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# Improving Students' Comprehension on Descriptive Text by Using Graphic Organizers Integrated with Islamic Values

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out whether the use of graphic organizers integrated with Islamic values can improve students' ability to comprehend descriptive texts. Since the true education requires a balance of cognitive development and character development or moral fortitude as the world becomes far from religious path, therefore, this study carried Islamic values as part of classroom English. The subject of this research was grade eight of SMPIT Al-Fauzi Medan of 2023/2024 academic year which consists of 25 students. Classroom action research was implemented following Kurt Lewin's model with action research procedures, namely planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. This research was conducted in two cycles in each cycle consists of two meetings. Data collection techniques in this study used the following instruments: interviews, field notes, questionnaires, and tests. The results of this study integration of media GOSS with Islamic values showed significant improvement on students' comprehension on descriptive texts. Students achieve expected grades which is higher than the minimum criteria 70 gradually at the end of the cycle. The average score of the students on the initial test was 51.25. The average value of students in the first cycle is 58.75. The average value of students in the second cycle is 72.80. Hence, there are positive responses from students and English teachers regarding to the use of media graphic organizers integrated with Islamic values to improve students' comprehension on descriptive text.

**Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Descriptive Text, Graphic Organizers, Islamic Values**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In English language acquisition, four abilities must be imparted by the educators and mastered by learners: reading, listening, speaking and reading. For both native speakers and new learners of English, it is important to note that reading and listening as receptive skills to understand the texts whether on spoken or written sources. Zimmerman and Hutchins (2003) say that reading comprehension is the capacity to read, process, and understand content. In addition, reading comprehension is a complex task which depends on a range of cognitive and linguistic processes. The complexity can be captured as the product of two sets of skills: decoding and linguistic comprehension (Nation, 2019). Then, Duke & Cartwright (2021) propose active view of reading (AVR) as an active self-regulation, which allows for word recognition, language comprehension, and the processes that bridge them (bridging processes) while reading. Therefore, GOs good comprehension is pivotal if reading has a purpose, if a reader engages with and learns from a text, ultimately, a reader is to enjoy what they're reading.

Many students enjoy stories and can read well, but they occasionally struggle to understand what they've read. Building reading comprehension abilities begins with a firm foundation that extends beyond simply completing multiple choice questions. True comprehension emerges from students' personal lives, experiences, and perspectives on the world. Reading comprehension questions on high-interest materials begin from imagining written language and communicating their comprehension through drawing which leads them carefully chunk the unit studies on intriguing themes to deepen their baseline knowledge. Reading through visualization will develop skills in sequencing, retelling, identifying character traits, understanding setting and plot, creating story maps, identifying the main idea and details, making predictions, drawing inferences from the text.

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Descriptive text is brought to the classroom as reading materials which is a paragraph vividly portrays a person, place, or thing in such a way that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer's experience (Evawina, 2010). Descriptive text looks easy to understand but actually has a high level of difficulty for students at primary and elementary level. Thus, we can understand that students have a level of difficulty in learning descriptive text even though there have been many efforts that have been done by teachers at classroom English to students both from media, techniques, and methods (Hafizah, et.al, 2024). Previous findings support the observation, as Prayudha (2023) finds several key challenges students have in reading descriptive texts, including recalling information, understanding complex text structures, unfamiliarity with the subject matter, lack of fluency, and insufficient use of reading strategies during the learning process.

Several studies show that the use of graphic organizers (GOs) in teaching reading improve students' comprehension (Ayiz, 2024; Min, 2023; Sabarun, et.al., 2023; Alawi, 2011; Yusnaini, 2018; Mutia, 2019; Tayib, 2015; Mahmudah, 2015). Furthermore, Salazar-Rodríguez (2020) found the efficacy of GOs showed discernible enhancement in overall text comprehension. These findings suggest that GOs are effective tools for enhancing students' comprehension and managing the cognitive demands of language learning. Therefore, graphic organizers (GOs) become sufficient media that can help students with difficulties in comprehending descriptive text. GOs media is a pictorial way of constructing knowledge and organization information. These methods, when incorporated in the lesson, provide students with the opportunity to actively participate and contribute to their learning process and it can help to improve the students' capacity for active learning.

