

Research Article

Utilizing Semantic Mapping Strategy to Improve the Reading Comprehension of the Eleventh-Grade Students of SMA Negeri 1 Malinau

Linda Parabak Mangori^{1*}, Margana²

¹ English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Languages, Arts and Culture, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia; email: lindaparak.2022@student.uny.ac.id

² English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Languages, Arts and Culture, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia; email: margana@uny.ac.id

*Corresponding Author: lindaparak.2022@student.uny.ac.id

Abstract: The objectives of this study were: (1) to describe how the implementation of Semantic Mapping Strategy improves the reading comprehension of eleventh graders at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau, and (2) to determine the extent to which the implementation of Semantic Mapping Strategy improves students' reading comprehension. This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) by adapting the procedures proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which include planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants of this research were eleventh-grade students, with a total of 20 students selected purposively based on preliminary observation indicating that they experienced difficulties in comprehending narrative texts. The research was conducted in two cycles, and the data were collected through reading comprehension tests, observation sheets and interview. The data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative. The findings revealed that the implementation of the Semantic Mapping Strategy was effective in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. Based on the qualitative data, the strategy created a more interactive, student-centered, and meaningful learning environment, which increased students' participation, motivation, and confidence during the learning process. Meanwhile, the quantitative data showed a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension scores, as evidenced by the increase from the pre-test score of 56.75 to the post-test score of 91.5, with all students achieving the minimum mastery criterion (KKTP) in the post-test. In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that the implementation of the Semantic Mapping Strategy is effective in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts at the eleventh grade of the senior high school.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research; Narrative Text; Reading Comprehension; Semantic Mapping Strategy; Student-Centered.

1. Introduction

Language plays an essential role in oral and written communication because it enables individuals to exchange information effectively (Javdatovich, 2025). In the Indonesian educational context, the Merdeka Curriculum positions English as a foreign language that supports communication competence and the development of 21st-century skills through student-centered and communicative learning (Nuralawiah & Baihaqi, 2024). Accordingly, English instruction is expected to develop the four language skills so that students are able to communicate appropriately in spoken and written forms according to the expected literacy level.

Among the four language skills, reading is considered fundamental because it enables learners to understand, interpret, and utilize written information. Reading literacy refers to the ability to comprehend and use written language in meaningful ways valued by individuals and society (McGrane et al., 2017). Reading also involves constructing meaning through top-down and bottom-up processes supported by various reading strategies (Manihuruk, 2020).

Received: February 10, 2026

Revised: April 14, 2026

Received: June 15, 2026

Online Available: July 31, 2026

Current ver.: July 31, 2026



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors.

Submitted for possible open

access publication under the

terms and conditions of the

Creative Commons Attribution

(CC BY SA) license

([https://creativecommons.org/li](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

[censes/by-sa/4.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

Therefore, mastering reading skills is essential for academic purposes, personal development, and everyday communication (Clark & Rumbold, 2006).

Despite these expectations, many Indonesian EFL students continue to experience difficulties in reading comprehension. Previous studies indicate that learners often struggle to understand English texts because of limited vocabulary, unfamiliar grammatical structures, and inadequate comprehension strategies (Smith et al., 2021). These challenges frequently make students dependent on dictionaries and reduce their confidence and motivation when reading English texts. Consequently, many students enter higher levels of education without achieving the expected level of reading proficiency.

In senior high schools, the Merdeka Curriculum expects students to comprehend various text types, including descriptive, procedure, recount, report, and narrative texts, while recognizing their rhetorical structures. However, students' reading achievement has not yet fully met these learning objectives. Therefore, improving reading instruction remains an important responsibility for English teachers. Harmer (2008) emphasizes that teachers should not only encourage students to read English texts but also apply instructional strategies that facilitate deeper comprehension. Likewise, Gelderen et al. (2023) highlight the importance of systematic instruction to strengthen students' reading comprehension skills.

To overcome reading difficulties, teachers need to implement effective comprehension strategies. Reading comprehension can be improved by teaching learners to apply cognitive and metacognitive strategies such as prediction, think-aloud, identifying text structure, visual representation, summarizing, and questioning (Bogale, 2018). Previous studies have also demonstrated that instructional techniques such as summarizing, skimming, reading aloud, and semantic mapping positively influence students' reading comprehension achievement.

One instructional strategy that has received considerable attention is Semantic Mapping, which visually represents relationships among concepts or keywords to facilitate understanding (Anastasiou et al., 2024). According to Bauman, as cited in Panjaitan and Sihotang (2021), semantic mapping presents concepts and their relationships through diagrams consisting of nodes and connecting lines. Research has shown that this strategy improves vocabulary mastery, writing ability, and reading comprehension among English as a Foreign Language learners (Zahro & Rachmawati, 2021). Furthermore, Semantic Mapping helps students activate prior knowledge, organize ideas, strengthen long-term memory, take effective notes, and understand conceptual relationships across different learning contexts (Al-Khasawneh, 2023). Cooper (2000) also explains that semantic mapping is particularly useful for activating background knowledge before reading, reinforcing understanding during instruction, and evaluating learning outcomes after instruction.

