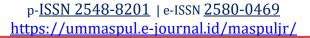# The Effect of Using the Nearpod Application on Reading Comprehension in the International Class of a Senior High School

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh penggunaan aplikasi Nearpod terhadap kemampuan memahami bacaan di kalangan siswa International Class Program (ICP) di SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo, dengan fokus khusus pada teks naratif. Dengan menggunakan desain pra-eksperimen berbentuk one-group pretest-posttest, penelitian ini melibatkan 36 siswa ICP, terdiri atas 14 laki-laki dan 22 perempuan, yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Intervensi yang dilakukan mencakup pengajaran teks naratif menggunakan Nearpod, sebuah platform interaktif yang dirancang untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan dan pemahaman siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui pretest dan posttest, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan uji t berpasangan (paired samples t-tests). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan secara statistik pada skor pemahaman bacaan siswa, dengan rata-rata skor meningkat dari 80,33 pada pretest menjadi 88,22 pada posttest (p-value = 0,000). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Nearpod secara efektif meningkatkan kemampuan memahami bacaan siswa melalui pengalaman belajar yang interaktif dan menarik. Penelitian ini juga menyoroti potensi integrasi teknologi dalam pembelajaran literasi, serta merekomendasikan penelitian lebih lanjut untuk mengeksplorasi manfaat jangka panjang penggunaan Nearpod di berbagai tingkat kelas, jenis teks, dan konteks pendidikan yang beragam. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap semakin berkembangnya bukti yang mendukung pendekatan pedagogi berbasis teknologi dalam pembelajaran bahasa.

Kata Kunci: Aplikasi Nearpod, Pemahaman bacaan, Teks Naratif, Penelitian Pra-eksperimental

Abstract

This study examines the effect of the Nearpod application on reading comprehension among students in the International Class Program (ICP) at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo, focusing specifically on narrative texts. Employing a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach, the research involved 36 ICP students, comprising 14 boys and 22 girls, selected through purposive sampling. The intervention consisted of teaching narrative texts using Nearpod, an interactive platform designed to enhance student engagement and comprehension. Data were collected through pretests, and posttests, and then analyzed using paired samples t-tests. Results revealed a statistically significant improvement in students' reading comprehension scores, with the mean increasing from 80.33 in the pretest to 88.22 in the posttest (p-value = 0.000). This finding demonstrates that Nearpod effectively enhances students' reading comprehension by providing interactive and engaging learning experiences. The study highlights the potential of integrating technology into literacy instruction and recommends future research to explore the sustained benefits of Nearpod across different grade levels, text types, and diverse educational contexts. These findings contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting the use of technology-driven pedagogical approaches in language learning

Keywords : Nearpod application, Reading Comprehension, Narrative text, Pre-experimental research

Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in the development of a nation. Every nation has its own curriculum to guide the learning process, including Indonesia. Curricula continuously evolve and develop over time. Since 2022, the Indonesian government has implemented a new curriculum known as *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This curriculum replaces the *Kurikulum 2013*. One of the key differences between the two is the use of diagnostic tests conducted before teachers deliver the instructional materials.

One of the significant innovations introduced in *Kurikulum Merdeka* is the use of diagnostic assessment prior to the delivery of instructional materials. Diagnostic assessment is specifically designed to identify the competencies, strengths, and weaknesses of learners, enabling educators to tailor the learning process according to students' needs and conditions (Kepmendikbud, 2020, p. 1) This type of assessment is conducted by teachers to evaluate students' readiness for learning and to identify areas of difficulty, as highlighted by Matarani Salma et al. (Matarani Salma et al., 2016, p. 19) and Arifin et al. (Arifin et al., 2019, p. 149).

The preventive nature of diagnostic assessment allows educators to anticipate potential challenges students may face at the beginning of a course, period, or subject (Delgado et al., 2019, p. 37). Diagnostic methods can include program activities, observations, interviews, questionnaires, or other tools and techniques. It is crucial for the evaluation objectives to be clearly defined, as unsystematic data may hinder effective interpretation. Moreover, teachers can use diagnostic assessments to design customized learning strategies that address individual difficulties, such as conceptual misunderstandings or gaps in knowledge (Firmanzah & Sudibyo, 2021, p. 167). By identifying these challenges, teachers can prepare specific instruments and interventions to support students in subsequent lessons.

