

## Innovative Teaching Strategies for Enhancing Narrative Text Learning in a Sukoharjo High School

<sup>1</sup> Chela Deandra, <sup>2</sup> Koesoemo Ratih\*  
<sup>1,2</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author  
Email: [cheladean19@gmail.com](mailto:cheladean19@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*This study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the teaching strategies used in teaching English narrative texts at Al Amin High School. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design at Al Amin High School to examine narrative text teaching strategies. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with an English teacher and five 12th grade students selected based on their academic achievement levels. Observations were conducted in three sessions to identify teaching strategies, classroom interactions, and student engagement, while interviews aimed to explore the perspectives of teachers and students regarding the learning process. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification through triangulation. The results showed that teachers at Al Amin High School applied narrative text learning strategies that combined traditional and innovative approaches, with Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as the main strategy supported by visual media such as images and videos. This strategy improves student understanding, participation, and motivation. However, learning still faces obstacles in the form of limited vocabulary, low interest in reading, anxiety about speaking, suboptimal group cooperation, and time management. Overall, the strategies implemented are effective, although there is still a need to develop more varied and interactive methods. However, the implementation still faces several challenges, including limited vocabulary, low reading interest, speaking anxiety, weak group cooperation, and time management issues. These findings imply that although the applied strategies are generally effective, teachers need to develop more varied, interactive, and well-structured learning activities to address students' language limitations and maximize the effectiveness of narrative text instruction.*

**Keywords:** English language, learning strategies, narrative text

### INTRODUCTION

In English language teaching at the secondary school level, teachers often face various challenges in teaching narrative texts, such as students' limited vocabulary, low reading interest, and anxiety in expressing ideas orally. These problems affect students' participation and comprehension during English lessons. To overcome these challenges, teachers at Al Amin High School implement a combination of traditional teaching methods and innovative strategies, particularly Project-Based Learning (PjBL) supported by visual media such as images and videos. The results of the study show that this approach improves students' understanding, participation, and motivation in learning narrative texts. However, several obstacles remain, including weak group collaboration and time management issues, indicating the need for more varied and interactive instructional strategies to optimize English learning outcomes. English language learning at the secondary school level emphasizes the mastery of communicative language skills, which include listening,

speaking, reading, and writing skills in an integrated manner (Setyawan, 2018). Based on the independent curriculum (2013), English language learning is not only oriented towards mastery of language structure but also towards the ability to use language in real and meaningful contexts. In line with the theory of Communicative Language Teaching, speaking skills are seen as a key competency that must be developed through active interaction, authentic language use, and student involvement in oral communication activities. Thus, English language learning is expected to create a learning environment that provides ample opportunity for students to practice pronunciation and fluency on an ongoing basis.

In English language teaching, teachers often face challenges in making lessons engaging and accessible for students, particularly in developing speaking skills such as pronunciation and fluency. Limited instructional time, varying student proficiency levels, and the need to maintain classroom motivation further complicate the teaching process (Giawa, 2022). To address these challenges, teachers are required to adopt innovative teaching strategies that promote active learning and meaningful interaction. In this study, teachers implemented Project-Based Learning supported by visual media, such as images and videos, to create a more dynamic learning environment. These strategies enabled teachers to present narrative texts more effectively, encourage student participation, and facilitate collaborative learning, thereby improving the overall quality of English instruction. In addition, although various learning strategies have been recommended in previous studies, their implementation in the classroom has not been able to fully meet students' needs to actively practice oral communication (Khoirunisa & Floriasti, 2023). This condition shows a gap between learning objectives and the results achieved.

In foreign language teaching, learning success is strongly influenced by teachers' instructional strategies in creating communicative classrooms. However, EFL instruction is still often dominated by teacher-centered approaches that emphasize grammar and written exercises, limiting opportunities for speaking practice (Irsyadi & Muta'allim, 2023). Narrative texts are frequently used only for reading comprehension, despite their potential to support communicative activities such as storytelling, discussion, and oral presentations. Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of innovative teaching strategies in narrative text instruction. Project-Based Learning has been shown to enhance student engagement and comprehension through collaborative learning, while story mapping helps students organize narrative elements and significantly improves understanding compared to conventional methods. These findings highlight the importance of varied, student-centered strategies that move beyond textbook-based instruction to foster active language use. Therefore, this study emphasizes optimizing narrative texts through multiple teaching strategies to support the continuous development of students' speaking skills.

In the current educational context, teaching narrative texts in Indonesian high schools still faces various challenges, particularly in developing students' language skills comprehensively. A number of previous studies have examined the use of narrative texts in English language learning from various perspectives. Khoir et al (2024) found that the use of narrative books can improve students' critical thinking skills and create a cooperative learning environment. However, this study has limitations in the form of a small sample size, the absence of objective language ability measurements, and a lack of clarity regarding the specific contribution of narrative texts compared to audio-visual and storytelling strategies.

Most studies on narrative text teaching focus on the effectiveness of specific learning techniques. Sari et al (2020), for example, show that story mapping can improve narrative text comprehension through quasi-experimental design. However, this study only involved one school with a post-test design, so it was not possible to compare students' initial and final abilities. In addition, reading comprehension was measured only using

multiple-choice tests without qualitative data support, thus failing to describe students' cognitive processes in depth. Similar findings were also reported by Devi et al (2020) through classroom action research, which showed an increase in students' narrative comprehension and writing skills using story maps. However, the limited sample size, the absence of a control group, the short duration of the intervention, and the focus on a single school context limit the generalization of the findings and do not explore the long-term impact of learning.

