IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION OF NARRATIVE TEXT THROUGH PROJECT BASED LEARNING

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to investigate how the application of Project Based Learning to enhance the comprehension toward narrative text of the second-year students in MTs Jamiyyah Islamiyyah Pondok Aren academic year 2015/2016. This study is categorized as the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method in which to identify and to solve the problem on students' reading comprehension. The number of students in that class is 36. In this Classroom Action Research, the writer implements the Kurt Lewin's design which consists of four phases. Therefore, this study is included into quantitative descriptive research. The findings of this study are: (1) related to the test result, there was 20.28% improvement of students' mean reading score after using Project Based Learning. (2) Related to the observation result showed that the students were more active and interested in reading activity in the classroom. Indeed, they were able to analyze the text and to get information from the text well. (3) Related to the interview result, it could be known that the students' reading comprehension in term of narrative text has improved and also assisted the teacher in finding the appropriate method in teaching reading especially narrative text.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text, Project Based Learning

BACKGROUND

English is considered as a foreign language in Indonesia in which it requires four certain major language skills should be targeted by a language learner. Those are listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. As one of the language skills, reading also plays an important role because reading has become a part of our daily life. In addition, there have been a number of research findings that support reading comprehension as meaningful and systematic learning experience (Ribe and Vidal, 1993; Allen and Stoller, 2005; Fried-Booth, 2010; and Sanpatchayapong, 2010).One of reading text types that second year of Junior High School students learn and should be mastered is narrative text. Narrative text is a kind of text that describes a sequence of fictional or non-fictional events. It consists of orientation, complication, and resolution.

Ideally, the second-year students of Junior High School are conveyed to learn and to master some genres including narrative text applied in any aspects of language skills. It has been stated on Standard of Competency and Basic Competence (SK, KD) in curriculum KTSP 2006. Beside of that, the policy of the school in determining the minimum passing grade score should be attained; at least the minimal mastery level criterion (KKM) considering English subject gains score 70 (seventy). However, most of 8th grade students of MTs Jamiyyah Islamiyyah are still difficult to achieve those targets because their knowledge of English is still low primarily on reading skill. Based on the unstructured interview result with the teacher on 3rd March 2016 concerning students' reading test, there are some difficulties probably faced by students in reading activities such as: First, most of students just have the ability to pronounce and recognize the

individual words without conveying the message what the author extends. Second, they actually have good knowledge of words and sentence meaning but they fail to understand longer reading materials such as stories. Third, they are hardly to concentrate as they read. After students read a story, most of them are difficult to analyze the schematic structures of the story concerning orientation, complication, and resolution whereas they had read the text for several times. Consequently, they have difficulty in figuring out the plot of the story. Next, based on the observation started from 10th to 18th March 2016 writer found that the students' activity in reading are not very interesting because the teacher usually asked every student to read orally then asking them to translate the story. Then the teacher gave them some minutes to do exercises meanwhile most of students did not pay attention to the teacher's explanation even they did not do the exercises. Furthermore, the teacher rarely let his students tried to analyze the story.

Those cases should be solved because it can cause further difficulties to the next reading lesson if their low degree of reading comprehension is not improved soon. As the effect, they will be probably continuous difficulty to understand any other texts. Furthermore, they probably cannot pass the policy of minimum passing grade determined by school. It is necessary to find out an alternative way to create suitable and interesting techniques related to students' condition. They need to be delivered any practices to assist them in improving their reading comprehension. For the need of research, the writer chooses the second-year students of MTs. Jamiyyah Islamiyyah because this class derives the lowest achievement scores based on the test result among the other classes. Therefore, the students' reading comprehension needs to be improved. This research is focused on narrative text. It is based on the recommendation from the teacher. That is why the teacher and the writer try to find out an appropriate strategy to improve students' reading comprehension through Project Based Learning which considered as one way of reading comprehension techniques toward narrative text.