Based on the previous explanation, diagnostic assessment can be defined as a preliminary evaluation conducted specifically by teachers to identify students' competencies, strengths, and weaknesses across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. This assessment allows educators to design learning experiences that align with students' conditions and needs. The implementation of diagnostic assessments has become mandatory in all classes, including specialized programs.

East Java is home to numerous schools with distinctive programs that reflect the unique characteristics of each institution. Among them, SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo stands out as a well-established high school in Indonesia that prioritizes academic excellence, character development, and Islamic values. Renowned for its dedication to quality education, the school consistently innovates to provide optimal learning experiences for its students. To align with global educational trends and prepare students for international competitiveness, SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo introduced the International Class Program (ICP).

The International Class Program (ICP) is an educational innovation aimed at improving quality and addressing global advancements and demands (Afni & Ubaidillah, 2023, p. 345). This program integrates English instruction into key subjects and creates opportunities for students to engage in international collaborations, exchange programs, and competitions. Through the ICP, SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo ensures that its graduates are not only academically proficient but also equipped to succeed in an increasingly globalized world.

The ICP program at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo began in 2022. This program integrates the national curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) with an international framework, specifically the American College Testing (ACT) curriculum for English subjects. SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo is the only high school in Sidoarjo to offer this program, and it is also the largest institution implementing it. Investigating how diagnostic assessments are conducted in the ICP class could provide valuable insights. Based on these assessments, one of the most significant challenges faced by students in the ICP class is reading. Out of 36 students, approximately 17 (47.5%) reported finding reading to be particularly difficult.

Reading competence is a fundamental skill in language learning, serving as the foundation for academic achievement and lifelong learning. It involves the ability to

comprehend, interpret, and analyze written texts effectively (Yanti, 2020, p. 60). According to Putra et al., reading is considered one of the most crucial and fundamental skills in language learning. It serves a variety of purposes; however, mastering reading comprehension requires extensive practice and patience (Putra & Taufiq, 2024, p. 7).

Reading is essential for students as a primary source of information, enabling them to gain and understand knowledge. Language learning and reading are inherently connected, as reading facilitates language acquisition. Without reading, language acquisition becomes significantly more challenging, as it provides a means of understanding vocabulary, syntax, and sentence structures. Therefore, language learners need to read extensively to maximize their learning. To summarize, reading and language learning are inseparable.

Teaching and learning reading skills involve distinct challenges, with reading comprehension being the most common difficulty. In the classroom, reading comprehension tasks often include answering questions related to main ideas, understanding vocabulary through synonyms and antonyms, and responding to specific details in the text. Such challenges can arise due to factors such as background knowledge, cultural awareness, and familiarity with text structures (Nurjanah, 2018, p. 225).

Background knowledge refers to the pre-existing information or understanding that students bring to the reading process. As Van Dijk noted in (Smith et al., 2021, p. 215), readers must integrate the information in a text with their prior knowledge to construct a mental representation of its meaning. A lack of prior knowledge can hinder comprehension, as students may struggle to understand the context of the text. Readers rely on their existing knowledge to connect new information with what they already know.

Cultural differences can also affect reading comprehension. When students are unfamiliar with a text's cultural context, lack cultural knowledge, or struggle with specific vocabulary, their understanding may be limited. Additionally, knowledge of text types is another crucial factor. Various texts—such as newspaper articles, fairy tales, or business letters—have unique structures and conventions. Without an awareness of these distinctions, students may face difficulties in comprehending the content. Recognizing text-type characteristics allows students to interpret and understand material more effectively.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), developing reading competence is particularly significant, as it enables students to build vocabulary, improve grammar, and enhance critical thinking skills. Among the various text types, narrative texts play a pivotal role in fostering these competencies. Narrative texts, characterized by their structure of orientation, complication, and resolution, provide an engaging medium for students to enhance their reading abilities. These texts expose learners to rich language, diverse perspectives, and moral lessons, all of which contribute to their cognitive and emotional development (Lubis, 2016, p. 3).