On the other hand, Necherda (2022) emphasizes the role of the narrative approach in shaping students' social personalities through the development of self-reflection and critical thinking. Nevertheless, this study highlights the aspect of personal development without reviewing in detail how narrative text teaching strategies are applied in classroom practice. Other studies highlight the challenges of text comprehension and pedagogical perspectives, such as the importance of critical literacy Sanam et al (2020) and Lekawael (2020), the development of teaching materials and assessment guidelines Sanam et al (2020) and Lekawael (2020), and teachers' perceptions of narrative text learning Qatrinada and Apoko (2024). Although they make important contributions, these studies tend to examine aspects of method, material, assessment, or teacher perceptions separately, thus failing to describe narrative text teaching strategies as an integrated classroom practice.

Based on this review, there is still limited research that deeply examines the implementation of various narrative text teaching strategies in the context of real classrooms and student responses during the learning process. This study offers novelty through a comprehensive exploration of narrative text teaching practices by integrating Project-Based Learning, the use of visual media, story mapping, group discussions, and presentations into a single learning framework. This study not only examines learning outcomes, but also the process of implementing strategies, student engagement, and the challenges faced by teachers and students. With a qualitative case study approach, this study provides a contextual description of narrative text learning in secondary schools and is expected to enrich EFL studies as well as serve as a practical reference for teachers in developing more effective and meaningful English language learning.

In order to address this need, this study was conducted at a high school that implements the latest curriculum, namely Sukoharjo High School. This school pays special attention to improving students' English proficiency, especially in understanding and evaluating narrative texts. Based on initial observations, students at various grade levels showed differences in their understanding, participation, and interaction with narrative text material. This condition indicates the need for a more in-depth analysis of the teaching strategies used in narrative text learning at the school.

Teachers at Sukoharjo High School have implemented various teaching methods, ranging from conventional techniques to more creative approaches, such as group discussions, role-playing, storytelling activities, and the use of multimedia. However, narrative text learning still faces a number of obstacles, including students' limited vocabulary, minimal exposure to English outside the classroom, and difficulties in understanding story structure and plot. Therefore, it is important to systematically examine the teaching strategies used and the challenges faced by teachers and students during the learning process.

This study aims to identify and analyze the teaching strategies employed in narrative text instruction at Sukoharjo High School, with particular attention to how these strategies are implemented in classroom practices. In addition, the study seeks to investigate the challenges encountered by both teachers and students in the teaching and learning of narrative texts. By examining instructional strategies alongside the difficulties faced during the learning process, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of narrative text teaching practices within the school context.

Students' critical thinking, creativity, and language competency are all greatly influenced by the process of teaching narrative texts. To improve students' understanding and interaction with narrative materials, Sukoharjo High School has implemented a number of strategies. But even with the use of a variety of techniques, including role-playing, group debates, and multimedia integration, there are still difficulties in teaching and studying narrative literature. These constraints include a lack of learning English outside of the classroom, a limited vocabulary, and trouble understanding story frameworks. Exploring and comprehending the particular teaching methods now in use as well as the challenges faced by both teachers and students is important for addressing these concerns fully. Therefore, the research questions guiding this study are:

1. What teaching strategies are implemented in narrative text learning at Sukoharjo High School?
2. What challenges do teachers and students face in the teaching and learning of narrative texts?

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Following Baxter and Jack (2008), qualitative case studies help uncover various aspects of a phenomenon through multiple data sources. This method allows for in-depth exploration of teaching practices, capturing the complexities of classroom interactions. The case study design specifically focuses on Sukoharjo High School as the research venue, providing a bounded system for investigating teaching practices.

This study examines teaching strategies for narrative text learning at Al Amin High School, focusing on both material and formal aspects. The material object of this research consists of one English teacher and nine students from Sukoharjo High School, including five twelfth-grade students selected to represent different levels of academic achievement. This diverse participant selection aims to provide a comprehensive picture of narrative text learning across varying student abilities. Formally, this study focuses on the instructional strategies employed in teaching narrative texts, encompassing an analysis of teaching approaches, learning materials and resources, classroom interaction patterns, and assessment practices. In addition, the study explores the challenges faced by teachers during instruction as well as the solutions implemented to address these difficulties. Through the examination of these components, the research seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of narrative text instruction and its effectiveness within the classroom context.

This qualitative study employs both primary and secondary data to obtain a comprehensive understanding of teaching strategies for narrative text learning at Sukoharjo High School. Primary data were collected directly from the field through classroom observations and interviews. Classroom observations provided detailed records of teaching strategies, student responses, and interaction patterns during narrative text instruction. In addition, interview recordings and transcriptions from the English teacher and five selected students, chosen based on different academic achievement levels, offered diverse perspectives on the learning experience. Secondary data were used to support and validate the primary findings, including teaching materials utilized in the classroom and student assessment records that reflected learning outcomes. These supplementary sources helped contextualize instructional practices and triangulate information obtained from observations and interviews, thereby strengthening the credibility of the research findings.

Data in this study were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews to obtain comprehensive information on teaching strategies for narrative text learning at Sukoharjo High School. Classroom observation served as the primary data collection method and was conducted in three sessions with Grade XII students. During these observations, the researcher focused on several key aspects,

including the teacher’s instructional strategies, students’ responses and levels of engagement, classroom interaction patterns, and the use of instructional media. Each observation was systematically documented using field notes and observation checklists to ensure accurate and detailed records. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the English teacher and five Grade XII students selected based on varying academic achievement levels to capture diverse learning perspectives. The interviews explored teachers’ instructional approaches, criteria for strategy selection, challenges encountered during teaching, and solutions implemented, as well as students’ learning experiences. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed to support in-depth qualitative analysis.