The use of GOs improves learning in the classroom. Though very simple to the eye, GOs are powerful tools, highly instrumental in altering and improving the teaching-learning process in the classroom. The Goals of GOs media are to improve reading comprehension and increase conceptual learning in ways that maximize students' involvement (Bromley, et.al., 1999). Furthermore, GOs provide many benefits, for instance; helping students chunk the content of the texts, helping students to classify ideas and communicate, guiding students in demonstrating their thinking process and many others. According to Watkins (2007), there are 5 reasons for using GOs such as tools for critical and creative thinking; organizing information; understanding information and relationships; depicting knowledge and understanding; and self-learning.

In the other hand, religious values are increasingly regarded as an integral, basic element of education, especially in influencing character, morality, and social cohesion. Research indicates that integrating these values helps develop mental resilience, empathy, and ethical decision-making in students. Rather than restricting knowledge, incorporating religious and moral values prepares individuals to contribute positively to a diverse society. Studies demonstrate that incorporating these principles fosters mental resilience, empathy, and ethical decision-making among pupils. Instead of limiting knowledge, integrating religious and moral principles equips individuals to positively participate to a varied community (Siregar, 2024). Therefore, in this study, the materials brought to the classroom are based on the character of Islamic figures and Islamic treasures such as:

| Cycle | Islamic Figures | Islamic Treasures |
|---|---|---|
| Cycles 1 | The Prophet Muhammad SAW | Hajar Aswad |
| | Muhammad Al Fatih: The Conquest of Constantinopel | Ka'bah |
| | Pharaoh:A Symbol of Arrogance and Tyranny | The Bee (An-Nahl) |
| Cycle 2 | Muammar Qaddafi\| Biography, Death and Facts | Madinah |
| | Mustafa Kemal Attaturk: His Death and Grave Story | Mecca |
| | Saddam Husein: Biography, Death and Facts | The Al-Qur'an |

Many previous studies have been conducted on the topic of reading comprehension with the assistance of graphic organizers; however, hardly any of them are associated with Islamic values. In contrast, Aziz (2025) research, "Advance Organizer Strategy and Reading Comprehension: A Longitudinal Analysis of Madrasa Students' Performance," focused solely on the efficacy of GOs in the context of reading, without establishing a connection to Islamic-themed teaching materials. The other previous studies, such as Qi and Jiang (2021), reported a significant achievement in comprehension among junior high

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school students in China by carrying GOs while reading. Albufalasa (2020) found that students using GOs not only gain higher comprehension scores but also increase motivation. In Iran, Rasouli and Heravi (2018) discern learners who used GOs outperformed peers in both comprehension and information retention. Similarly, Hon and Mukundan (2023) stated that GOs reduced cognitive load and enhanced performance among Malaysian ESL learners. In the Chinese EFL context, Min et al. (2023) further remarked that GOs not only enhanced students' critical thinking skills but also improved their reading comprehension and engagement. The deficiencies of these prior investigations can be summarized as the necessity for curriculum developers to incorporate GOs with Islamic epistemic principles (e.g., Tadabbur reflection) in order to align cognitive strategies with religious pedagogy. These modifications convert GOs into a culturally responsive instrument for Islamic education systems at Islamic schools. Therefore, this classroom research intended to clarify how is the students' reading comprehension on descriptive text by using GOs which is integrated with Islamic values and to what extend does the use of GOs integrated with Islamic values improve the students' comprehension on descriptive text.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The design used in this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR). According to Kember (2000), action research has several major characteristics; (1) action research is concerned with social practice which it involves direct interaction of teacher and group of students (2) action research is aimed towards improvement (3) action research is a cyclical process which involves some phases of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (4) action research is pursued by systematic inquiry (5) action. The research design of CAR in this study is a collaborative classroom action research. It means the researcher collaborates with the English teacher of SMPIT Al-Fauzi Medan.