However, despite their importance, students often encounter challenges in comprehending narrative texts due to factors such as limited vocabulary and insufficient background knowledge. These barriers can negatively impact their reading competence and, consequently, their overall academic progress. Difficulties in the learning process can adversely affect academic achievement. As noted by Maryam in Basri et al. (Basri et al., 2023, p. 10) when students face learning difficulties, it negatively influences their academic performance. Furthermore, Al-Mahrooqi and Denman emphasize that 'reading . . . contributes to educational achievement through developing a variety of academic skills' (Diets & Sengkey, 2023, pp. 188–189). Therefore, it can be concluded that reading has a strong relationship with students' academic achievement.

Surely, it asks teachers to find a solution to make English learning, especially the reading process, more effective and creative. One of them is through technology. Some experts claim that technology can enhance language learners' proficiency in reading, listening, speaking, and writing (Hashim et al., 2017, p. 48);(Lam Kieu et al., n.d., p. 24); (Taufiq & Megawati, 2023). With the technology implementation, it can improve English teaching through dynamic and interactive learning content.

The use of innovative teaching tools has shown great potential in addressing challenges in education. By integrating technology into the

teaching of narrative texts, educators can adopt a learner-centered approach that fosters and improves comprehension. One such tool is Nearpod, an interactive platform designed to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Nearpod features multimedia presentations, interactive videos, quizzes, interactive games such as 'Time to Climb,' drawing activities, and collaborative tasks. It is a website and digital application accessible to teachers as a resource for facilitating the learning process. This application utilizes interactive slides that students can access via their gadgets or electronic devices (Edwards, 2023).

Invented in 2012 by Kovalskys, Felipe Sommer, and Emiliano Abramzon in Florida, United States, Nearpod has become a widely used educational tool. Perez, as cited in Burton describes it as a cloud-based application with an easy-to-use interface. Students and audiences can access lessons through any smart device or computer/PC. Moreover, it offers the flexibility to be used both synchronously and asynchronously. Nearpod allows educators to transition seamlessly between presentation/lecture modes and individual or group activities (Burton, 2019, p. 95). Additionally, Sanmugam et al. highlight that Nearpod facilitates interactive learning by encouraging students to actively engage in educational activities, thereby enhancing their knowledge (Sanmugam et al., 2019, p. 8).

Several studies have been conducted on the use of Nearpod in education. Previous research explored its application in developing writing skills. Lestari and Hermanto Sihombing identified Nearpod as an effective tool to address students' perceptions of writing, presenting it as one of the key solutions to this challenge (Lestari & Hermanto Sihombing, 2022, p. 79). Although Nearpod has been predominantly applied to improve writing skills, it can also be utilized for enhancing reading comprehension. For instance, a study conducted by Faten Zahran revealed that using Nearpod in conjunction with guided reading strategies positively impacted students' comprehension abilities (Zahran, 2025, p. 7). Another study demonstrated that Nearpod's ability to structure and control learning experiences, engage all students in class, and organize learning materials significantly improved students' reading comprehension (Pupah & Sholihah, 2022, p. 27). However, these studies focused on reading comprehension in general rather than narrative texts specifically.

The implementation of Nearpod has not yet been explored within the International Class Program (ICP) at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo. Thus, this research aims to investigate the effect of the Nearpod application on Reading Comprehension in the International Class particularly on narrative texts.

Method

This research employed a pre-experimental design: one group pretest-posttest. The one group pretest-posttest design is a research method applied to a single group, observed both before and after a treatment or intervention (Fadilla et al., 2021, pp. 103–104). The procedure of the study involved three critical steps: pretest, treatment, and posttest.

The pretest was administered to evaluate and assess students' knowledge prior to the intervention. The treatment consisted of teaching narrative texts using Nearpod, an interactive teaching platform. Finally, the posttest was conducted after the treatment, and the posttest scores were analyzed to measure the difference between pretest and posttest results, thereby assessing the impact of the intervention.

A sample is a subset of individuals, objects, or elements selected from a larger population for measurement in research (Makwana et al., 2023, p. 763). (Makwana et al., 2023, p. 763). A sample refers to selected elements (people or objects) chosen to participate in a study, with people often referred to as subjects or participants (Irfan Syahroni et al., 2022, p. 106).