The data analysis technique in this study began with the application of an interactive data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which includes three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. In the data reduction stage, data obtained through observation and interviews were transcribed, selected, and categorized according to the research focus, specifically related to narrative text teaching strategies, challenges encountered in the learning process, and student responses. Next, in the data presentation stage, the reduced data is arranged in the form of thematic tables, matrices, and narrative descriptions to make it easier for researchers to identify patterns, relationships, and emerging trends. The final stage is the drawing and verification of conclusions, which is carried out continuously throughout the research process by comparing and validating findings through data triangulation between observation results, interviews, and supporting documents to ensure the validity of the research results.

## **RESULTS**

### **Teacher And Student Interview Results**

To support the qualitative findings, this section presents data obtained from teacher and student interviews as well as classroom observations. The tables below summarize the key information related to teaching strategies, learning activities, students’ difficulties, teachers’ support, and classroom implementation during narrative text instruction at Al Amin High School.

Table 1. Teacher Interview Results on Narrative Text Teaching

No	Question	Teacher's Answer
1	How do you teach narrative texts?	Using pictures and slides to help students visualize the story
2	What teaching methods do you use?	Warm-up, discussion, mind mapping, and story-writing tasks
3	What problems do you face?	Different student abilities, limited vocabulary, and low reading interest
4	How do you help students?	Providing vocabulary, allowing dictionaries/computers, and using visual media

Source: Primary data 2025

Table 1 shows that the teacher employs visual-based and interactive strategies in teaching narrative texts, including the use of pictures and slides to help students visualize stories, as well as warm-up activities, discussions, mind mapping, and story-writing tasks. These approaches indicate that the teacher applies a student-centered instructional model aimed at increasing engagement and supporting students’ understanding of narrative structures.

However, the table also reveals significant challenges faced by the teacher, particularly related to students’ diverse proficiency levels, limited vocabulary mastery, and low reading interest. These issues affect students’ ability to participate actively in learning activities and require the teacher to provide continuous instructional support. To address

these challenges, the teacher implements several scaffolding strategies, such as providing vocabulary lists, allowing students to use dictionaries or computers, and integrating visual media.

To complement the teacher interview findings, Table 2 presents the results of student interviews, highlighting students' perspectives on teaching strategies, preferred learning activities, learning difficulties, and the support provided by the teacher during narrative text instruction.

Table 2. Student Interview Results on Narrative Text Learning

No	Respondent	Teaching Strategy	Favorite Activity	Student Difficulties	Teacher's Support
1	Student 1	Starts with familiar stories and uses pictures/slides	Creating stories from pictures	Limited vocabulary and long texts	Vocabulary list, dictionary, computer, pictures/videos
2	Student 2	Explains using pictures	Creating stories from themes/titles	Many unfamiliar words	Vocabulary list and dictionary
3	Student 3	Shows pictures and explains the plot	Watching short videos	Texts are too long and boring	Memorizing vocabulary, pictures, and videos

Source: Primary data 2025

Table 2 indicates that students perceive visual-based instruction, such as the use of pictures and slides, as the main strategy applied by the teacher in narrative text learning. Students reported that activities like creating stories from pictures, developing stories from themes or titles, and watching short videos were their favourite learning experiences, suggesting that multimedia-supported instruction increases engagement and motivation.

However, the table also reveals that students continue to experience linguistic and affective difficulties, particularly limited vocabulary, unfamiliar words, and boredom when dealing with long texts. These challenges affect students' comprehension and participation during learning activities. In response, the teacher provides various forms of support, including vocabulary lists, dictionaries or computers, and visual media to help students understand the material more easily.

Table 3 presents the results of observations of narrative text learning in the classroom, focusing on several aspects, namely lesson planning, material comprehension, project activities, group work, creativity and originality, communication and presentation, as well as reflection and evaluation. Each aspect is assessed using four assessment categories, ranging from a score of 4 (excellent) to a score of 1 (poor), to describe the level of achievement in the learning process.

Table 3. Classroom Observation Results of Narrative Text Instruction

No	Observed Aspect	Indicator	Score 4 (Very Good)	Score 3 (Good)	Score 2 (Fair)	Score 1 (Poor)
1	Lesson Planning	Teacher explains objectives and steps of PjBL	Objectives are clear and detailed	Objectives and steps are explained	Objectives are unclear	Objectives and steps are not explained
2	Material Understanding	Students understand narrative text structure and elements	All students understand and explain	Most students understand	Only a few students understand	Almost all students do not understand
3	Project Activity	Students are involved in	All active, contextual	Most students are	Only a few students	Almost no involvement

		making projects	and creative	active	involved	
4	Group Cooperation	Students cooperate in completing projects	Very cooperative, clear roles	Good cooperation	Minor conflicts / unequal roles	No cooperation
5	Creativity and Originality	Project shows creativity and originality	Very creative and original	Quite creative and partly original	Less creative and mostly imitative	Not creative and fully imitative
6	Communication and Presentation	Students present projects in good English	Fluent, confident, appropriate language	Quite fluent and confident	Less fluent and less confident	Not fluent and not confident
7	Reflection and Evaluation	Teacher and students reflect on learning process	In-depth reflection and evaluation	Reflection and evaluation conducted	Limited reflection by teacher	No reflection or evaluation

Source: Primary data 2025

Based on Table 3, the observation results show that the implementation of narrative text learning is generally in the good to very good category. In terms of lesson planning, teachers are able to explain the objectives and learning steps quite clearly, although in some meetings there are still objectives that have not been conveyed in detail.