Based on these considerations, the researcher implemented Semantic Mapping Strategy in the reading classroom at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau, Malinau Regency. Preliminary observations revealed that students had limited background knowledge, experienced difficulties in comprehending English narrative texts, and relied heavily on dictionaries when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. Reading instruction was also predominantly teacher-centered, requiring students to read texts, identify difficult words, listen to explanations, and answer comprehension questions. This approach resulted in low student participation, with only a few students actively engaging during classroom activities.

To address these problems, the researcher conducted Classroom Action Research (CAR) by implementing Semantic Mapping Strategy. This strategy was expected to improve students' reading comprehension by helping them activate prior knowledge, organize information, enrich vocabulary, and understand narrative texts more effectively.

Based on the research problem, this study aimed to describe the implementation of Semantic Mapping Strategy in improving the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau and to determine the extent of its effectiveness in enhancing students' reading comprehension achievement.

2. Literature Review

Reading comprehension is an active process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with written texts rather than merely decoding words. Comprehension requires readers to interpret information, relate ideas, and connect new information with their prior knowledge, language competence, and reading strategies (Alruthaya et al., 2025). It also involves identifying essential information, understanding the relationships among ideas, and interpreting the author's intended message accurately (Botsas, 2017).

The success of reading comprehension is influenced by several factors, including text type, reading purpose, and the strategies applied during reading. Readers develop

understanding by recognizing text organization, predicting content, and using contextual information to interpret meaning (Herhausen et al., 2025). In second language learning, comprehension extends beyond translating vocabulary because learners must integrate linguistic knowledge, background knowledge, and effective reading strategies to understand texts successfully (Grabe & Stoller, 2019).

The interactive perspective proposes that effective reading integrates bottom-up processing, such as recognizing words and sentence structures, with top-down processing, including prediction, inference, and the use of background knowledge. The combination of these processes enables readers to construct deeper understanding of a text (Grabe & Yamashita, 2022). In addition, the metacognitive perspective highlights the importance of planning, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating reading outcomes. Readers are expected to apply appropriate strategies, such as rereading difficult sections, identifying key ideas, and checking their understanding when comprehension problems arise (Zhang, 2010).

Based on these perspectives, the reading process in this study is viewed as an active and self-regulated process in which students construct meaning from narrative texts by integrating language knowledge, prior knowledge, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive awareness. Semantic Mapping Strategy supports this process by helping students organize information visually, recognize relationships among ideas, and improve overall reading comprehension (Grabe & Yamashita, 2022).

In the Indonesian senior high school curriculum, reading instruction includes several genres, particularly recount and narrative texts. Based on Depdiknas (2006), eleventh-grade students are expected to comprehend the meaning, rhetorical structure, communicative purpose, and language features of these text types. These competencies require students to identify main ideas, supporting details, factual information, and implied meanings, reflecting both literal and interpretive comprehension. Accordingly, this study focuses on narrative texts because they align with the curriculum and address the reading difficulties encountered by students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau. To support students in understanding vocabulary, identifying important information, following the sequence of events, and interpreting the overall meaning of narrative texts, Semantic Mapping Strategy was applied as the instructional approach (Gebremariam, 2025).

In senior high school English instruction, students are introduced to various text genres that differ in their communicative purposes, organizational patterns, and language features. Genre is not merely a classification of text, but also reflects its social purpose and linguistic characteristics (Lee, 2001). The curriculum includes descriptive, procedure, recount, report, and narrative texts. Descriptive texts present detailed characteristics of people, places, or objects (Tompkins, 1994), while procedure texts explain a sequence of steps to accomplish a task (Hasanah et al., 2022). Recount texts retell past events chronologically and emphasize their significance (Mustofa & Kurniawan, 2023), whereas report texts provide factual descriptions of general subjects and their characteristics (Alsaywid & Abdulhaq, 2019). Among these genres, this study focuses on narrative text because it corresponds to the instructional materials and addresses students' reading comprehension difficulties, particularly in identifying main ideas, supporting details, vocabulary in context, event sequences, and overall text meaning (Barth, 2021).

Narrative text is a story-based text that presents events in a meaningful sequence (Barth, 2021). Although its primary purpose is to entertain readers, it also conveys experiences, values, and moral messages through characters, conflicts, and their resolutions. Narrative texts may describe real or imaginary events and generally include characters, setting, conflict, sequence of events, and resolution. They are commonly written in the past tense and frequently employ action verbs, temporal connectives, and descriptive language to ensure coherence and clarity. In English learning, narrative texts help students recognize story elements, interpret implied meanings, understand vocabulary in context, and identify moral lessons. Therefore, this study employed narrative texts as the main reading material and used Semantic Mapping Strategy to assist students in organizing story elements and improving reading comprehension (Barth, 2021).