Project Based Learning is a model for classroom activity that shifts away from the usual classroom practices of short, isolated, teacher-centered lessons. Dechakup (2008) emphasized that Project Based Learning (PBL) is a project that follows a scientific method which enables students to think and design to work through a project. It promotes understanding, which is true knowledge. In PBL, students explore, make judgments, interpret, and synthesize information in meaningful ways. According to Buck Institute (2015) PBL is an instructional methodology. In addition, Beckett and Gulbahar (2006) stated that William Heard Kilpatrick promoted the Project Method and was introduced into the field of language education and developed as a student-centered learning approach. This trend developed many instructional frameworks and forms of assessment that allow increase the student's participation and promote language and content learning. Moreover, Project-based learning has become a focus of interest among researcher, language teachers and practitioners since the eighties (Bell, 2010; Alan & Stoller, 2005; Fried-Booth, 1982, 1986; Haines, 1989; Legutke, 1984, 1985; Papandreou, 1994; Sheppard & Stroller, 1995; Stoller, 1997; Tessema, 2005; Tomei at al., 1999). The term "project" used in EFL contexts was first proposed by Fried-Booth (1986: 8), indicating that language tasks arise naturally from the project itself, "developing cumulatively in response to a basic objective, namely, the project". Haines (1989) elaborated project work as involving multi-skill activities which focus on a theme of interest rather than specific language tasks. Stoller (1997) suggested project-based learning as a natural extension of fully integrated language and content learning, making it viable option in a variety of instructional settings including general English (GE), English for academic purposes (EAP), and English for specific purposes (ESP). It is in line with other researchers who related the benefit of PBL across

disciplines and mostly applied in the higher education level and divide the students into groups. On the other hand, this research focused on applying PBL in junior high school level in term of teaching Narrative text as one of the material learn by eight grade students to improve their reading comprehension. In addition, the researcher applied PBL method without dividing students into groups but individual work.

The General Concept of Reading

Reading is regarded as one of English skills that need relatively mechanical skills. In this sense, Bernhardt (1991: 5) assumed that reading is viewed as not merely taking written information on the printed matter but also attributing a meaning-extracting process as the essence of the act of reading. It means that reading is not only to get the information from the text passively but also to process it on mind to understand the meaning. That assumption is in line with a linguist expert, Rubin (1982: 8) who defined that reading as the conveying of meaning to and the processing the printed word symbols to decode the words and to know the meaning of the selections.

Regarding those definitions above, it can be seen that learning to read is a complex process because reading requires thinking. When a reader reads to get the meaning of the printed written selection, it is obviously needed a great number of mechanical skills and comprehension skills as thinking process. Therefore, it can be said that reading includes many aspects of skills. Davis in Alderson (2000: 9) divided those skills involves recalling, drawing, finding, weaving, recognizing, identifying, and following which are considered toward the readers in understanding the printed symbols as a mental process. That is why the readers have to integrate their skills when reading texts because as a complex process, reading needs understanding to process the information on mind.

Based on those statements above, clearly, reading is a complex process in getting meaning or in understanding the message. It is commonly what we call as reading comprehension.

The Purposes of Reading

There are some purposes of reading which is stated by Grellet (1986: 4) who stated that there are two main reasons of reading; reading for pleasure and reading for information (to find out something or in order to do something with information you got).

In addition, Nuttal (2005: 3) stated that whatever your reasons for reading (excluding any reading for language learning), it is not very likely that you were interested in the pronunciation of what you read, and even less likely that you more interested in the grammatical structure used. You read because you wanted to get something from the writing. This statement also emphasizes on no matter the reader's technique used in reading, it aims to convey the message of the text. The different purpose of reading is also stated by (Harmer, 1983). He divided it into some areas:

a. Predictive skills
b. Extracting specific information
c. Getting the general picture
d. Extracting detailed information
e. Recognizing function and discourse patterns
f. Deducing meaning from context

In general, reading purposes mentioned above is to understand or comprehend the reading passage from the printed text whether there is an action or not after reading a text. It emphasizes on reading is not a general ability. Related to the purpose of reading itself, it embraces a wide variety of tasks, activities, skills, and mental process. For instance, when

reading for getting specific information, a reader needs to consider the accuracy in order to comprehend the information in the text. Therefore, a reader may have one or more purposes in reading. It is used to ease the reader in using any reading techniques.

In sum up, those definitions above conclude that the general purpose of the reading is to be able to use any techniques of reading activity and to reach the meaning or message toward any kinds of reading.