The writer uses the CAR procedure based on Kurt Lewin's design. Lewin (1947) stated that CAR has two cycles in which each cycle contains four phases; planning, acting, observing, and reflecting as follows:

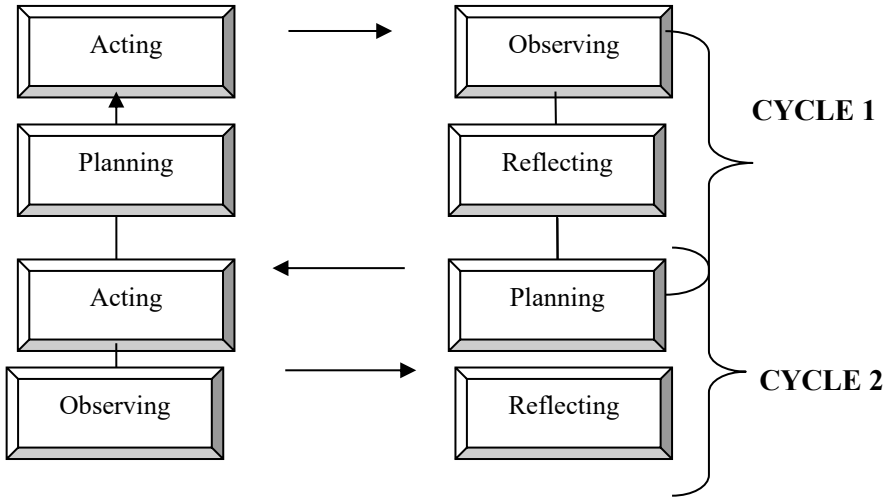



**Fig. 3.1**
**Kurt Lewin's Action Research Design**

Lewin's CAR design consists of four phases; planning, acting, observing, and reflecting within one cycle. If the first cycle finished but still found any problem, it is necessary to continue to the second cycle with the same concept of the first cycle. Those are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In addition, before entering the cycle of classroom action research, the writer conducts the preliminary study. According to Mills preliminary information gathering is taking time to reflect on your own beliefs and to understand the nature and context of your general idea. It is aimed to gain data about problems faced by teacher and students in teaching-learning activities and needed to be solved.

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**Participants**

This study is conducted at SMPIT Al-Fauzi located at Jl. Garu II/Nusa Indah No.59, Kecamatan Medan Amplas, Kota Medan, Provinsi Sumatera Utara. The subject of research was students of Class VIII that consist of 25 students. The reason of choosing this school as the subject because there still lack of students' ability in reading skill especially in descriptive text and moreover as one of Islamic school in Medan.

**Instruments and data Collection**

Technique of collecting data in this study is both qualitative data and quantitative data. The writer uses qualitative data consist of interview, field notes, and questionnaire sheet. While quantitative data consists of students' final reading as a pre-test and post-test.

**Data Analysis**

Reading comprehension skills of elementary school students is related to the indicators studied. The reading test given in the form of multiple choices to measure the students: (1) Understanding 5W1H Information (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How) based on the descriptive texts they read; (2) identifying characters, events, places, times, reasons, and ways in descriptive text well; (3) Determining the main idea in the descriptive texts; and (4) making conclusions from the text. In the other side, the data gathering through field notes and interview is analyzed by presenting the description of the result of field notes and interview. Questionnaire is analyzed in the form of percentage and presented by the description of the result of questionnaire.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**The Result of Pre-Interview**

In doing the first step, namely pre-interview, the researcher used unstructured interviews. In this interview, below are the conclusion taken based on the interview:

| The Questions | Conclusion |
|---|---|
| What are the general conditions of the class during the teaching and learning process? | Students had varying personalities, so their attitudes toward activity and response varied. However, in general, pupils who enjoy learning English outperform those who dislike it. Students who dislike learning English struggle to understand detailed material. |
| What difficulties do students experience when reading? | The difficulties faced by grade 8 students include difficulty understanding unfamiliar words or phrases. |
| How are students' reading ability? | The students' capacity to understand text in onetime reading is still low so they need to repeat reading several times. However, in class, many students must repeat at least two or three times reading. |
| What teaching media do teachers often use to overcome difficulties in improving students' reading skills | Teacher employed visuals and storytelling media as a medium for learning to read descriptive text, with the goal of helping students understand more quickly and participate more actively in teaching and learning activities. |