Semantic Mapping Strategy is a visual reading strategy that assists students in organizing ideas, identifying relationships among concepts, and integrating new information with their prior knowledge, thereby improving reading comprehension. This strategy is closely associated with schema theory and concept mapping, which emphasize meaningful learning through the visualization of concepts and their connections (Linh, 2025). Rather than presenting isolated words or ideas, semantic mapping illustrates the relationships among the main idea, supporting details, vocabulary, events, and other important information, enabling students to understand a text more comprehensively (Linh, 2025).

Several scholars define semantic mapping as a form of visual representation that organizes concepts and demonstrates their relationships. Cooper (2000) describes it as a visual representation of a concept, while Little and Box, as cited in Sasabone et al. (2018), consider it a graphic organizer that connects key ideas. Likewise, Alvermann and Moore (1991) explain semantic mapping as a process of organizing categories of information and displaying their relationships visually. In this study, Semantic Mapping Strategy was implemented to improve students' comprehension of narrative texts by guiding them to identify main ideas, supporting details, contextual vocabulary, sequences of events, and the overall meaning of the story. Within the framework of Classroom Action Research, the strategy also promoted interactive, student-centered, and meaningful learning by helping students connect prior knowledge with new textual information (Alvermann & Moore, 1991).

Semantic Mapping Strategy facilitates the construction of ideas by transforming textual information into an organized visual framework. The process begins with a central concept, followed by activating students' prior knowledge, identifying related words or ideas, and grouping them into meaningful categories. This approach helps students understand both vocabulary and the relationships among concepts, making semantic mapping an effective strategy before, during, and after reading activities (Lumontad et al., 2020).

The development of a semantic map typically starts with a key word or concept introduced by the teacher, after which students generate related ideas through brainstorming and discussion (Johnson et al., 2013). These ideas are then classified into categories such as characters, setting, events, problems, resolutions, vocabulary, and moral values (Vacca & Vacca, 1999). As students read the text, they expand the map by adding the main ideas, supporting details, sequences of events, unfamiliar vocabulary, and implied meanings. To accurately represent the content, the organization of the map should reflect the structure of the text itself (Nurcihan, 2013).

Through this process, students move beyond simple word association toward deeper reading comprehension by classifying, connecting, and interpreting textual information. In this study, Semantic Mapping Strategy was implemented throughout each cycle of the Classroom Action Research to help eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau develop a more systematic understanding of narrative texts and improve their reading comprehension from the pre-test to the post-test (Lumontad et al., 2020).

Reading instruction at the SMA level is designed to develop students' communicative competence through integrated language skills, including reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Under the national curriculum, students are expected to comprehend and communicate information accurately through various text types, including descriptive, narrative, recount, procedural, and report texts (Depdiknas, 2006).

For Grade XI students, reading competencies emphasize understanding the meaning, rhetorical structure, communicative purpose, and language features of narrative and recount texts. Students are also expected to identify main ideas, supporting details, factual information, and interpersonal meanings within a text (Depdiknas, 2006). These competencies require students to achieve both literal and interpretive comprehension. Accordingly, this study focuses on improving students' comprehension of narrative texts by strengthening their ability to identify essential information and interpret textual meaning in accordance with curriculum objectives.

In this study, the procedure consisted of three stages. During pre-reading, the teacher introduced the lesson objectives, activated students' prior knowledge through brainstorming, presented the central topic, and guided students to construct an initial semantic map. In the whilst-reading stage, students read a narrative text, identified unfamiliar vocabulary, determined the main idea and supporting details, and expanded their semantic maps using information obtained from the text. Finally, during post-reading, students discussed and refined their maps, retold the story, added relevant information, and reflected on their understanding.

These procedures enabled students to classify narrative elements such as characters, setting, conflict, sequence of events, resolution, vocabulary, and moral values into an organized visual framework. Furthermore, the stages aligned with the Classroom Action Research process because they could be systematically planned, implemented, observed, and evaluated in each research cycle (Cooper, 2000).

The classroom implementation involved complementary teacher and student activities. In the pre-reading stage, the teacher explained objectives, stimulated brainstorming, introduced the semantic map, and organized students into small groups, while students responded to questions, contributed ideas, and prepared for discussion. During whilst-reading, students read the narrative text, identified unfamiliar vocabulary, analyzed story

elements, and completed their semantic maps collaboratively under the teacher's guidance. In the post-reading stage, students retold the story using their completed maps, participated in class discussions, added relevant information, and answered brief comprehension questions. Overall, semantic mapping functioned as a structured learning strategy that supported students in understanding, organizing, and communicating the content of narrative texts more effectively (Cooper, 2000).

3. Research Methods

This study applied Classroom Action Research (CAR) to address students' reading comprehension problems and improve the instructional process. CAR enables teachers and researchers to identify classroom issues, implement actions, observe learning activities, and reflect on the outcomes to enhance teaching effectiveness (Connor et al., 2006). This approach was considered appropriate because the difficulties originated from an actual classroom context, where students struggled to comprehend narrative texts, including identifying main ideas, supporting details, vocabulary in context, sequence of events, and overall meaning. According to Burns, Edwards, and Ellis (2022), teacher action research provides English teachers with a practical means of evaluating and improving their instructional practices. In this study, Semantic Mapping Strategy was implemented to activate students' prior knowledge, organize concepts, classify information, and strengthen understanding of narrative texts through visual mapping. The research involved one class of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau and followed the Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) model consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection.