Narrative Text

In order to make the discussion of literature more manageable, it is sensible to view the categories or genres that simply mean a type of literature with similar characteristic. One of genres that Junior High School students learn is narrative text. Chatman and Attebery (1993: 15) defined the narrative text is a kind of story either fictive or real which contain a series of events in which how the story is told and how the context is presented as aspects of the story construction. Thus, special features of narrative text could be found in its sequence of events to attract the readers in order to build their curiosity throughout the story. In addition, based on Longman dictionary (2004), narrative means a description of events in a story.

Narrative text also enables students to make connections such as they may figure out similarities among the text and their own lives, they make links between the text they are current reading and another text they have previously read, they also see connections between the text and the real world. Indeed, narrative text requires a content background for understanding. Consequently, readers need to develop background knowledge for literary elements in order to make connections. Students who are reading narrative text need to become familiar with the previously reviewed literary elements of character, setting, problem and solution, theme, and writing style.

As students read quality narrative text, they naturally become involved with the characters that may possess similar feelings or may find themselves in like situations. Those can be classified into imaginary and factual, or even combination of both.

Beside several of narrative texts, Chatman (1993) classified narrative text into four basic elements. Those are as following:

a. Characters

There are two characters take place within a story. They are main characters and secondary characters. Character is the single most important element in the narrative text. It describes physical of the character such as age, weight, height, even personality traits including the strength and weaknesses. The author can also depict character into dialogue. It tells a reader what the character says or thinks.

b. Settings

The setting addresses the location (where) and the period (when) of the story whether the story tells a reader among realistic, historical fiction or fantasy. At times, the author gives details in any imagination to tell where and when the story takes place.

c. Plot

The plot includes a series of episodes or events written by the author to hold the reader's attention and to build excitement as the story progresses. The plot contains an initiating event, starting the main character of the series of events

toward problem solving. The excitement builds until the climax or tension; the high point in the story where the problem is solved.

d. Conclusion

At the end of a story, the writer ends up the story through figuring out all the important things happened in the story led to a "conclusion". This is the most exciting point in the whole story and tells how the events work out for the characters.

Project Based Learning

Fried-Booth (2010) pointed out that Project-Based Learning was particularly relevant to English language teaching and learning for its capacity in bridging "classroom" with "real life" English. In line with Booth, Bell stated that Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a student driven method of instruction that allows students to learn through inquiry while collaborating with their peers and creating projects to demonstrate their learning (Bell, 2010). Student involvement and choice are essential elements of PBL. In contrast to traditional methods of instruction, PBL teachers become facilitators of student learning as they guide students through the learning process. The PBL method of instruction leads to increase students 'motivation, and has many positive impacts on students and allows teachers to differentiate to accommodate student needs. On the other hand, PBL changes the roles of teachers in the classrooms and can pose potential problems for teachers who are not used to the PBL method of instruction.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a model for classroom activity that shifts away from the usual classroom practices of short, isolated, teacher-centered lessons. PBL learning activities are long-term, interdisciplinary, and student-centered and integrated with real-world issues and practices. It is a method that fosters abstract, intellectual tasks to explore complex issues. It promotes understanding, which is true knowledge. In PBL, students explore, make judgments, interpret, and synthesize information in meaningful ways. According to Hedge (2002), projects are extended tasks which usually integrate language skills by means of a number of activities. These activities support working toward the learning goal and may include the following: (1) planning, (2) gathering of information through reading, listening, interviewing, and observing, (3) group discussion of the information, (4) problem solving, (5) oral and written reporting, and (6) display.

METHOD

The method used in this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR). According to Michael J. Wallace, Classroom Action Research (CAR) is a type of classroom research carried out by the teacher in order to solve problems or to find answers toward context-specific issues (Wallace, 2006). It means that to begin the Classroom Action Research (CAR), the researcher or the teacher needs to identify any problems real found in the classroom concerning students' condition in learning. The subject of this study is students at grade VIII class VIII.5 of MTs Jamiyyah Islamiyyah Pondok Aren, academic year 2015/2016. The number of students consists of 36 (thirty-six). It is chosen based upon the unstructured interview result with the English teacher at that class proving that they have the lowest achievement of reading test among the other second grade classes. That is why they need an appropriate strategy to help them in improving their scores toward reading. Technique of collecting data in this research are qualitative data (experience-based) and quantitative data (number-based). The qualitative data consists of observation within the activity in the classroom and interview to be presented for the teacher. On the other side, the quantitative data uses pre-test and post-test. This Classroom Action Research used the Kurt Lewin's design which consists of four phases. Those are planning, acting, observing,