In terms of material comprehension, most students have understood the structure and elements of narrative text, although there are still some students who experience difficulties. The project activity aspect shows that the majority of students were actively involved in the project, although the level of participation was not entirely uniform. Furthermore, the group cooperation aspect shows that students were generally able to work well together, with only a few conflicts arising within the groups. In terms of creativity and originality, the projects produced were quite creative, although some still showed a tendency to imitate the examples given. In terms of communication and presentation, most students were able to present their projects quite smoothly and confidently, but there were still students who lacked confidence when presenting their ideas. Finally, in terms of reflection and evaluation, reflection activities were carried out, but they were not yet fully in-depth because they were still dominated by the teacher.

### **Teaching Strategies Implemented in Narrative Text Learning**

#### ***The use of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as the main strategy***

In narrative text learning, teachers use Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as the main learning framework with the aim that students not only understand the theory of narrative text, but also are able to produce products in the form of stories that they design themselves. In its application, teachers explain the objectives and stages of the activity in detail before the learning begins, so that students can see the relationship between the activities carried out and the expected final results. The stages of PjBL include project planning, discussing story ideas, writing drafts, revisions based on teacher direction, and oral presentations in class. Observations showed that the teacher provided coherent instructions, monitored the progress of each group, and ensured each stage was completed effectively. This was reflected in the high observation score for the lesson planning aspect (score 4). In this process, the teacher acted as a facilitator, while the students acted as creators.

#### **Extract 1**

*"This aligns with the "Learning Planning" indicator in the observation rubric, which received a score of 4 (very good). The teacher guided students through the stages of project-based learning, from planning to implementation to reflection."*

The application of PjBL demonstrates a student-centered learning strategy. With this method, students learn to understand the structure of narrative text through exploration, collaboration, and product creation. This approach allows students to explore their creativity, sharpen their critical thinking skills, and improve their authentic writing skills. PjBL also provides a meaningful learning experience because students produce their own work. The strategy implemented at Sukoharjo High School, particularly the combination of PjBL and visual media, is effective in increasing student engagement and understanding of narrative texts. However, this success is still limited by issues such as vocabulary, reading interest, group dynamics, speaking anxiety, and time management.

### ***Use of visual media***

When teaching narrative texts, teachers utilize visual media such as images and short videos to help students understand the story. This is based on the observation that most students struggle to understand narrative texts if they only read long texts. Images are used to show key scenes in the story, making it easier for students to connect events, characters, and settings. Meanwhile, videos are used to provide a richer picture of movement, expressions, and storyline.

Observations show that when visual media is used, students appear more enthusiastic, actively respond to teacher questions, and express ideas more readily. Teachers also frequently link visual media to discussion activities so students can draw conclusions together. Based on interviews with English teachers at Al Amin High School, it was found that teachers tend to use visual media in the form of images when teaching narrative texts. Teachers believe that students have difficulty understanding texts if they only rely on reading, so images are used to help them imagine the plot, characters, and settings. The teacher said,

#### **Extract 2**

*"I focus more on using images as a medium. For example, when teaching Cinderella, I show several images at each point in the story. This allows the children to visualize each scene, because if they just read, they quickly get bored."*  
(Teacher Interview, 2025)

The use of visual media is an important strategy for improving students' understanding and learning interest. This media helps overcome limited vocabulary and low reading interest, while also making it easier for students to identify story structure. Thus, visual media is not just a tool, but a core part of the scaffolding process for learning narrative text.

### ***Use of story mapping / mind mapping***

Teachers use story mapping techniques to help students visually visualize the structure of narrative texts. In practice, teachers and students fill out a chart containing important elements such as orientation, characters, main conflict, climax, and resolution. This activity is carried out before students begin writing to provide a clear framework for thinking. Story mapping has been proven to help students who typically struggle to understand the logical sequence of a story. Observations show that when this technique is used, students develop ideas more easily and experience less confusion while writing. Story mapping makes it easier for students to see the overall structure of a story before they write. This technique strengthens analytical skills and makes the writing process more focused. Thus, this strategy serves as a bridge between theoretical understanding and writing practice. The teacher said,

**Extract 3**

*"I usually start by asking what narrative texts they have studied before, to get them interested. Then, we move on to discussing the mind map I created about story structure." (Teacher Interview, 2025)*

Story mapping makes it easier for students to see the overall structure of a story before they write. This technique strengthens analytical skills and makes the writing process more focused. Thus, this strategy serves as a bridge between theoretical understanding and writing practice.

**Group discussions and collaboration**

Teachers use strategic discussion groups to encourage the exchange of ideas and collaboration among students. In these discussions, students are asked to discuss the storyline, determine the division of tasks, and draft a narrative text together. Observations show that some groups are able to work well, while others experience obstacles such as dominance by one member or low contributions from others. Teachers provide supervision but are not always able to address the imbalance in contributions between groups due to the large number of students. Nevertheless, this strategy still provides space for students to develop social and communication skills.

The observation score for the presentation aspect was only 2. Many students appeared nervous and spoke slowly.