The conclusion from the interviews with grade eight students is that some students like to learn English, students also experience difficulties in improving their descriptive text understanding, namely lack of vocabulary, low motivation and difficulties to grasp the texts at one time reading.

**The Result of Pre-Questionnaire**

a) Students' motivation in learning reading especially in reading descriptive text.

| Positive | Fair | Less |
|---|---|---|
| 40% | 20% | 40% |

b) Students' responses whether reading descriptive text is difficult.

| Positive | Fair | Less |
|---|---|---|
| 66.67 % | 20% | 13.33% |

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c) Students' responses to difficulties in reading descriptive text can be overcome.

| Positive | Fair | Less |
|---|---|---|
| 22% | 13.10% | 64.90% |

d) Students' responses to the using of GOSS when teaching reading descriptive text.

| Positive | Fair | Less |
|---|---|---|
| 43.33% | 36.67% | 20% |

e) Students' responses to the using of Islamic figures and treasures as the reading materials.

| Positive | Fair | Less |
|---|---|---|
| 58.33% | 24.67% | 20% |

At this initial project, the students showed reluctant responses to the learning activities when reading English text by using GOs integrated with Islamic figure and treasures. Positive responses at all questions showed less than 70%.

**The Result of Pre-test**

The pre-test in this study was conducted before CAR implementation. In this test students were asked to read a descriptive text then the results from the pre-test shows the average value of the students' pre-test scores is 51.25. There are no students who gained the minimum criteria score 70. The data analysis shows that the students' ability in reading descriptive texts is still very low.

**Findings of the First Cycle**

**a. Planning**

At this stage, the researcher employed GOs to help students improve their performance in reading descriptive texts. The researcher also took field notes to monitor the actions of students and teachers during the teaching and learning process, allowing researchers to collect data on whether or not the lesson plans were acceptable for the previously created lesson plans. In addition, the researcher prepared the first post-test to collect data and determine whether or not student scores increased between the pre-test and the first post-test.

**b. Acting**

In this stage, the researcher carried out the teaching and learning process of descriptive text in the classroom using the lesson plan created. Firstly, the teacher presented the information that had been taught and learned by the students, as well as an explanation of the GOs medium, so that the students understood it. The researcher then explained the descriptive text using GOs as the media. The students are then instructed to arrange and collect sentences into a descriptive paragraph. At the second meeting, students were assigned to create a descriptive narrative about persons using GOs.

**c. Observing**

During this stage, the researcher observed the teaching and learning process of teachers and students using field notes that included information about the class situation, activity, student focus and response to the material taught by the teacher, and the teacher's delivery when explaining the material to students. Students are a little more engaged, pay attention, and respond to the teacher. Some students in the class struggle to absorb the information. As a result, some pupils remain silent and do not answer while paying attention and completing the assigned tasks. The teacher also taught the content in accordance with the lesson plan, but she did not explain the description text material using GOs media.

However, because they use new instructional medium than before, students are more excited about the teaching and learning of descriptive text. In the second act of the first cycle, the teaching and learning process activities in the classroom revealed that students were more passionate, focused, active, and provided a suitable response to make GOs when reading descriptive text. The teacher also assists pupils in guiding and teaching the making of GOs. At this point, post-test 1 was administered to assess the improvement in student achievement in reading the descriptive texts that had been examined. According to the results of the pre-test, the average value was 51.25 which is clearly below the minimum standard 70.