and reflecting. Meanwhile, the data is derived among from the test (pretest and posttest), interview, and observation. Therefore, this study is included into quantitative descriptive research. Based on the Kurt Lewin's action; the writer would like to describe further concerning the implementation of Classroom Action research (CAR) in the cycle one and cycle two as following:
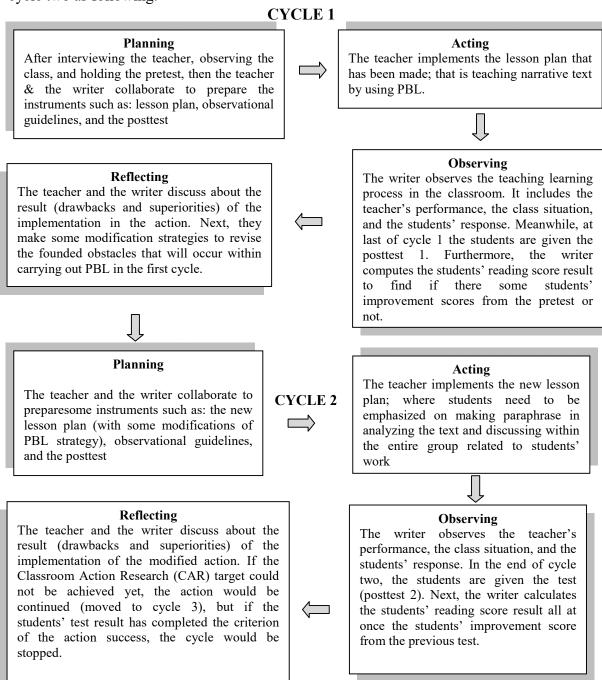
CYCLE 1

Planning
After interviewing the teacher, observing the class, and holding the pretest, then the teacher & the writer collaborate to prepare the instruments such as: lesson plan, observational guidelines, and the posttest

Acting
The teacher implements the lesson plan that has been made; that is teaching narrative text by using PBL.

Observing
The writer observes the teaching learning process in the classroom. It includes the teacher's performance, the class situation, and the students' response. Meanwhile, at last of cycle 1 the students are given the posttest 1. Furthermore, the writer computes the students' reading score result to find if there some students' improvement scores from the pretest or not.

Reflecting
The teacher and the writer discuss about the result (drawbacks and superiorities) of the implementation in the action. Next, they make some modification strategies to revise the founded obstacles that will occur within carrying out PBL in the first cycle.

Planning

The teacher and the writer collaborate to preparesome instruments such as: the new lesson plan (with some modifications of PBL strategy), observational guidelines, and the posttest

CYCLE 2

Acting
The teacher implements the new lesson plan; where students need to be emphasized on making paraphrase in analyzing the text and discussing within the entire group related to students' work

Reflecting
The teacher and the writer discuss about the result (drawbacks and superiorities) of the implementation of the modified action. If the Classroom Action Research (CAR) target could not be achieved yet, the action would be continued (moved to cycle 3), but if the students' test result has completed the criterion of the action success, the cycle would be stopped.

Observing
The writer observes the teacher's performance, the class situation, and the students' response. In the end of cycle two, the students are given the test (posttest 2). Next, the writer calculates the students' reading score result all at once the students' improvement score from the previous test.

Figure 1
The phases of Classroom Action Research modified by the writer

FINDINGS

The data after implementing the action consisted of two parts. Those were the result of post interview and the result of posttest. For further descriptions as following:

1. The Result of Post Interview

After implementing PBL, the writer carried out the unstructured interview with the teacher. It was conducted on Friday, May 28th 2016 after accomplishing cycle 2. It started at 08.30 A.M and finished at 09.00 A.M. It was to know the teacher's response concerning story mapping strategy through Classroom Action Research (CAR) that had been done. In this case, the writer divided into three criteria of questions. Those were the general condition in English class during Classroom Action Research, the difficulties in implementing Project Based Learning (PBL) during Classroom Action Research (CAR), and the strategy that had been used to overcome the revised plan.