**Extract 4**

*"which is reflected in the observation results with a score of 2 in the group cooperation aspect."*

Group discussions are an essential part of collaborative approaches to narrative learning. This strategy creates a space for students to learn socially through interaction and collaboration. Although their effectiveness is affected by uneven participation, group discussions remain a relevant tool for enhancing student understanding and creativity.

**Oral Presentation**

In the final stage of the lesson, students were asked to present their project results in English. Observations revealed that while some students appeared confident, many appeared nervous, spoke softly, or were afraid of making mistakes. The teacher provided a supportive environment by offering praise and gentle correction, but some students still exhibited speaking anxiety. This suggests that students need more speaking practice before the presentation stage.

**Extract 5**

*"The observation score for the presentation aspect was only 2. Many students appeared nervous and spoke slowly."*

Presentations are an important strategy for improving students' speaking skills. Through these activities, students learn to convey ideas in a structured manner. Despite the challenges, this technique remains an integral part of narrative learning to strengthen students' communication skills. Overall, the research findings indicate that teachers implemented five main strategies in teaching narrative texts: Project-Based Learning (PjBL), the use of visual media (images and videos), the application of story mapping/mind mapping, group discussions, and oral presentations. This combination of strategies created interactive, engaging, and product-oriented learning. PjBL served as the main framework that guided all activities in a structured manner. Visual media helped students understand

the story's content, while story mapping strengthened their ability to organize ideas. Group discussions supported collaboration and knowledge sharing, and oral presentations honed students' communication skills. Overall, these strategies proved effective in improving students' understanding of narrative text structure and encouraging their active engagement throughout the learning process. These findings directly address Research Question 1, indicating that narrative text learning at Al Amin High School uses a varied, creative, and student-centered approach, although it still requires strengthening in several aspects such as equal participation and student confidence.

### **Challenges in Teaching and Learning Narrative Texts**

Although various instructional strategies have been implemented, teachers at Al Amin High School still encounter several challenges when applying narrative text teaching strategies in the classroom. These challenges mainly relate to managing students' diverse language abilities, maintaining engagement during learning activities, organizing collaborative work, facilitating oral communication, and managing limited instructional time.

From the teacher's perspective, the main difficulties include addressing students' limited vocabulary, stimulating low reading interest, ensuring equal participation in group work, reducing students' speaking anxiety during presentations, and completing Project-Based Learning stages within restricted class time. These issues complicate the implementation of student-centered strategies such as PjBL, story mapping, group discussions, and oral presentations. As a result, teachers must continuously adjust their instructional approaches, provide additional scaffolding, and manage classroom dynamics to ensure that learning objectives are achieved. Therefore, these challenges significantly influence the effectiveness of narrative text instruction and require careful pedagogical planning and classroom management.

### **Limited Vocabulary Mastery**

Limited vocabulary mastery emerged as a major instructional challenge for teachers in implementing narrative text learning. From the teacher's perspective, students' limited vocabulary significantly hindered the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning activities, particularly during reading, writing, and oral presentation stages. The teacher explained that vocabulary is the most inhibiting factor when students are asked to engage in narrative projects, as differences in vocabulary mastery among students create unequal learning progress and complicate classroom management:

#### **Extract 6**

*"The main problem is vocabulary mastery. Some students excel, but many are still lacking. They also tend to be reluctant to read long texts, so their comprehension is limited." (Teacher Interview, 2025)*

As a result, teachers frequently had to interrupt learning activities to explain basic vocabulary, provide translations, and offer additional guidance, which reduced time for higher-level tasks such as story development and critical discussion. Classroom observations showed that students with limited vocabulary struggled in the early stages of story writing, often pausing repeatedly because they could not find appropriate words. This slowed the overall learning process and required continuous teacher scaffolding. Students also acknowledged this difficulty:

#### **Extract 7**

*"What is difficult for me is that there are many English words that I don't understand, so I am often confused about the meaning of sentences." (Student*

*Interview, 2025)*

These vocabulary limitations prevented students from grasping implicit meanings, identifying narrative elements such as conflict and climax, and constructing coherent storylines. Consequently, teachers faced difficulties in fostering creativity and independent learning, as reflected in the low creativity score (2) on the observation rubric. Many students relied heavily on teacher-provided examples, producing repetitive and underdeveloped sentences. Furthermore, limited vocabulary also affected oral presentation activities. Classroom observations revealed that several students spoke quietly and avoided eye contact, resulting in a communication and presentation score of 2:

**Extract 8**

*"Classroom observations reinforced this. When students were asked to present their project results, some looked down and spoke quietly. The communication and presentation aspect received a score of 2, indicating that students' confidence still needs to be improved."*

This condition increased students' speaking anxiety and posed additional challenges for teachers in encouraging active participation and confident communication. Overall, limited vocabulary mastery not only constrained students' comprehension and language production but also created significant pedagogical challenges for teachers, requiring continuous instructional adjustment and support. Therefore, vocabulary mastery represents both a learner-related difficulty and a central teaching challenge in narrative text instruction.