The research was carried out at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau, North Kalimantan, because preliminary observations revealed that students experienced difficulties in comprehending narrative texts. The findings indicated that students required an instructional strategy capable of helping them organize ideas, connect prior knowledge with new information, recognize main ideas and supporting details, and understand vocabulary within context. The participants were 20 eleventh-grade students enrolled in the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The class was selected purposively because both classroom observations and the pre-test results confirmed weaknesses in reading comprehension. The students obtained a mean pre-test score of 56.75, which was below the school's Criteria for Achievement of Learning Objectives (KKTP) of 75, indicating the need for instructional improvement. Consistent with the principles of Classroom Action Research, participant selection was based on an identified classroom problem rather than random sampling. The implementation of Semantic Mapping Strategy was conducted over two cycles, each consisting of three meetings, while the improvement process was monitored using observation sheets, students' activity observation sheets, field notes, reflections, interviews, and documentation (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

The research procedures followed the Classroom Action Research framework proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Prior to the intervention, a preliminary study and a pre-test were conducted to identify students' initial reading comprehension of narrative texts. The intervention was then implemented through two cycles, with three meetings in each cycle.

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative data to examine the improvement of students' reading comprehension and to describe the classroom process during the implementation of the Semantic Mapping Strategy. Quantitative data were collected through reading comprehension tests, while qualitative data were obtained from observation sheets, students' activity observation sheets, field notes, reflection notes, interviews, and documentation. The combination of multiple instruments was intended to enhance data credibility through triangulation, allowing the researcher to explain both students' learning outcomes and classroom changes (Kemmis et al., 2014).

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' reading comprehension improvement and the implementation process of the Semantic Mapping Strategy. Quantitative analysis measured students' learning achievement, whereas qualitative analysis described classroom activities, students' participation, responses, and behavioral changes during the action research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

4. Results and Discussion

Reconnaissance

The preliminary observation indicated that students experienced considerable difficulty in comprehending English narrative texts. Limited background knowledge and schemata

prevented them from connecting new information with their prior experiences, particularly when the topics or story elements were unfamiliar. In addition, students demonstrated limited vocabulary mastery, frequently relying on word-by-word translation, dictionaries, or the teacher's explanations instead of understanding vocabulary in context. This tendency reduced their ability to comprehend the overall meaning of the text and answer comprehension questions accurately.

The teaching of reading comprehension was also dominated by conventional activities, such as reading passages, identifying unfamiliar words, and answering comprehension questions. Such practices provided minimal opportunities for students to actively construct meaning or engage in meaningful classroom interaction. Consequently, only a small number of students participated in discussions, while most remained passive. Furthermore, many students perceived English as a difficult subject, resulting in low motivation, limited confidence, and reluctance to express ideas during reading activities.

The classroom observation was supported by interviews with the English teacher and several students. The teacher explained that students' limited vocabulary and background knowledge frequently hindered their understanding of English texts, making them highly dependent on teacher guidance. Likewise, students admitted that unfamiliar vocabulary often prevented them from understanding the content of narrative texts and made them hesitant to interpret texts independently. These findings suggested the need for a strategy that could help students activate prior knowledge, organize ideas, and understand vocabulary within context. Therefore, Semantic Mapping Strategy was selected because it enables learners to activate schemata, visually organize concepts, identify relationships among ideas, and improve comprehension of narrative texts more systematically (Johnson, 1987).

Based on the reconnaissance findings, the action focused on five major issues: limited background knowledge and schemata, insufficient vocabulary mastery, difficulty understanding narrative texts, low classroom participation, and low learning motivation and confidence. Semantic Mapping Strategy was considered appropriate to address these problems because it encourages students to activate prior knowledge before reading, organize vocabulary according to conceptual relationships, and identify connections between the main idea and supporting information. Through brainstorming, collaborative discussion, map construction, and presentation activities, students were expected to become more actively involved in the learning process while improving their comprehension of narrative texts. In addition to enhancing reading achievement, the strategy was also expected to strengthen students' participation, motivation, and confidence during English learning (Heimlich & Pittelman, 1986).

A pre-test was administered before the implementation of the action to determine the students' initial level of reading comprehension and provide baseline quantitative data. The test assessed students' ability to identify main ideas, locate supporting details, understand vocabulary in context, and comprehend the overall meaning of narrative texts. The results showed a total score of 1135, with a maximum score of 100, a minimum score of 15, and a mean score of 56.75. This average was considerably below the school's KKTP of 75. Of the 20 students, only two achieved the minimum mastery criterion, whereas eighteen students failed to meet the expected standard.