The first category was the general condition in English class during the action. The teacher said that the students' condition were better than before. In this sense, they could more focus on doing the exercises individually rather than before carrying out the Classroom Action Research (CAR) and indeed, they more comprehend the schematic structures of narrative text. Beside of their improving reading comprehension, the teacher also believed that the Project Based Learning (PBL) was able to create students' creative thinking ability. It can be seen from the students' ability to retell the story and answer the questions based on the text that mostly correct. The students score can be used to measure the improvement of their reading comprehension. Moreover, the students seem enthusiast in doing the PBL for their reading so they could discuss their understanding and express their ideas within the group.

The second category was the difficulty of the teacher in implementing PBL during Classroom Action Research (CAR). The teacher was confused because all of students had not recognized yet what PBL was. Hence, the teacher should be more explicit in explaining the PBL use and the schematic structures of the story. Another difficulty was the spending time toward students' work in accomplishing the reading exercises.

The third category was how the teacher overcomes the problems and difficulties using PBL during Classroom Action Research (CAR). In this case, the teacher and the writer kept collaborating to discuss the resolution of those problems above by:

Teaching Narrative Text Using Project-Based Learning

The writer modifies these following steps concerning teaching narrative text using Project-Based Learning compiled from Ribe & Vidal (2003). Those steps are:

1. Getting the class interested. Explained the material, in this case narrative text with example the students are familiar with. Prepare some pictures to get students interested.
2. Selecting the topic. Ask the students to choose which story (narrative text) they want to choose to be presented.
3. Doing the project. Give students time to gather and extract important information from the story then synthesize the information. The teachers' role as the facilitator to help students if they have some confusing questions.
4. Negotiating the criteria for evaluation. Let the students know the criteria of scoring. How they modified their project to get good comprehension.

5. Presenting the project. In this stage, students become aware of the ways their presentations meet the criteria of assessment. The teacher observes how engaged the students are in presenting their projects.
6. Assessing and evaluating. Give students an evaluation by giving several questions related to the story/text they presented. It is necessary to check their reading comprehension of a story using a printed test to gain working individually and the last is giving feedback to the students work.

2. The Result of Post Test

The writer inputted the result of data including the pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2 into a table as following:

The Students' Reading Score of Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2

STUDENTS' NUMBER	PRETEST	CYCLE 1 POSTTEST	CYCLE 2 POSTTEST
1	45	60	75*
2	50	65	75*
3	65	75*	80*
4	55	60	75*
5	70*	75*	80*
6	50	70*	75*
7	55	65	75*
8	70*	75*	85*
9	40	55	65
10	50	55	75*
11	55	70*	75*
12	45	55	75*
13	35	50	60
14	55	60	75*
15	50	60	75*
16	65	75*	80*
17	55	65	75*
18	30	50	60
19	50	70*	75*
20	55	60	75*
21	45	50	55
22	55	60	70*
23	65	80*	85*
24	55	60	75*
25	55	70*	75*
26	45	60	65
27	40	65	75*
28	40	55	70*
29	60	70*	75*
30	50	60	75*
31	35	55	60
32	55	60	75*
33	55	60	70*
34	60	70*	75*
35	45	55	75*
36	50	60	75*

Mean: $$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$	51.39	62.78	73.19

*: *The student who passed the KKM (70)*

From the table above, it can be seen the mean score of the class in pretest is 51.39. It means that the students' reading mean score before using PBL or before implementing Classroom Action Research (CAR) is 51.39. Moreover, the students' score percentage in the pretest is 5.56%. It means that there are 2 students who pass the KKM and there are 34 students are still below the KKM.

Next in the cycle 1 of Classroom Action Research (CAR), the writer calculates the result of posttest 1 to know the students' score improvement from the pretest to posttest 1 result. There are three steps to get this improvement. The students' mean score of posttest in cycle 1 is 62.78. It proves that there are some improvements from the pretest mean score. It could be seen from the pretest mean score (51.39) to the mean score of posttest 1 (62.78). It improves 11.38 (62.78 – 51.39). The second step is to get the percentage of students' improvement score from pretest to posttest 1. The percentage of the students' improvement score from pretest to posttest 1 is 22.44%. It shows that the score in the cycle 1 has improved 22.14% from the pretest score. The third step is to know the percentage of students who pass the KKM. The class percentage which passes the KKM is 30.56%. It means that in the cycle 1 of Classroom Action Research (CAR), there are 11 students who passed the KKM and there are 25 students whose score are below the KKM. The class percentage of posttest 1 shows some students' improvement of the class percentage in the pretest (5.56%). The students' improvement passing the KKM is 25% (30.56% - 5.56%). Even though it is still needed more improvement because it could not achieve yet 75% as the target of success Classroom Action Research.