This research utilized purposive sampling as the sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a method in which samples are selected based on the researchers' specific objectives, rather than criteria such as strata, randomness, or geographical location (Irfan Syahroni et al., 2022, p. 106). The researchers specifically focused on selecting participants from the International Class Program (ICP) students at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo.

The study was conducted at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia. The participants comprised 36 ICP students, including 14 boys and 22 girls. The

research instruments consisted of objective tests, which included 15 reading comprehension tasks.

The researchers collaborated with the teacher to conduct a diagnostic test aimed at identifying problems and collecting relevant data. The findings indicated that reading posed significant challenges for the students, potentially affecting their academic achievement and scores. To address this, the researchers utilized narrative texts, which are part of the curriculum for this grade level, as the teaching material. Additionally, Nearpod, an interactive learning platform, was employed as the teaching medium.

This study aimed to examine whether the use of Nearpod could positively impact students' achievement in reading comprehension of narrative texts. To achieve this, a pretest-posttest method was adopted. The pretest was designed to assess students' baseline knowledge of narrative texts prior to the treatment (O1). The experimental treatment (X) involved using Nearpod to improve students' abilities in reading narrative texts. Following the intervention, a posttest was conducted to evaluate the students' comprehension of narrative texts after using Nearpod. Finally, the differences between the pretest and posttest scores were analyzed to determine the impact of the experimental treatment (O2).

> **O1 X O2**

After the result was revealed, then the normality test was conducted. The function of the normality test in a paired sample t-test is to check whether the differences between paired observations follow a normal distribution. This is important because the paired t-test assumes that the differences between paired samples are normally distributed. Then, t-test was conducted, precisely Paired Sample T-Test. The paired-samples t-test was conducted by comparing two means or averages from the sample groups or by comparing the pre-test results (before learning) and post-test results (after learning). (Tri Basuki, 2019, p. 10) explains that paired samples are the same subjects but experience different treatment. Then, the data was analysed by applying SPSS 26. Further information about the activities done in this study can be seen in the following table.

No	Day and Date	Activity
1	Friday, 3 January 2025	Preliminary Study
2	Friday, 10 January 2025	Pretest
3	Friday, 17 January 2025	Treatment 1 Introduction and explain about Nearpod Application, creating an account on a Nearpod application and reviewing the material of narrative text. Practicing comprehending narrative text using Nearpod
4	Friday, 24 January 2025	Treatment II The second of Practicing comprehending narrative text using the Nearpod application
5	Friday, 31 January 2025	Posttest
6	February 2025	Analyzing the data using IBM SPSS 26 to answer the hypothesis

Table 1. Research Activities

Result and Discussion

After getting the result of the post-test, the researchers then conducted a test of normalcy. The test of normality aims to ascertain if the independent and dependent variables within the regression model exhibit a distribution that is either normal or not. In this case, The One-Sample Shapiro-Wilk Test was employed in the normalcy test. If the sig. result of the normality table test is more than 0.05, the data is regularly distributed.

Tests of Normality

	Kelas	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Nilai Ujian	Pretest	.155	36	.028	.941	36	.056
	Posttest	.149	36	.043	.957	36	.173

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tabel 2. *Test of Normality*

Test of Homogeneity of Variance		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Nilai Ujian	Based on Mean	.807	1	70	.372
	Based on Median	.694	1	70	.408
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.694	1	64.441	.408
	Based on trimmed mean	.967	1	70	.329

Tabel 3. Test of Homogeneity of Variance

The researchers attempted to use a t-test on paired samples to examine the initial and final exam data to determine how well the Nearpod application improved the students' reading comprehension of narrative content. One test technique used to look at the treatment's efficacy is the t-test on paired samples. The difference between the average before and after receiving therapy serves as an indicator.

Paired Samples Statistics		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	80.33	36	8.092	1.349
	Posttest	88.22	36	6.437	1.073

Tabel 4. Mean Paired Samples Statistics

From the data we can conclude that the posttest mean is higher, suggesting improvement after the intervention. There are 36 participants. The pretest scores show more variability compared to post-test scores. The post-test has a smaller SEM (standard Error Mean), indicating less variability in sample mean estimates. In general, the results indicate that the posttest scores are significantly higher than pretest scores, suggesting that the intervention or treatment was effective in improving performance.