***Low Reading Interest in Narrative Texts***

The second finding relates to students' affective aspects, namely their low interest and motivation in reading narrative texts. Low interest in reading was a barrier that consistently emerged during student observations and interviews. Observations showed that when teachers shared long narrative texts, most students displayed less enthusiastic expressions, such as looking down, groaning softly, or asking for a shorter version. The teacher confirmed this situation:

**Extract 9**

*"Because their vocabulary knowledge is still very lacking, many students are lazy to read long and overly complex narrative texts. (Teacher Interview, 2025)"*

Students tend to read only parts of the text, skip important paragraphs, or rush to conclusions without fully understanding the narrative structure. As a result, they don't recognize the story's sequence (orientation–conflict–resolution), are unable to deduce the moral message, and lack a clear understanding of the function of each paragraph. One student said:

**Extract 10**

*"If the text is long, I get bored quickly. I prefer shorter ones or videos." (Student Interview 3, 2025)"*

Low reading interest also prevents students from being naturally exposed to new vocabulary. They miss out on recognizing sentence patterns, idiomatic expressions, and the style of language typical of narrative texts. Other impacts of low reading interest include difficulty developing storylines due to insufficient story references, limited imagination when asked to write new stories, inability to differentiate between main and secondary

characters, and frequent re-examination of the meaning of words already explained. All of this demonstrates that low reading interest significantly impacts narrative literacy skills. These findings answer the research question "What challenges do teachers and students face in the teaching and learning of narrative texts?" by showing that low reading interest is a significant barrier that hinders students' comprehension, text processing, and creativity in narrative learning.

### **Unequal Participation in Group Work**

The third finding relates to pedagogical challenges, namely the imbalance in student contributions in group work during the narrative project development process. The PjBL model encourages students to work collaboratively. However, observations have found that the division of tasks is not optimal. In a group, usually only one or two students dominate the task, while the others wait for instructions or simply copy their peers' work. This is clearly seen during observations of group activities:

#### **Extract 11**

*"Some students appeared to be actively discussing the storyline,"  
"others remained silent, chatting about other things, or simply busy themselves."*

Teachers also expressed difficulties:

#### **Extract 12**

*"There are active groups, but there are also those who just tag along without making any clear contribution." (Teacher Interview, 2025)*

*"and in the observation results the score on the "group cooperation" aspect was 2, indicating less effective cooperation."*

The consequences of uneven participation in groups are that project results do not reflect the overall ability of the group, passive students do not get sufficient learning experience, the workload becomes unbalanced, and active students feel burdened and stressed because they have to complete more tasks. These findings answer the research question "What challenges do teachers and students face in the teaching and learning of narrative texts?" by showing that unequal participation within groups is a significant barrier that reduces the effectiveness of project-based narrative text learning.

### **Speaking Anxiety During Presentations**

This finding relates to students' psychological factors, namely anxiety when speaking in English in front of the class. This speaking anxiety was evident when students were asked to present their group stories. Observations noted several behaviors indicating anxiety, including students looking down and avoiding eye contact, very low and unstable voices, long pauses between sentences, and frequently asking friends to fill in.

#### **Extract 13**

*"Some students still feel awkward when it comes to speaking in front of the class. They're afraid of making mistakes, so their delivery isn't as fluent." (Teacher Interview, 2025).*

Anxiety arises due to several factors, namely limited vocabulary makes them afraid of not being able to continue a sentence, pronunciation is not yet fluent so they are afraid of being laughed at by friends, lack of speaking practice because learning is more focused on writing, and the mental burden of presenting in front of the class. A student confirmed:

**Extract 14**

*"I'm afraid of saying the wrong thing... sometimes I forget the words." (Student Interview)*

Based on the observation results, the aspect of "communication/presentation" received a score of 2, indicating low student self-confidence. This finding answers the research question "What challenges do teachers and students face in the teaching and learning of narrative texts?" very clearly: speaking anxiety is a significant barrier that interferes with students' performance in learning narrative texts.

**Time Limitations in Completing Project-Based Learning Stages**

These findings shed light on the managerial challenges faced by teachers and students: the lack of time to fully complete the PjBL stages. PjBL requires several stages: planning, discussing story ideas, drafting, revising, and presenting. However, a 2 x 45-minute learning time is insufficient to complete the entire process. The teacher explained:

**Extract 15**

*"There are groups that haven't finished writing, but the schedule requires them to continue with their presentations." (Teacher Interview, 2025)*

The impact of time constraints on learning is that students rush their writing, produce under-developed stories, lack time for revision, some groups are unprepared for presentations, and teachers are unable to provide comprehensive feedback. Overall, learning time is a constraint that reduces the quality of student output. This finding answers the research question "What challenges do teachers and students face in the teaching and learning of narrative texts?" by showing that the PjBL model requires more time, so that time constraints become a major obstacle in learning narrative texts. Overall, findings from interviews and observations indicate that the main challenges in teaching narrative text include limited vocabulary, low reading interest, uneven student participation, speaking anxiety, less conducive group work dynamics, and time management issues. These challenges are interrelated and constitute major inhibiting factors that require greater attention in developing classroom learning strategies.

**Teachers' Efforts in Helping Students**

This section presents the findings related to the teachers' efforts in helping students learn narrative texts at Al Amin High School. Based on classroom observations and interviews, the teacher applied several efforts to support students' understanding, participation, and confidence during the teaching and learning process. The teacher's efforts were mainly aimed at overcoming students' difficulties in vocabulary, reading comprehension, group collaboration, and speaking performance. These efforts were implemented through various teaching activities, learning supports, and classroom strategies. The findings in this section are grouped into several categories to clearly show how the teacher helped students during narrative text learning.

