

## **SIMPLE STORIES EXTENSIVE READING METHOD: EFL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IMPROVMENT**

**Wamah Yaya Saparang<sup>1</sup>, Aminah Suriaman<sup>2</sup>, Maf'ulah<sup>3</sup>, Nadrun<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Universitas Tadulako, Indonesia

[wamahyayasaparang@gmail.com](mailto:wamahyayasaparang@gmail.com),

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Reading comprehension is the ability to capture and understand the meaning of text. However, many students have difficulty in understanding and remembering the information they read. The objective of this research is to find out the effectiveness of the Simple Stories Extensive Reading method in improving students' reading comprehension at SMP Negeri 2 Lore Tengah. This research used a pre-experimental research design. The sample was selected through random sampling. The researchers used a pretest and posttest to collect the data. The results showed that the mean score on the pretest was 29.95, which significantly increased to 80.67 on the posttest. In addition, the significance value (2 tailed) ( $p = 0.001$ ) was lower than the alpha level (0.05), which indicated that the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This research implies that the Simple Stories Extensive Reading method can increase students interest in reading, make students less likely to get bored, and create a more enjoyable learning process.*

**Keywords:** *Extensive Reading, Reading Comprehension, Simple Stories.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reading is an activity that involves interpreting written symbols, codes, and other forms of representation that are arranged in meaningful patterns. Reading not only helps us find information, but also allows us to process and analyze it more deeply (Novitri 2021). According to (Hidayat 2018), Reading is also an escape from everyday stress, taking us to a new world full of inspiration and life lessons. Reading, we not only broaden our horizons, but also develop our character and enrich our values (Hurtado-reina & Velasco 2024). learning to read also has several important benefits, such as helping one in understanding a new language, expanding vocabulary, improving proficiency in written English, and preparing oneself for those who want to study in an English-speaking environment (Andayani & Sri 2022). English is an important international language used in education. According to (Galloway & Numajiri 2020), the rise of English as a global language has influenced the development of English language teaching. Therefore, English language skills, particularly reading comprehension, are essential for students during the learning process (Wanci 2023). Learning process involves students' active participation in developing skills and improving understanding through experience and interaction in the classroom (Sari 2014). In addition, reading skills can improve students' general knowledge and reading comprehension (Ar 2024).

Reading comprehension is a complicated process that involves the integration of different cognitive skills and abilities (Azzahra 2025). Reading comprehension is the ability to capture and understand the meaning of text. However, many students have difficulty in understanding and remembering the information they read. According to (Darwin 2019), reading comprehension requires motivation, a mental framework for storing ideas, concentration, and effective study techniques. In other words, for successful reading comprehension, intrinsic motivation is needed to build concentration while reading, efforts to develop effective idea storage strategies, and readers need to develop good reading techniques to achieve the desired goals.

The Emancipated Curriculum specifies several phases for each level of education, ranging from phase A to F. These phases are designed to accommodate students' development according to their ability and age (Kemendikbudristek, 2025). At the eight grade level, students are placed in phase D. Phase D emphasizes teaching students to interact in English by exchanging ideas and participating in formal and informal discussions. Students are expected to be able to understand the main ideas and important details of familiar topics, express opinions, make comparisons, and give explanations using simple sentences (Safitri & Andani, 2024). They should also be able to read and respond to familiar and unfamiliar texts, evaluate main ideas, and identify purpose and information implied in texts (Stevani et al., 2022).

Based on the problems faced by students at SMP Negeri 2 Lore Tengah, such as limited reading skills, lack of interest, and inadequate reading habits. Therefore, the researcher take the initiative to apply the Start with Simple Stories strategy in learning extensive reading. Extensive reading is a second language reading approach that provides students with opportunities selected according to their interests and reading ability levels (Taembo 2023). (Yuniar & Umami 2023), states that extensive reading enables independent improvement of reading skills through continuous reading experiences. The Start with Simple Stories strategy is a simple and fun learning method, suitable for students with different language levels (Nurjamaliah, 2018). This is in line with (Patrick 2019), theory of comprehensible

input, which states that learning materials should be slightly above the students' ability level. The strategy involves providing simple narrative texts with animated or cartoon images, as well as some difficult vocabulary (10-15 words), designed to facilitate comprehension and increase students' motivation in reading.