Paired Samples Correlations		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pretest & Posttest	36	.536	.001

Tabel 5. Paired Samples Correlations

This indicates a moderate to strong positive correlation between pre-test and posttest

scores. A positive correlation suggests that participants who scored higher on the pretest also tended to score higher on the posttest. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the correlation is statistically significant

Paired Samples Test		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-7.889	7.147	1.191	-10.307	-5.471	-6.623	35	.000

Tabel 6. Paired Sample t Test

The mean difference between pre-test and post-test scores is -7.889 meaning that post-test scores are, on average, 7.889 points higher than pre-test scores. 7.147, indicating the variability of the differences. Standard Error Mean: 1.191, which measures how much the sample mean difference is expected to vary from the true population mean difference. Significance (Sig. 2-tailed, p-value): .000. Since p < 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis, meaning there is a statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest scores.

If we take a look at the previous finding, it's evident that there was a notable improvement in the student's performance in narrative text, with scores increasing from 80.33 in the pretest to 88.22 in the post-test. Additionally, the paired samples t-test indicated a significant difference, with a p-value of 0.000, which is below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates a substantial improvement in student learning outcomes from the pre-test to the post-test. Consequently, it can be inferred that Nearpod effectively contributed to enhancing the reading ability in the narrative text of ICP students at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo. The observed success among students can likely be attributed to the remarkable features offered by Nearpod. For instance, its ability to create engaging and interactive presentations likely played a crucial role in capturing students' attention and making the learning process more enjoyable. This aligns with the findings of Ami, (Ami, 2021, p. 147) who highlighted Nearpod as a versatile application software with various captivating features that support interactive learning, such as interactive presentations and quizzes.

Moreover, the paired samples t-test revealed a two-tailed significance value of 0.000, indicating a substantial difference between the student's learning outcomes in the pre-test and post-test, as it falls below the standard threshold of 0.05. Hence, it can be deduced that Nearpod effectively enhanced the reading proficiency of tenth-grade students in the narrative text within ICP class at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo. The student's achievements may have been influenced by Nearpod's impressive features, including its capacity to craft captivating and interactive presentations, thereby engaging students and rendering the learning process more enjoyable.

This finding resonates with Brock in his research about Nearpod that the students responded with more energy for the material and this seemed to have a very positive effect on the classroom environment (Lowry-Brock, 2016, p. 31). Nearpod offers a plethora of compelling features, such as interactive presentation tools and quizzes, to facilitate interactive learning experiences. In addition, Nearpod enables the integration of multimedia content such as videos, images, and audio clips into the lesson. This can help reinforce the concepts being taught and cater to different learning styles. This statement is in line with (Minalti et al., 2021, p. 2232) who said that Nearpod offers a wide range of features that enhance the learning experience, including interactive presentations with multimedia elements such as images, videos, audio, and virtual reality (VR) content.

Additionally, Nearpod offers the functionality to seamlessly integrate quizzes, polls, and other interactive exercises, providing instant feedback to students. This interactive approach encourages active engagement and allows students to assess their comprehension of the material in real time.

Conclusion

Referring to the findings above, the average reading score of ICP students at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo in Narrative text improved significantly after using the Nearpod application. Before the treatment, the mean score was 80.33, which increased to 88.22 after the treatment. The t-test with paired sample findings analysis showed a 0.000 Sig. (2-tailed) value, indicating that the improvement in scores was statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis of null (Ho) is refuted, and the hypothesis of alternative (Ha) is affirmed. This implies that the usage of the Nearpod application effectively enhances the reading comprehension skills of learners in SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sidoarjo, especially on the topic of Narrative texts. From the result, it is recommended for future researchers to investigate the impact of Nearpod on reading comprehension mastery, future research could explore its effectiveness across different grade levels and diverse student populations. Longitudinal studies could track students' progress over an extended period to assess the sustained benefits of Nearpod integration. Additionally, comparative studies could examine the efficacy of Nearpod against other instructional approaches to identify best practices in literacy instruction. Furthermore, qualitative research methods such as interviews and observations could provide deeper insights into students' perceptions and experiences with Nearpod, informing the development of tailored instructional strategies. By addressing these avenues, future research can contribute to the ongoing advancement of technology-enhanced pedagogy and its implications for language learning outcomes.

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