***Helping Students Understand Vocabulary and Text Content***

One of the main efforts made by the teacher was helping students understand difficult vocabulary found in narrative texts. The teacher explained unfamiliar words, provided simple meanings, and encouraged students to ask questions when they did not understand certain words or sentences. This effort helped students better understand the content of the narrative texts and improved their reading comprehension. The first strategy is to present a list of comprehension questions before the lesson begins. The teacher explains that comprehension is the key to students' easier comprehension of the text. This is evidenced

by the following interview excerpt:

**Extract 16**

*"Usually, before starting the lesson, I give them a vocabulary list. I also ask them to memorize at least ten words so they'll be better prepared when they read the text." (Teacher Interview, 2025)*

Another strategy is to allow students to use a dictionary or computer when they encounter difficulties. Teachers believe that understanding words is the foundation before moving on to text analysis. This is evident in the following quote:

**Extract 17**

*"If they have trouble, I let them open a dictionary or look it up on the computer. The important thing is that they understand the meaning first." (Teacher Interview, 2025)*

**Using Learning Media and Examples to Support Understanding**

Another effort made by teachers is to use learning media such as pictures, example stories, and simple explanations to make narrative texts easier to understand. Teachers also provide examples of narrative structures, such as orientation, complication, and resolution, to help students structure their stories correctly. This study found that teachers use visual media in the form of images and videos to increase students' motivation and understanding of narrative texts. Visual media makes it easier for students to visualize the storyline concretely, rather than simply reading it abstractly. This is evidenced by the following teacher statement:

**Extract 18**

*"With pictures or videos, children become more enthusiastic. They can visualize the story, not just read the text." (Teacher Interview, 2025)*

**DISCUSSION**

**Teaching Strategies in Narrative Text Learning**

The findings of this study indicate that the application of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) combined with group discussions and presentations is effective in increasing students' active involvement in narrative text learning. Theoretically, PjBL is defined as a student-centered learning model, where learning takes place through the completion of authentic projects that require in-depth investigation, collaboration, and reflection (Nurhidayah et al., 2023). In the context of language learning, PjBL provides space for students to construct knowledge through real experiences, such as writing and presenting narrative texts, so that their understanding of the structure, linguistic elements, and meaning of the text becomes more profound.

The results of this study are in line with the theory proposed by Bell (2010) in Aniasi et al (2025), which states that PjBL not only increases learning engagement but also develops critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills. Furthermore, Hayati et al (2024) emphasize that PjBL encourages students to integrate knowledge and skills through inquiry, problem solving, and meaningful final products. In this study, the process of creating narrative texts as project products and classroom presentation activities reflects the main characteristics of PjBL, namely the presence of trigger questions, collaborative work, and published work.

These findings are also in line with the research by Khoir et al (2024), which shows that the use of narrative texts in learning can improve critical thinking skills and create a cooperative learning environment. However, unlike that study, which still faced limitations

in teaching methods, this study shows that the application of PjBL combined with group discussions and presentations can optimize the potential of narrative texts in a more systematic and focused manner. In addition, the effectiveness of active teaching strategies in narrative text learning is also supported by research by Sari et al (2020), Hasibuan and Handayani (2018), and Devi et al (2020), which emphasizes the importance of student engagement through story mapping techniques and structured writing strategies. Thus, PjBL not only functions as a learning method but also as a pedagogical framework that accommodates various teaching techniques in narrative text learning.

### **Students' Difficulties in Learning Narrative Texts**

The findings of this study indicate that students have difficulty understanding narrative texts, particularly due to limited vocabulary and low interest in reading. Theoretically, these difficulties can be explained through the theory of vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. Rahmawati (2019) asserts that vocabulary mastery is a fundamental component of text comprehension, as vocabulary serves as the basis for accessing meaning and information in reading. When students' vocabulary knowledge is limited, the processes of decoding and understanding meaning are hampered, making it difficult for students to comprehensively understand the content of narrative texts.

This finding is also in line with the reading theory proposed by Sinamo et al (2023), which states that reading comprehension is a complex process involving the interaction between language knowledge, reading strategies, and reader motivation. Low interest in reading, as found in this study, has an impact on low cognitive engagement of students during the reading process, resulting in less than optimal comprehension of the text. This is supported by Rosyadi et al (2023) that reading motivation has a direct effect on students' engagement and persistence in understanding texts. In this context, limited vocabulary and low exposure to narrative texts cause students to lack adequate linguistic input, making it difficult for them to express ideas clearly and structurally.

In line with these findings, empirical research by Sari et al (2020) and Hasibuan and Handayani (2018) also shows that limited vocabulary and low reading habits are the main factors that hinder students' understanding of narrative texts. Research by Sanam (2020) and Lekawael (2020) also confirms that a lack of student involvement in reading activities has an impact on their weak in-depth understanding of texts. Thus, the results of this study reinforce the findings of previous studies that emphasize the importance of vocabulary mastery and increased interest in reading as key prerequisites in narrative text learning.

Based on this description, it can be concluded that students' difficulties in understanding narrative texts stem not only from linguistic aspects but also from affective and motivational factors. Therefore, learning strategies are needed that can enrich students' vocabulary while increasing their interest in reading, so that students' understanding and ability to express themselves in narrative texts can develop optimally.

### **Challenges in Speaking and Group Participation**

The findings of this study indicate that some students still face challenges in speaking in front of the class, particularly a lack of confidence when giving presentations, as well as uneven participation in group work. Theoretically, this phenomenon can be explained through the concept of foreign language anxiety. Halimah et al (2022) speaking anxiety often arises from a fear of making mistakes, concerns about negative judgments from teachers and peers, and a low perception of one's own abilities. This condition causes students to tend to avoid opportunities to speak and choose to be passive during presentation activities. In the context of this study, high speaking anxiety causes students' "affective filter" to increase, thereby reducing their courage to express ideas verbally even though they understand the narrative text material.