From the explanation above, the researcher will conduct research on the same topic with a different focus on techniques of simple stories extensive reading strategy as a solution can develop reading comprehension, specifically literal comprehension. the researcher is interested in using the Start with Simple Stories Extensive Reading method as a solution because previous studies have successfully implementation used this method in learning to read and at SMPN 2 Lore Tengah.

## **MATERIALS AND METHOD**

The reading materials used in this research consisted of narrative texts, adapted from publicly shared sources and K13. Narrative texts, were selected because have a clear structure, familiar and engaging students, and are effective in reading comprehension. Narrative text is a type of text that presents a sequence of interesting events with the purpose of entertaining and engaging the readers (Lubis 2017). The short texts were selected based on appropriate difficulty level about 10-15 new words each page. The pretest and posttest instruments were based on these texts and included 15 multiple choice questions and 10 essay questions with the learning objectives. Student worksheets (LKPD) were also used to support group discussion and presentation activities. Then, the treatment procedure was conducted in six meetings. Students read the text independently without using a dictionary, were directed to skip difficult vocabulary, and focused on the general understanding of the story content. After reading, students discussed in small groups and presented the results of their discussions. The teacher then gave feedback and discussed vocabulary or sentence structures that had not been understood.

The sample of this research was eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Lore Tengah, with a total of 21 students in one class. The sample was selected using a total sampling technique because all students in the class were included in the research. This class was chosen as it was considered appropriate for the research focus and relevant to the learning materials based on the curriculum. The data were

collected through pretests and posttests administered before and after the treatment. Data analysis was conducted quantitative using SPSS version 28. The analytical techniques included descriptive statistics, a normality test (Shapiro-Wilk), Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test and paired sample t-test to determine the significance of differences between pretest and posttest results at a 0.05 significance level.

## RESULTS

The researcher used SPSS 28 to calculate the average student score, and the results of the calculation are as follows:

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	21	15	71	629	29.95	12.355
Post-test	21	60	100	1694	80.67	10.896
Valid N (listwise)	21					

Table 1 showed the learning outcome data of 21 experimental class students using the pre-experiment design. The minimum and maximum scores on the pre-test were 15 and 60 respectively, with a total score of 629 and an average of 29.95. After the application of the Start Simple Stories Extensive Reading method, the minimum and maximum scores on the post-test increased to 60 and 100, with a total score of 1,694 and an average of 80.67. These results indicated a significant improvement in students' reading ability after the treatment, showing that the method is effective.

**Table 2.** Experiment Classification Scores in Pre-Test

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Poor	19	90.5	90.5	90.5
Poor	1	4.8	4.8	95.2
Fair	1	4.8	4.8	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Based on Table 2, 19 students (90.5%) received a classification of very poor, 1 student (4.8%) received a poor classification, and 1 student (4.8%) was classified as fair.

**Table 3.**Experiment Classification Scores in Post-Test

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Poor	4	19.0	19.0	19.0
Fair	4	19.0	19.0	38.1
Good	9	42.9	42.9	81.0
Excellent	4	19.0	19.0	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Based on Table 3, 4 students (19.0%) were classified as poor, 4 students (19.0%) as fair, 9 students (42.9%) as good, and 4 students (19.0%) as excellent.