These findings confirmed the results of the classroom observation and interviews, indicating that students continued to experience difficulties in identifying main ideas, recognizing supporting details, interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary, and understanding the overall meaning of narrative texts. Consequently, Semantic Mapping Strategy was implemented as an instructional approach to improve students' reading comprehension by facilitating more meaningful vocabulary learning, activating prior knowledge, and promoting systematic organization of textual information (Johnson, 1987).

The Implementation of the Action

The implementation stage was conducted after the reconnaissance phase identified that students still experienced difficulties in comprehending narrative texts, particularly in activating prior knowledge, understanding vocabulary, identifying main ideas, and participating actively during reading activities. The research was implemented through two cycles, each consisting of three meetings following the Classroom Action Research procedures of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Process data were collected through observation sheets, students' activity observation sheets, field notes, reflections, and documentation, while students' learning outcomes were measured using the pre-test and post-test. The implementation emphasized the use of the Semantic Mapping Strategy to improve students' reading comprehension by encouraging students to

organize ideas systematically and interact collaboratively during the learning process (Johnson & Pearson, 1984).

The planning stage of Cycle 1 was developed based on the problems identified during the reconnaissance stage. Students demonstrated limited background knowledge, insufficient vocabulary mastery, low classroom participation, and limited motivation during reading activities. To address these issues, the researcher and collaborator prepared lesson plans, selected narrative texts, designed semantic mapping worksheets, and developed observation instruments, field notes, and documentation. The learning activities introduced the Semantic Mapping Strategy, enabling students to activate prior knowledge, identify key vocabulary, classify information, recognize main ideas and supporting details, and collaboratively construct semantic maps (Heimlich & Pittelman, 1986).

The three meetings employed different narrative texts. During the first meeting, students explored “The Legend of Mount Wayang” through brainstorming activities and collaboratively created a semantic map. The second meeting used “The Guardian of the Time Gate” to strengthen vocabulary development and information classification, while the third meeting focused on “The Broken Mirror on the Third Floor,” allowing students to construct and present their own semantic maps based on the text.

Cycle 1 was implemented through three meetings using the Semantic Mapping Strategy during the pre-reading, whilst-reading, and post-reading stages. Throughout the implementation, the collaborator observed students’ participation, classroom interaction, and learning difficulties.

During the first meeting, students were introduced to semantic mapping and encouraged to connect their prior knowledge with the topic through brainstorming activities. Although several students responded positively to the new learning strategy, many remained hesitant when answering guiding questions and required assistance in classifying ideas into semantic map categories. The observation data indicated that students were still adapting to the strategy. The activity observation score reached 36 of 60 (60%), which was categorized as Fair, indicating that students still needed guidance in identifying key concepts and participating actively in classroom discussions.

The second meeting emphasized vocabulary enrichment and information organization. Students predicted the story, discussed unfamiliar vocabulary, and grouped ideas into categories such as characters, setting, and problems. Compared with the first meeting, participation increased during group discussions. However, many students still depended on teacher assistance when interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary or organizing information accurately. Additional explanations and modeling were therefore provided to strengthen students’ understanding.

In the third meeting, students applied the strategy more independently while reading “The Broken Mirror on the Third Floor.” Working collaboratively, they identified characters, events, main ideas, and supporting details before constructing semantic maps. Most groups successfully completed simple maps, although several students continued to experience difficulties identifying the main idea and explaining the relationship between central concepts and supporting information. Teacher scaffolding through guiding questions and examples remained necessary to support students’ comprehension.

The reflection of Cycle 1 indicated that the Semantic Mapping Strategy had begun to facilitate students’ understanding of narrative texts by helping them organize information more systematically. Students became more engaged in group discussions and gradually adapted to semantic mapping activities. Nevertheless, several limitations remained. Many students still struggled to activate prior knowledge, understand unfamiliar vocabulary, identify main ideas, and confidently present their ideas. Consequently, the researcher revised the action for Cycle 2 by providing clearer instructions, more structured semantic map categories, stronger vocabulary support, additional guided examples, and more opportunities for collaborative discussion and presentation. In accordance with the research design, no formal achievement test was administered after Cycle 1 because quantitative improvement was evaluated through the comparison between the pre-test and post-test (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

The planning of Cycle 2 was based on the reflection findings from Cycle 1. The revised action emphasized clearer instructional guidance, more systematic semantic map categories, enhanced vocabulary support, and explicit modeling to help students identify relationships between main ideas and supporting details more accurately. To provide additional practice opportunities, different narrative texts were selected, namely “The World Behind the Laptop Screen,” “The Compass that Shows the Direction of Dreams,” and “The Little Wizard in the

Metropolitan City.” Teacher feedback and demonstrations were also increased to promote students’ independent use of semantic mapping (Heimlich & Pittelman, 1986).

Cycle 2 consisted of three meetings with greater emphasis on teacher scaffolding before students worked collaboratively.

In the first meeting, students read “The World Behind the Laptop Screen.” Through guided questions, they activated prior knowledge, predicted the story, and organized information using a structured semantic map. Compared with Cycle 1, students demonstrated greater readiness and required less teacher assistance in identifying main ideas and supporting details, although some groups still needed support when explaining relationships among ideas.