Furthermore, in the cycle 2 of Classroom Action Research (CAR) the writer also calculates the result of posttest 2 to know further the score improvement either from the result of pretest or posttest 1. There are three steps to know this improvement. Those are to calculate the mean score of the class, to calculate the percentage of the students' improvement score, and to calculate the class percentage which pass the KKM (70). After calculating, the mean score of posttest 2 is 73.19. It means that there are some students' improvements scores (10.41) from the mean score of pretest 1 (62.78). The second step is to know the calculation of the percentage of students' improvement score. It showed that the posttest 2 improves 42.42% from the pretest or 20.28% (42.42 – 22.14) from the pretest 1.The last step is the writer tries to get the class percentage whose score pass the KKM. The class percentage is 83.33%. It means that in the cycle 2 there are 30 students who pass the KKM and there are only 6 students are below the KKM. The class percentage of posttest 2 obviously shows some improvements from the previous test; the improvement is 77.77% from the pretest (5.56%) or 52.33% from the class percentage of posttest 1.

DISCUSSION

As a whole, the interpretation of the data results among the pretest, the posttest of cycle 1 and the posttest of cycle 2 are as following:

In the pretest, the mean score of students on reading test before carrying out Classroom Action Research (CAR) is 51.39. It is the students' reading score before they use Project-Based Learning. Meanwhile, the class percentage which passes the KKM is

5.56%. It means that that there are only 2 students who are able to pass the KKM (70) and there are 34 students are out of the target. It was very low score of second year students of Mts Jamiyyah Islamiyyah.

Furthermore, after implementing PBL for the first time in cycle 1, the mean score in the posttest of cycle 1 is 62.78. It means that there are some students' score improvement from the previous test (pretest), that is 11.38 (62.78 – 51.39) or 22.14%. Meanwhile, the class percentage which passes the KKM in posttest 1 is 31%. It shows improvement, there are 11 students who pass the KKM and there are 25 students whose score still under KKM. However, it is still needed more improvement because it could not achieve the target yet of success CAR, that is 75% (or at least 27 students) from the class percentage. That is why the writer and the teacher continue to the second cycle.

Next, students were get used to PBL and the score was improved significantly. the mean score in the posttest of second cycle is 73.19. It shows the students' improvement score 10.41 (73.19 – 62.78) from the posttest 1 (62.78) or 42.42% students' improvement in the score percentage from the pretest or 20.28% students' improvement from the pretest 1. Meanwhile, the class percentage which passes the KKM is 83.33%. It means there are 30 students whose score pass the KKM and there are 6 students are under the target of KKM. This class percentage shows some improvements 77.77% from the pretest (5.56%) or posttest 1 (30.56%) in the class percentage. The posttest of cycle 2 has fulfilled the target of Classroom Action Research (CAR) success, that is above 75% students could pass the KKM. Automatically, it can be said that implementing Project-Based Learning was success and the cycle was stopped.

The result showed how project work improved reading comprehension of the students in the second-year students of Mts. Jamiyyah Islamiyyah. It was proved by improving the students' score after implementing PBL method. It also showed that all students were able to re-tell their stories in their own words with good understanding, as reflected in their positive attitude toward project-based learning. They learned a lot of new words. They asserted that they gained and developed their critical thinking skills, such as making a decision, and explaining their viewpoints.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted in second grade students of MTs Jamiyyah Islamiyyah Pondok Aren in academic year 2015/2016, it can be concluded that the students could improve their reading comprehension of narrative text through Project Based Learning (PBL). The result of tests, observations, and interviews show that there are some improvements in the students' reading comprehension. Finally, this research shows a positive result in improving the students' learning process of reading narrative text by using PBL. The mean scores of the students in Cycle I was 62, 78 and 73,19 in Cycle II. Based on the comparison of the mean score in Cycle I and Cycle II, there was an improvement in the students' reading comprehension. It proved that the use of PBL in the teaching and learning process improved the students' reading comprehension of narrative text.

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