### Test normality

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data of each learning outcome in this study followed a normal distribution. Normally distributed data can be further analyzed with statistical t-test. Normality was checked using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test through the SPSS 28 program. The determination criteria are  $\text{sig} > 0.05$  means the data is normally distributed, while  $\text{sig} < 0.05$  indicates the data is not normal. The calculation results are presented below:

**Table 4.**Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.180	21	.072	.811	21	<.001
Posttest	.096	21	.200*	.974	21	.828

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the normality test results in Table 4.4, the pretest data was not normally distributed because the Shapiro-Wilk significance value was less than 0.05, while the posttest data was normally distributed with a significance value of more than 0.05. Because the pretest data was not normal, the Wilcoxon non-

parametric test was used to compare the pretest and posttest results, which was suitable for paired and non-normal data.

Based on the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test results displayed in the table above, the Z value was -4.019 with a significance value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) less than 0.001. This significance value was smaller than 0.05, so it could be concluded that there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results. In other words, the treatment given had a significant effect on improving students' learning outcomes.

### Testing Hypothesis

**Table 6.** Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Significance	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Pair					Lower	Upper				
1	Pretest Posttest	-50.714	7.329	1.599	-54.050	-47.378	-31.710	20	<,001	<,001

Hypothesis testing was conducted using paired sample t-test with a significance level of 0.05 to determine the effectiveness of the Start with Simple Stories Extensive Reading method in English learning for grade 8 students at SMP Negeri 2 Lore Tengah. Based on the results of data analysis with SPSS version 28, the mean score difference between the pretest and posttest was -50.714 with a standard deviation of 7.329 and a standard error of the mean of 1.599. The 95% confidence interval for this mean difference is between -54.050 (lower limit) and -47.378 (upper limit). The t-count value was -31.710 with a degree of freedom (df) of 20. The two-sided p-value was less than 0.001, indicating a highly statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant increase in learning outcomes after the application of the tested method.

### DISCUSSION

This research discusses the results of techniques the Start Simple Stories Extensive Reading (SSSER) method to improve students' reading skills. The

findings indicate that students' low reading ability is influenced by several factors, including low interest in reading, limited vocabulary due to the perception that English is difficult, lack of confidence, and insufficient understanding of text structure. (Zainudin et al., 2022) who state that students' reading difficulties are generally caused by low reading motivation, limited vocabulary mastery, and lack of confidence in understanding English texts. According (Yulianti 2022), unfamiliar vocabulary or structures are clarified after the reading activity, allowing students to focus on overall meaning during reading. Also (Ainun 2024), explains that students tend to rely on memorizing vocabulary without fully understanding text structure, whereas reading comprehension requires deeper understanding beyond memorization. Another contributing factor is that students are not given opportunities to choose reading materials that match their interests. Thus, reading comprehension of narrative text by Implementation start with simple stories extensive reading improved. (Nabiillah 2025), explains that in extensive reading activities, teachers select simple narrative texts, encourage students to enjoy the story, and train them to ignore unfamiliar words without becoming discouraged.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of this approach can also be supported by learning theory that emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input in language acquisition, as stated by (Erlidawati 2023), who emphasizes that learning becomes more effective when students are exposed to comprehensible and level-appropriate reading materials. Supporting activities such as discussion and question-and-answer sessions after reading further strengthen students' understanding of the text (Virgiyant 2020). In addition, (Wiranegara, 2022), states extensive reading is suitable for improving students' reading comprehension. In this strategy, teachers can use to make the learning process more effective. Through this approach students are able to improve their reading fluency and comprehension in a more structured learning environment. Extensive reading enables independent improvement of reading skills through continuous reading experiences. The Start with Simple Stories strategy is a simple and fun learning method, suitable for students with different language levels.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this research indicated that the Start Simple Stories Extensive Reading (SSSER) method is effective in improving students' reading comprehension. The improvement was reflected in the increase of students' post-test scores after the implementation of the method. The use of simple reading materials focusing on literal comprehension helped students understand English texts more effectively and increased their interest in reading activities. However, this research was limited to one class and focused only on literal comprehension in narrative texts. Therefore, future researchers are recommended to conduct studies with larger samples, different text types, and more comprehensive reading aspects such as inferential and critical comprehension.

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