The second meeting utilized “The Compass that Shows the Direction of Dreams.” Students worked collaboratively to interpret unfamiliar vocabulary, refine semantic maps, and discuss the meaning and moral values of the narrative. Classroom interaction became more active as students assisted one another in completing the maps and connecting supporting details to the central idea. Teacher feedback primarily focused on improving the completeness and accuracy of students’ semantic maps.

The final meeting employed “The Little Wizard in the Metropolitan City.” Students answered comprehension questions, completed semantic maps, and presented their findings during classroom discussions. Most students demonstrated greater confidence and comprehension, successfully explaining the relationship between main ideas and supporting information. The observation results showed a considerable improvement in students’ participation. The total activity score increased to 52 of 60 (86.67%), which was categorized as Very Good, indicating stronger collaboration, confidence, and active engagement throughout the learning process.

The reflection of Cycle 2 demonstrated that the revised implementation successfully enhanced both the learning process and students’ reading comprehension. Clearer instructions, structured semantic maps, vocabulary support, and explicit modeling enabled students to organize information more effectively and participate more actively during classroom activities. Field notes confirmed improvements in brainstorming, group discussions, vocabulary exploration, and presentation skills. Students also became more confident in identifying main ideas and supporting details while explaining the content of narrative texts.

The comparison of classroom observations further confirmed this improvement. Students’ activity increased from 60% (Fair) in the first meeting of Cycle 1 to 86.67% (Very Good) in the third meeting of Cycle 2, indicating that the Semantic Mapping Strategy effectively promoted students’ participation, collaboration, and confidence during reading instruction (Heimlich & Pittelman, 1986). After completing Cycle 2, the researcher administered the post-test as the final quantitative measurement of students’ reading comprehension and conducted interviews with ten representative students to obtain qualitative evidence regarding their perceptions of the implementation. These findings were subsequently presented separately in the following section of Chapter IV as supporting evidence of the effectiveness of the action.

Discussion of The Research

The findings indicate that *Semantic Mapping Strategy* improved students’ reading comprehension by creating a reading process that was more systematic, visual, and interactive. During the pre-reading stage, students activated their prior knowledge through brainstorming and prediction, enabling them to connect existing knowledge with the content of narrative texts. This finding supports schema theory, which emphasizes that comprehension is facilitated when readers integrate new information with prior knowledge (Rumelhart, 1980). Likewise, Cooper (2000) explains that *semantic mapping* is an effective technique for activating and expanding learners’ background knowledge before reading.

In the whilst-reading stage, students identified essential elements of the narrative text, including unfamiliar vocabulary, main ideas, supporting details, characters, settings, problems, and events, before organizing them into *semantic maps*. This process reduced students’ dependence on word-for-word translation and encouraged contextual understanding of vocabulary and ideas. These findings are consistent with Al-Khasawneh (2023), who argues that *semantic mapping* enhances vocabulary acquisition by linking words with related concepts, and Panjaitan and Sihotang (2021), who describe it as a visual representation that illustrates relationships among concepts.

The visual organization provided by *semantic maps* also enabled students to comprehend narrative texts more effectively by recognizing connections between central ideas and supporting information. As a result, students became better at identifying main ideas, organizing details, and constructing overall meaning from the text. This finding aligns with

Anastasiou et al. (2024), who highlight that *concept mapping* improves learning achievement through visual knowledge organization, and Anderson and Pearson (1984), who emphasize that reading comprehension results from the interaction between prior knowledge and textual information.

The implementation of *Semantic Mapping Strategy* further enhanced classroom interaction. Students participated more actively in brainstorming, group discussions, constructing *semantic maps*, and presenting their work. Although students in Cycle 1 still required considerable teacher guidance, their participation and confidence increased in Cycle 2 after receiving clearer modeling, guided practice, vocabulary support, and structured mapping categories. This improvement reflects Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which stresses the importance of social interaction in learning, and is supported by Johnson and Johnson (1999), who argue that cooperative learning promotes collaborative achievement of learning objectives.

Interview data reinforced the observational findings. Students reported that *semantic mapping* helped them understand the relationship between main ideas and supporting details, while also making reading activities more engaging and reducing boredom. These responses suggest that the strategy enhanced not only reading comprehension but also students' motivation and confidence during English learning, consistent with Dörnyei (2001), who emphasizes that meaningful classroom activities contribute to stronger learning motivation.

The effectiveness of *Semantic Mapping Strategy* was reflected in the comparison between the pre-test and post-test results. Since the pre-test measured students' initial reading comprehension and the post-test was administered after the completion of Cycle 2, the quantitative findings represent the overall impact of the intervention rather than comparisons between individual cycles.

The post-test results demonstrate substantial learning improvement. Sixteen students achieved scores between 86–100, while the remaining four students scored between 76–85. No student scored below 76, indicating that all 20 students exceeded the KKTP of 75. Furthermore, the post-test produced a total score of 1,830, with scores ranging from 80 to 100 and an average of 91.5. Because the minimum score was already above the required criterion, every student successfully met the expected learning standard after the implementation of *Semantic Mapping Strategy*.

