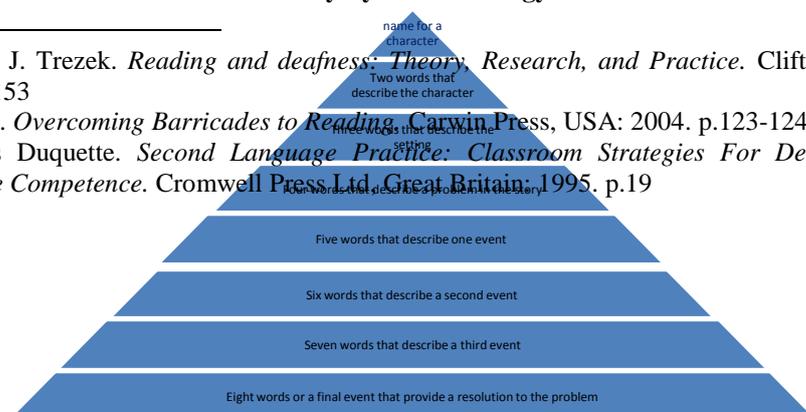
To create a story pyramid, the teacher first reads a story to the class or has the students read it independently, depending on the grade level and ability of the class. Then, the students work in groups to find the answers to complete the pyramid. Following that activity, students can work in groups of three or four to discuss the responses to the pyramid, compare and contrast their pyramid with those of other groups, and analyze, synthesize, and evaluate which responses are most accurate.

A story pyramid helps students pinpoint highlights of a story and describe the important parts using a limited number of words. The requirement of brief response stretches students' thinking and is fun.

The main objective of using pyramid pattern is that the reader gets all the essential news at a glance. As a result, the reader gets the essence of the report in the very beginning and does not have to read it through till the end for being posted with the news. If the reader is not much interested, he can stop reading after first three or four paragraphs. Story pyramids provide students with a framework in order to identify principal characters, situations, problems, main events and solutions to a story then story pyramids help students better express their ideas using a limited number of words and also improve reading skills of students.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 1 Story Pyramid Strategy**

14	Beverly J. Trezek. <i>Reading and deafness: Theory, Research, and Practice</i> . Clifton Park, USA: 2010. p.153
15	Sue Teele. <i>Overcoming Barricades to Reading</i> . Carwin Press, USA: 2004. p.123-124
16	Georges Duquette. <i>Second Language Practice: Classroom Strategies For Developing Communicative Competence</i> . Cromwell Press Ltd, Great Britain: 1995. p.19



The instructional procedures of using story pyramid strategy as in the following:

1. The teacher review with the students the importance of picking a book that is on the students reading text.
2. The teacher explains to students the meaning behind story grammar and what it is.
3. The teacher asks the students to make a story map to help them in beginning the process.
4. The teacher asks the students to retell the story.

The advantages of using the story pyramid form are as follows:

1. It catches the reader's interest.
2. It tells the reader what the story is about, depending on its importance.
3. It facilitates the editor to get the gist of the story in a hurry.
4. It helps the editor to leave out less important paragraphs, if pressure on space demands it.<sup>17</sup>

The disadvantages of using the story pyramid form are as follows:

1. It is only giving further details to each point
2. Next analysis repeats the entire story again
3. It will cut the story from the bottom to the appropriate number of column inches.

Story mapping is a strategy used to increase students' reading comprehension by participant in a cooperative activity to analyze and discuss stories using graphic organizer.<sup>18</sup> It means that Story mapping provides mental representations of story structures. On the others definition, story map is a graphic representation of all or part of the elements of story and the relationships between

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<sup>17</sup> Narasimha Reddi. *Effective Public Relations and Media Strategy*. Baba Barkha Nath Printers, New Delhi: 2009. p.330

<sup>18</sup> Julie Bowen, William R. Jenson and Elaine Clark. *School-Based Interventions For Students With Behavior Problems*. Library Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data. United States of America: 2004. p.141

them. In addition to representing plots, settings, characterizations, themes of stories visually, these maps can emphasize the authors' writing patterns in predictable books.<sup>19</sup>

Story Maps are used for teaching students to work with story structure for better comprehension. This technique uses visual representations to help students organize important elements of a story. Students learn to summarize the main ideas, characters, setting, and plot of an assigned reading.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Story Maps can be used with the entire class, small groups, or for individual work. In addition, story Maps also can be used with both fiction (defining characters; events) and nonfiction (main ideas; details).

In this strategy, the teacher decides upon that text to be read and determines the key elements that the students should identify. Teachers choose (or create) a Story Map that is most appropriate for the type of assigned reading. As with all strategy instruction, teachers should model the procedure to ensure that students understand why and how to use the strategy.<sup>21</sup> Teachers should monitor and support students as they work. Teachers should introduce the text/story to be read and provide each student with a blank Story Map.

**Table Story Mapping**

Title:	
Author:	
Setting:	
Characters:	
Beginning:	
Midle:	
End:	
Resolution:	

The procedures of making story mapping strategy in the classroom are as in the following:

<sup>19</sup> *opcit. Effective Public Relations and Media Strategy*. Baba Barkha Nath Printers, New Delhi: 2009. p.291

<sup>20</sup> Rasinski, T. & Padak, N. (1996). *Holistic Reading Strategies: Teaching children who find reading difficult*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall. p.2

<sup>21</sup> Reutzel, D.R. (1985). Story maps improve comprehension. *Reading Teacher*. p.400-404

1. Introduce story mapping as a collaborative activity
2. Introduce this strategy using a story with an uncomplicated plot
3. Read the selection to students
4. Encourage students to visualize the characters, settings and events as they listen
5. Discuss and chart the main characters and story events
6. Review the chart, focusing students' attention on the sequence of main events
7. Emphasize what happened first, next, and then
8. As students agree upon the order of listed events, number these in sequence
9. Individuals or groups could each illustrate one story event
10. Display completed illustration in sequence
11. This pattern or framework can be used for retelling the story
12. Students can retell the story for their own enjoyment, to a partner, to a small group or to the class
13. Story illustrations can be displayed in a vertical or horizontal sequence, in a circular pattern or as a winding trail that traces the movements of the characters
14. Once students become familiar with these procedures, they can create a sequence of illustrations that will provide an outline for storytelling or for writing original stories.

### **C. Conclusion**

Based on the description above, the English teacher should apply story pyramid strategy on in comprehending recount texts. Students have to practice story pyramid strategy to increase reading skill especially in comprehending recount texts.

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