**d. Reflecting**

In this stage, researchers and teachers discussed the results and conclusions of the implementation of the actions in cycle 1. In this stage the researchers and teachers also discussed trying to design media to improve student achievement in reading descriptive texts and in order 70%. students

in the class can get scores above 70. Because at this time, the results of post-test 1 show that only 13.3% of students have scores above 70. Meanwhile, the teaching and learning process in the classroom is very good. In this case, there must be an increase in efforts that are more than before in the next cycle to improve student achievement.

**Findings of the Second Cycle**

**a. Planning**

At this stage, the researcher made a few changes to the previous lesson plans in light of the first cycle's reflection outcomes. However, the Learning Implementation Plan employed in the teaching and learning process remains tied to the use of GOs media to improve students' reading descriptive text achievement. In this cycle, the teacher must deliver an engaging explanation using graphic GOs, text descriptions helped by projectors, and requesting that students bring a dictionary. In addition, at this stage, the researcher developed field notes to document class activities as well as post-test 2 to gather data.

**b. Action**

The researcher taught descriptive texts with a new theme, namely describing Islamic figures. At the second meeting, students were asked to make a descriptive text with a picture of the specified Islamic treasure, read the description text that had been made and collect their assignments. This assignment becomes the data for post-test 2.

**c. Observing**

The condition of the class in general in the teaching and learning process is more active, calm, focused and students respond well compared to cycle I. This can be seen from the field notes made by researchers showing students focus in paying attention to the material being taught and provide a good understanding response during the teaching and learning process of reading descriptive text. Students are also very enthusiastic in doing descriptive text reading exercises and most students prefer to choose their favorite Islamic figures and treasures and illustrate descriptive text by using GOs. The teacher also checks students' work from table to table and makes remarks. Students are also neither worried or bored when attempting to learn vocabulary from words they have never heard before. Students can use a dictionary to search up the vocabulary of a word. In the second action cycle II, the teacher administered a post-test 2 to determine the gain in student achievement when reading descriptive text. Based on the findings of post-test 2, the data shows that the average post-test score of two students is 72.80, with 12 out of 15 students scoring above 70.

**d. Reflecting**

Reflection ensued after receiving the findings of the field notes and post-test 2. Knowing these results made the researchers and teachers very happy, and the attempts to improve student achievement in reading descriptive texts had been successful. The results of post-test 2 suggest that 80% of students score above 70. As a result, the success criteria have been met, with 70% of pupils receiving scores greater than 70. As a result, researchers and teachers opted not to continue the CAR citing its success. Based on the evaluation results between researchers and teachers, it can be concluded that the use of CAR to improve student achievement in reading descriptive texts using GOs is consistent with previous researchers' and teachers' plans and actions. Thus, the activities of the teaching and learning process for pupils reading descriptive texts were carried out successfully.

**The Result of Post-Interview**

It can be concluded that students are more active and enthusiastic about creating GOs, and they find it easier to write descriptive text using GOs media. Second, discuss the issues students have while using GOs media in the teaching and learning process of reading descriptive text during CAR, as well as potential solutions. The teacher stated that most students struggled to articulate their ideas since they still had a limited vocabulary or little comprehension of it. So, the idea is to require each student to bring a dictionary when learning English, particularly during reading courses. Third, this is the final assessment, which is based on the teacher's perspective on GOs media. The teacher stated that GOs was an extremely successful medium for improving student achievement in reading descriptive literature. Media GOs can be a tool for motivating pupils and changing the perspective of those who believe that reading descriptive literature is difficult. Furthermore, English teachers might be encouraged to include GOs into their reading instruction and learning.

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**The Result of Post-Questionnaire**

The results of these questions can be described as follows:

| Indicators | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| students' responses to reading descriptive text using GOs as media | Positive | 66.67 |
| | Fair | 20 |
| | Less | 13.33 |
| student admit GOs can help them to ease their mind to comprehend and recall the content of the text | Positive | 86.67 |
| | Fair | 13.33 |
| | Less | 0 |
| Student responses to the lesson in reading descriptive text | Positive | 80 |
| | Fair | 6.67 |
| | Less | 13.33 |
| Student responses to teaching reading through GOs | Positive | 66.67 |
| | Fair | 22 |
| | Less | 11.33 |
| students feel interested in the teacher's delivery during the teaching and learning process | Positive | 80 |
| | Fair | 13.33 |
| | Less | 6.67 |
| Students feel interested in Islamic figures and treasures | Positive | 87 |
| | Fair | 13 |
| | Less | 0 |

It can be concluded the students' responses showed positive in the learning activities in improving reading comprehension on descriptive text by using graphic organizers integrated with Islamic values.