Qualitative findings from the interviews strengthened these quantitative results. Students stated that *semantic mapping* enabled them to understand the relationship between main ideas and supporting information, encouraged greater classroom participation, reduced boredom, and created a more enjoyable reading experience. These responses are consistent with the observations and field notes, indicating that the strategy positively influenced both students' comprehension and classroom engagement.

Overall improvement is evident from the comparison of pre-test and post-test performance. The mean score increased from 56.75 to 91.5, representing an improvement of 34.75 points. Similarly, the number of students achieving the KKTP increased from only 2 students in the pre-test to 20 students in the post-test. These findings demonstrate that *Semantic Mapping Strategy* effectively improved students' reading comprehension by helping them identify key information, organize ideas visually, understand vocabulary in context, and recognize relationships among events within narrative texts. The results support Grabe and Stoller (2019), who emphasize that effective reading instruction should develop students' understanding of reading processes, and are consistent with previous studies by Zahro and Rachmawati (2021), Sasabone et al. (2018), Afriyanti (2023), and Mouchrif (2023), all of whom reported that *semantic mapping* contributes positively to reading comprehension and student engagement.

In conclusion, the findings addressed both research questions. First, *Semantic Mapping Strategy* improved students' reading comprehension by activating prior knowledge, visually organizing information, facilitating contextual vocabulary learning, identifying main ideas and supporting details, and promoting collaborative learning. Second, the effectiveness of the strategy was confirmed by the significant increase in students' achievement, as reflected in the rise of the mean score from 56.75 to 91.5 and the achievement of the KKTP by all 20 students. These findings indicate that *Semantic Mapping Strategy* was effective in improving the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau.

5. Conclusion

This Classroom Action Research concluded that the implementation of the Semantic Mapping Strategy effectively improved the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau. The strategy created a more structured, visual, and interactive

learning process by encouraging students to activate prior knowledge, identify key information in narrative texts, classify related ideas, and organize them into semantic maps. Learning activities such as brainstorming, group discussion, semantic map construction, presentation, and reflection promoted active participation and meaningful learning. Furthermore, the improvements introduced in Cycle 2, including clearer modeling, stronger teacher guidance, vocabulary support, and more organized group work, enabled students to understand relationships among ideas more systematically and construct meaning independently rather than relying solely on teacher explanations.

The implementation of the Semantic Mapping Strategy also improved students' reading comprehension achievement. Quantitative findings revealed that the mean score increased significantly from 56.75 in the pre-test to 91.5 in the post-test, with all 20 students successfully achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKTP) of 75. These results demonstrate that the strategy enhanced students' ability to identify main ideas, recognize supporting details, interpret vocabulary in context, understand the sequence of events, and comprehend the overall meaning of narrative texts. The qualitative findings further reinforced these results, as observations, field notes, documentation, and interviews indicated that students became more active, motivated, confident, and collaborative throughout the learning process. They also demonstrated greater competence in discussing texts, completing semantic maps, and explaining relationships among ideas. Overall, within the scope of this study involving 20 eleventh-grade students and two cycles of classroom action research, the Semantic Mapping Strategy proved effective in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts.

References

- Afriyanti. (2023). The effectiveness of using semantic mapping strategy in teaching reading comprehension of narrative text. *Journal of English Education*, 1(1).
- Al-Khasawneh, F. M. (2023). The potential of semantic mapping strategy to enhance vocabulary learning. *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University*, 58(60).
- Alruthaya, S., Mantei, J., White, S. L. J., & Kervin, L. (2025). Moving towards a more comprehensive understanding of multimodal text complexity. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 48(2), 119–139. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44020-025-00079-9>
- Alsaywid, B. S., & Abdulhaq, N. M. (2019). Guideline on writing a case report. <https://doi.org/10.4103/UA.UA>
- Alshammari, M. M. (2015). New developments in teaching reading comprehension skills. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3(1), 1–10.
- Alvermann, D. E., & Moore, D. W. (1991). Secondary school reading. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 2, pp. 951–983). Longman.
- Anastasiou, D., Nangsin, C., & Pantelis, W. (2024). The effectiveness of concept maps on students' achievement in science: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 36(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-024-09877-y>
- Anderson, R. C., & Pearson, P. D. (1984). A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading comprehension. In P. D. Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of reading research* (pp. 255–291). Longman.
- Barth, F. (2021). Annotation guidelines for narrative levels and narrative acts v2. 6(4), 98–139.
- Bogale, Y. U. (2018). Conceptualizing reading to learn: Strategy instruction. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 10(2), 93–117.
- Botsas, G. (2017). Differences in strategy use in the reading comprehension of narrative and science texts among students with and without learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal*, 15(1), 139–162.
- Burns, A., Edwards, E., & Ellis, N. J. (2022). *Sustaining action research: A practical guide for institutional engagement*. Routledge.
- Clark, C., & Rumbold, K. (2006). *Reading for pleasure: A research overview*. National Literacy Trust.
- Connor, K. A. O., Greene, H. C., & Anderson, P. J. (2006). Action research: A tool for improving teacher quality and classroom practice.
- Cooper, J. D. (2000). *Literacy: Helping children construct meaning* (4th ed.). Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Depdiknas. (2006). *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia Nomor 22 Tahun 2006 tentang standar isi untuk satuan pendidikan dasar dan menengah*. Departemen Pendidikan Nasional.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gebremariam, H. T. (2025). Cultivating students' reading skills: Inspiring reading comprehension and motivation through critical reading strategies. *SAGE Open*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251367189>