In addition, uneven participation in group work can be linked to cooperative learning theory. Fitriana and Wardani (2024) asserts that group work will be effective if teachers apply the principles of individual accountability and positive interdependence. Without adequate guidance and supervision, more dominant students tend to take over tasks, while less confident students become passive and dependent on other group members. In line with these findings, empirical research by Qatrinada and Apoko (2024) and Khoir et al (2024) also shows that students' speaking skills and participation in narrative text learning still face various challenges, especially related to self-confidence and the role of students in groups. Hanifa (2024) research also confirms that without appropriate facilitation strategies, group-based learning has the potential to cause participation inequality. Thus, the results of this study reinforce previous theories and research stating that the challenges of speaking and group participation in language learning are not only related to linguistic abilities but are also influenced by affective and classroom management factors. Therefore, the role of the teacher as a facilitator is very important in creating a safe, supportive learning environment and implementing a clear group work structure so that all students can participate actively and confidently.

### **Teachers' Efforts to Help Students and Previous Studies**

The findings of this study indicate that teachers made various efforts to help students overcome difficulties in learning narrative texts, including explaining difficult vocabulary, providing clear examples of narrative structures, guiding students during group work, providing motivation, and giving positive feedback during presentations. These efforts reflect the role of teachers as facilitators in language learning. Theoretically, teachers' efforts in explaining vocabulary and narrative text structures are in line with Krashen's (1985) in Wijaya and Putra (2023) comprehensible input theory, which states that students' understanding will improve when teachers present clear language input that is appropriate to the students' ability level. Furthermore, teacher guidance during group work reflects the application of the scaffolding theory in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) framework proposed by Vygotsky (1978).

These findings are in line with the research by Sari et al (2020) and Hasibuan and Handayani (2018), which found that active teacher involvement in guiding students during collaborative activities can improve students' text comprehension and the quality of their narrative writing. Classroom action research by Devi et al (2020) also shows that continuous teacher assistance can help students who experience learning difficulties to achieve more optimal results. Research by Qatrinada and Apoko (2024) also found that affective support from teachers, such as praise and positive encouragement, helps reduce students' anxiety about speaking in narrative text learning. Similar findings were reported by Khoir et al (2024), who stated that a supportive and cooperative learning environment plays an important role in increasing student participation. Thus, the teachers' efforts identified in this study were proven to help students overcome difficulties in learning narrative texts and create a more effective and meaningful learning process.

**Time Management in Narrative Text Learning.** The results of this study indicate that time constraints are one of the challenges in implementing PjBL in narrative text learning. The process of planning, implementing projects, group discussions, and presentations requires a longer time allocation than conventional learning. To overcome this obstacle, teachers adjust learning activities and extend the completion of tasks to the next meeting if necessary. This strategy demonstrates the flexibility of teachers in managing learning time so that learning objectives can still be achieved. This finding is in line with PjBL theory, according to Bell (2010), who states that although PjBL is effective in increasing student engagement and understanding, this learning model has the potential to be time-consuming if not planned carefully. Therefore, teachers are required to design projects with clear stages, realistic time allocations, and adjustments to classroom

conditions. This view is also supported by Thomas (2000), who emphasizes that the success of PjBL is highly dependent on the planning and management of the learning process, including effective time management (Jayanti & Hidayat, 2021). This is in line with the findings of Sari et al (2020), who found that providing sufficient and continuous time can improve the quality of students' understanding and work outcomes in narrative text learning. By extending the assignment to the next meeting, teachers give students the opportunity to learn more deeply without excessive time pressure. Thus, the results of this study reinforce previous research findings that emphasize that time management is a crucial aspect in the implementation of PjBL. Teachers' flexibility in adjusting activities and allocating learning time not only helps overcome time constraints but also ensures that narrative text learning continues to be effective, meaningful, and oriented toward achieving learning objectives.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study investigated the teaching strategies used in narrative text instruction at Al Amin High School and the challenges faced by teachers and students during the learning process. The findings demonstrate that the teacher implemented a combination of Project-Based Learning (PjBL), visual media, story mapping, group discussions, and oral presentations to promote student-centered learning. Classroom observations showed clear lesson planning (score 4) and active student involvement in project activities, while interviews confirmed that pictures, slides, and story-writing tasks helped students visualize narratives and increase engagement.

However, the implementation of these strategies was constrained by several instructional challenges. Teacher and student interviews revealed that limited vocabulary mastery and low reading interest hindered students' comprehension and writing development, requiring continuous teacher scaffolding through vocabulary lists, dictionaries, and visual support. Observation data also indicated unequal participation in group work and low confidence during presentations, reflected in the group cooperation and communication scores (both scored 2). In addition, time limitations restricted the completion of PjBL stages, resulting in rushed writing and limited feedback opportunities.

Overall, although the applied strategies effectively increased students' engagement and understanding of narrative text structures, their impact was reduced by linguistic, affective, and managerial constraints. These findings suggest that narrative text instruction requires not only innovative teaching strategies but also systematic vocabulary development, structured group management, increased speaking practice, and flexible time allocation. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to integrate more intensive language support and interactive activities, such as role-play or digital storytelling, to strengthen students' confidence, creativity, and communicative competence.

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