**The Result of Post-test**

The results of the first post-test showed that the average score of the class was 58.75. In this first post-test, there were 2 students who scored above 70 and 13 students scored below 70. The details of the results of reading student description texts in cycle I shows that the average value of post-test 1 is 58.75. In post-test 1, there were only 2 students or 13.33% of the students who scored above 70. While the other 13 students scored below 70.

Based on the results of student achievement in reading descriptive text above, it can be concluded that there is an improvement in the average score of students in reading descriptive text from the preliminary study to cycle II. The average score of students in the preliminary study was 51.25 and the average score of students in post-test 2 in the second cycle was 72.08. That means there is a 42.04% increase in the average score of students in reading descriptive text. From the data above also shows that there are 12 students or 80% of students who get scores above 70. This shows that the objectives of this research have been achieved. The table of student scores in reading descriptive text is as follows:

**Table 4.1 The Students' Reading in Descriptive Text Score of Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2**

| No | Name | Score | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pre-test | Post-test 1 | Post-test 2 |
| 1. | S1 | 68.75 | 75 | 87.5 |
| 2. | S2 | 68.75 | 75 | 87.5 |
| 3. | S3 | 50 | 62.5 | 75 |
| 4. | S4 | 50 | 56.25 | 75 |
| 5. | S5 | 62.5 | 68.75 | 75 |
| 6. | S6 | 56.25 | 62.5 | 75 |
| 7. | S7 | 43.75 | 50 | 56.25 |
| 8. | S8 | 31.25 | 43.75 | 50 |
| 9. | S9 | 56.25 | 62.5 | 75 |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. | S10 | 50 | 62.5 | 75 |
| 11. | S11 | 50 | 56.25 | 75 |
| 12. | S12 | 50 | 56.25 | 75 |
| 13. | S13 | 43.75 | 50 | 73.33 |
| 14. | S14 | 37.5 | 43.75 | 62.5 |
| 15. | S15 | 50 | 56.25 | 75 |
| **TOTAL** | | **768.75** | **881.25** | **1.092.08** |
| **MEAN** | | **51.25** | **58.75** | **72.80** |

**: The students who passed the Minimum and Maximum Scores above (70)*

**The Interpretation of Data**

The data diagram summarized by researcher are as follows:

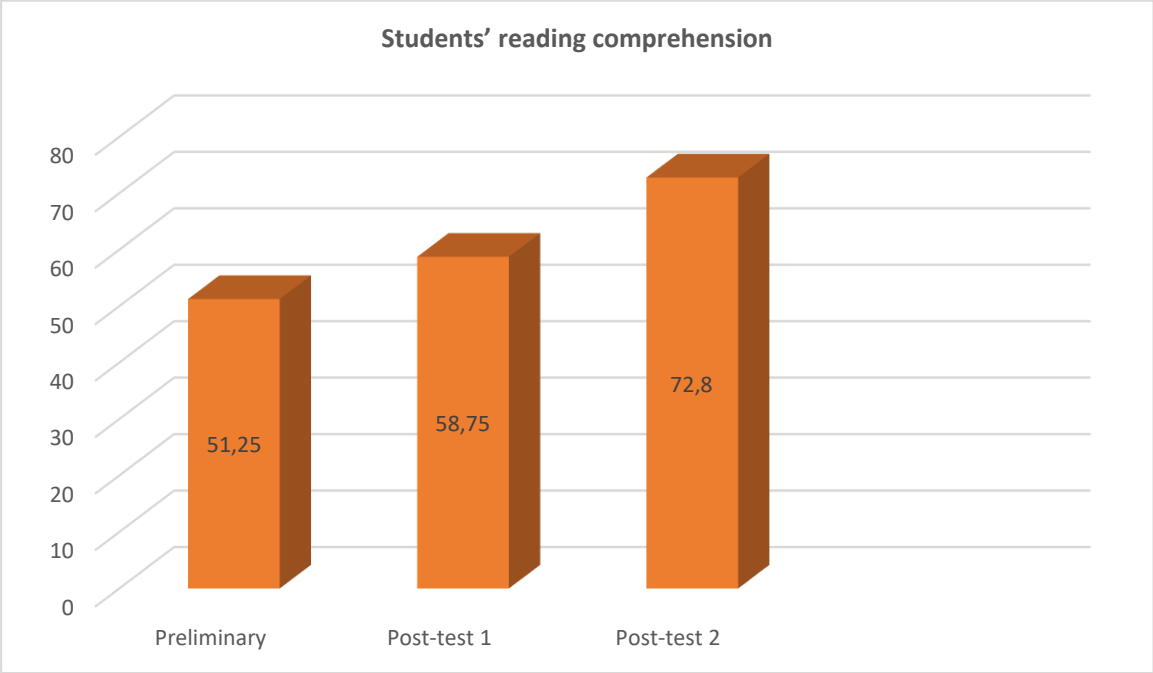



**Fig. 4.1. Students' Achievement in Descriptive Text Score**

At the preliminary study stage, before carrying out CAR and using GOs media for reading course, a reading test was conducted by the English teacher at SMP IT Al Fauzi at the end of the previous semester. The average score of students on the descriptive text reading test was 51.25. Meanwhile, the percentage of students who scored above 70 was 0%. It means there were no students achieved the standard minimum 70.

Furthermore, in the first post-test stage of cycle 1, it showed that the students' average score was 58.75. It means that there is an increase in students' scores in reading descriptive text from the scores before using GOs and before the first post-test, which is 18.4%. Meanwhile, the percentage of students who scored higher than 70 was 13.33%. That means there are 2 students who get a score above 70 and 86.67% of students get a score below 70. That means there are 13 students who do not get a score above 70. For this reason, it is still necessary to improve student achievement in reading descriptive texts. Therefore, researchers and teachers must improve student achievement in reading descriptive texts in cycle 2.

Furthermore, in the second post-test stage of cycle 2, it showed that the average score of students was 72.80. In this case, it shows that the student's improvement score is 14.05 from the first post-test (58.75) or 31.05% experienced an increase in the student's score in the percentage score of the preliminary study. Meanwhile, the percentage of students who scored below 70 was 13.33%. That

means there are 86.67% students who get a score above 70. For this reason, the percentage of the class showed an increase of 87.1% from the preliminary study (9.7%) or the first post-test (38.7%) in the percentage class. Finally, in the second post-test stage, the students hit the minimum standard. So, it can be said that the CAR was successful and the cycle was terminated.

It can be stated that the optimalization of using GOs integrated with Islamic values definitely improve the students reading comprehension as their conceptual understanding, long-term memory retention, learning motivation, and critical thinking skills, proving effective across diverse academic abilities.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of media GOs in the first year of grade eight of SMPIT Al-Fauzi can be concluded that GOs integrated with Islamic values can improve students' reading skills. It can be proven from the following facts. First, the increase can be seen from the increase in the average reading score of students from 51.25 or 0% of the class, the percentage who passed scored above 70 in the preliminary study, and 58.75 or 13.33% of the class the percentage that pass scores above 70 in the first cycle, to 72.80 or 80% of the class percentage those who pass get scores above 70 in cycle II. Second, the results of the field notes show that class conditions during the teaching and learning process create a positive atmosphere in the classroom, and also make students creative in finding ideas. Third, the results of the questionnaire showed that students gave positive responses to the application of media GOs in the teaching and learning process of reading. In addition, media GOs are an alternative strategy in teaching reading.

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