- Gelderen, A. J. S. van, Schooten, E. van, & Steensel, R. van. (2023). Does vocabulary knowledge matter in the effectiveness of instructing reading strategies? Differential responses from adolescents with low academic achievement on growth in reading comprehension. *Reading and Writing*, 2549–2575.
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2019). *Teaching and researching reading* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Grabe, W., & Yamashita, J. (2022). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Harmer, J. (2008). *How to teach English* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Hasanah, Q., Tjendani, E. N., & Ghozali, I. (2022). Discourse analysis on procedure text to practice self-directing learning. *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 6(2), 72–83.
- Herhausen, D., Ludwig, S., Abedin, E., Ul, N., & Jong, D. De. (2025). From words to insights: Text analysis in business research. *Journal of Business Research*, 198(May), 115491. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2025.115491>
- Javdatovich, T. J. (2025). The importance of writing and written speech in mastering oral communication in a foreign language. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD)*, 14–16.
- Johnson, D. D., Pittelman, S. D., & Heimlich, J. E. (2013). Semantic mapping. *The Reading Teacher*, 39(8).
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1999). *Learning together and alone: Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning* (5th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The action research planner* (3rd ed.). Deakin University Press.
- Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2014). *The action research planner: Doing critical participatory action research*. Springer.
- Lee, D. Y. W. (2001). Genres, registers, text types, domains, and styles: Clarifying the concepts and navigating a path through the BNC jungle. *Language Learning & Technology*, 5(September), 37–72.
- Linh, P. D. (2025). *The role of mind mapping strategy training for enhancing EFL learners' writing skills: Learning academic essay writing* [Doctoral dissertation, Waseda University]. Waseda University Graduate School.
- Lumontad, N. S., Argate, R. T., & Aparece, U. B. (2020). Concept mapping as a reading comprehension tool. *International Journal of English Language Studies (IJELS)*, 21–29.
- Manihuruk, D. H. (2020). The correlation between EFL students' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension: A case study at the English Education Department of Universitas Kristen Indonesia. *Journal of English Teaching*, 6(February), 86–95.
- McGrane, J., Stiff, J., & Lenkeit, J. (2017). *Progress in international reading literacy study (PIRLS): National report for England*. Department for Education.
- Mouchrif, H. (2023). The impact of semantic mapping on reading comprehension among Moroccan EFL students. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 4(3), 1–29.
- Mustofa, M. I., & Kurniawan, E. (2023). Theme and thematic progression in a recount text by an advanced student. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 7(2), 481–494.
- Nuralawiah, V., & Baihaqi, A. (2024). An analysis of the English textbook “English in Mind Second Edition” based on the Merdeka Curriculum. *EDUCATIO: Journal of Education*, 06(03), 16046–16056.
- Nurcihan, Y. (2013). Using semantic mapping technique in vocabulary teaching at pre-intermediate level. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 1531–1544. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.221>
- Panjaitan, N. B., & Sihotang, H. M. (2021). A comparative study between Frayer model and concept mapping strategy to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition. *Acuity: Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature and Culture*, 5, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.35974/acuity.v5i1.2221>
- Rumelhart, D. E. (1980). Schemata: The building blocks of cognition. In R. J. Spiro, B. C. Bruce, & W. F. Brewer (Eds.), *Theoretical issues in reading comprehension: Perspectives from cognitive psychology, linguistics, artificial intelligence, and education* (pp. 33–58). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sasabone, L., Yassi, A. H., Imran, N., & Studies, E. L. (2018). Applying semantic mapping to improve students' reading comprehension. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 1(1), 10–16.
- Smith, R., Snow, P., Serry, T., & Hammond, L. (2021). The role of background knowledge in reading comprehension: A critical review. *Reading Psychology*, 42(3), 214–240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2021.1888348>
- Tompkins, G. E. (1994). *Literacy for the 21st century: A balanced approach*. Prentice Hall.
- Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (1999). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (6th ed.). Longman.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Zahro, T. M., & Rachmawati. (2021). The use of semantic mapping technique in teaching reading recount text: A case study at the eighth grade of junior high school in Majenang. *ELT Forum: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 8–14.

Zhang, C. (2010). The teaching of reading comprehension under the psychology schemata theory. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(4), 457–459. <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.1.4.457-459>