

IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING USING SKIMMING TECHNIQUE FOR GRADE VIII SMP NEGERI 4 PEMATANGSIANTAR

¹Rajamin Lingga, ²Joel Marbun, ³Bela Rosa, ⁴Layola Naibaho, ⁵Cristina Geovani,
⁶Vivi Rinanda, ⁷Yanti Sidauruk, ⁸Kris Jhon Simbolon, ⁹Samuel Manik, ¹⁰Selviana
Napitupulu

Department of English Education, Universitas HKBP Nommensen
Pematangsiantar, Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

E-mail: napitupuluselviana@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This classroom action research aims to improve students' reading comprehension, particularly in identifying the main idea of narrative texts, through the implementation of the skimming technique. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar with eighth-grade students as the subjects. It was carried out in two cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. Data were collected through tests, observations, and documentation. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after the implementation of the skimming technique. In the pre-test, only 33.3% of students passed the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM), while in the second cycle, 76.6% of students achieved scores above the KKM. The results indicate that the skimming technique effectively enhanced students' ability to identify main ideas, improved their reading speed, and increased their engagement in reading activities. This study concludes that the skimming technique is an effective strategy to improve reading comprehension among junior high school students.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, skimming technique, narrative text, classroom action research, junior high school.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian tindakan kelas ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa, khususnya dalam mengidentifikasi ide pokok dalam teks naratif, melalui penerapan teknik skimming. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar dengan subjek siswa kelas VIII. Penelitian dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus yang masing-masing terdiri dari tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam pemahaman membaca siswa setelah penerapan teknik skimming. Pada pre-test, hanya 33,3% siswa yang mencapai Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM), sedangkan pada siklus kedua, sebanyak 76,6% siswa memperoleh nilai di atas KKM. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa teknik skimming secara efektif meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam mengidentifikasi ide pokok, mempercepat kecepatan membaca, serta meningkatkan keterlibatan mereka dalam aktivitas membaca. Dengan demikian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa teknik skimming merupakan strategi yang efektif untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa sekolah menengah pertama.

Kata kunci: pemahaman membaca, teknik skimming, teks naratif, penelitian tindakan kelas, sekolah menengah pertama.

1. PENDAHULUAN

English is an international language that plays a vital role in global communication. It serves as a means of interaction across nations in various fields such as education, science, technology, economics, politics, and entertainment. As a global lingua franca, English is used by millions of people around the world, either as a first language or a second/foreign language. Harmer (2007) emphasizes that English has become the most widely used language for both written and spoken communication worldwide, which makes it essential for learners to acquire English proficiency to participate effectively in the global community.

In Indonesia, English is considered a compulsory subject in the national education curriculum and is taught at all levels, from elementary school to higher education. The objective is to equip students with the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, reading is particularly important because it provides access to knowledge and information necessary for academic and everyday life. Reading is one of the four essential language skills required for learners who are studying English as a second or foreign language. It is an important medium for accessing knowledge, improving academic performance, and understanding information from various sources such as textbooks, newspapers, articles, and online content.

Reading is one of the four language skills required for learners learning English as a second or foreign

language. Reading is very important because reading is one of the activities that cannot be separated in our lives to find information or knowledge from textbooks, articles, or magazines written in English. Therefore, students must have good reading skills in order to help them in their academic studies. Souhila (2014: 4) mentions a simple word in defining reading. She describes it as a process of understanding printed text. In other words, reading is the process of observing written symbols in to find out the meaning or comprehend the content of the text.

One important aspect of reading is reading comprehension, which refers to the ability to understand, interpret, and draw meaning from written text. The function of reading comprehension is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text, not to gain meaning from isolated words or sentences (Wahyuningsih, 2021; Widiyanto, 2017). Without comprehension, reading becomes a meaningless activity, as readers may recognize the words but fail to understand the message conveyed. Students often have difficulty comprehending the texts they read when they learn English as a foreign language, especially when faced with long texts that have many elements, such as characters, plots, and themes. Some of these problems include limited vocabulary, inability to understand grammatical structures, difficulty in finding the main idea or making inferences.

Based on observations, it was found that many students at SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar have difficulty in identifying the main idea of the reading

text. Although they can read the words fluently, they struggle to understand the main message or connect events logically. In interviews with some students, they stated that they often did not know what to focus on when reading, making it difficult for them to summarize or retell the story. One example of a problem found in reading narrative texts is the story of The Ugly Duckling. Many students tend to focus on certain details, such as the ugly duckling character or events in the story, and ignore the main message of the story. For example, some students may conclude that the main idea of the story is "The Ugly Duckling", whereas the point of the Ugly Duckling story is about self-acceptance, and how one can evolve into something more beautiful and valuable despite initially being considered ugly by others. This indicates that students have not been able to fully identify the moral values and the main message conveyed in the story.

2. LANDASAN TEORI

The Concept of Reading

Reading is one of the important skills in learning a language, especially English as a foreign language (EFL). This skill is not only used to get information but also helps students understand different types of texts in the curriculum, such as descriptive, narrative, and expository text. Reading also plays an important role in helping students learn new vocabulary, understand grammar, and gain knowledge. It is not just about recognizing words and sentences, but also about understanding and finding the meaning of the text. Therefore, teachers must have a clear understanding of what

reading really is, so they can provide clear and effective reading instructions to their students. As a result, students can also develop a better understanding of reading and experience the enjoyment and meaningful benefits from reading activities. However, many students still think that reading is simply the act of pronouncing words correctly from a written text. If reading is seen only in that way, it can become boring and seem unnecessary to learn at school. Thus, it is important to understand the true concept of reading. To explore it further, the next section will discuss the definition of reading.

Definition of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension involves the process of interpreting written words, understanding their intended meaning, and applying one's prior knowledge to grasp the deeper significance of the text. The ability to comprehend and interpret written material reflects a reader's cognitive capacity and proficiency in processing information. According to Klingner et al. (in Fadryon, 2020:12), reading comprehension is a complex process that integrates several components such as word decoding, language ability, and coherent thinking. The essence of reading comprehension lies in applying appropriate and effective strategies. These strategies may stem from bottom-up approaches, where readers focus on individual words and sentences, or from top-down approaches, which rely on background knowledge and inference-making (Fadryon, 2020:12).

Skimming Technique

Before understanding the concept of skimming technique, it is important to know what a technique means in the context of teaching. According to Anthony (1963), in the field of language teaching, a technique is a specific activity or strategy used in the classroom to achieve teaching goals. Techniques are different from methods and approaches because they are more practical and situational, often chosen and applied by teachers to suit specific skills, materials, and learning objectives. In reading instruction, a technique refers to a planned way of helping students develop reading skills such as fluency, comprehension, and speed. One of the commonly used techniques in teaching reading is skimming.

Definition of Narrative Text

Narrative text is one of the most commonly used genres in language teaching, especially in reading. It is a type of text that tells a story with the purpose of entertaining, informing, or even teaching a moral lesson to the reader or listener. This text usually follows a clear structure involving orientation, complication, and resolution, and may include a coda or moral message at the end. According to Anderson and Anderson (1997), a narrative is a piece of text which tells a story and, in doing so, entertains the audience. It can be based on real events or entirely imaginary. Similarly, Hyland (2004) defines narrative as stories that tell about something that happened in the past, with the aim to entertain and inform. Knapp and Watkins (2005) emphasize that narrative presents a view of the world through storytelling that either entertains

or informs the audience. Supporting this, Sugiarto and Sumarsono (2014) explain that narrative text is a text which contains a story from the past, and it may be either a fiction or non-fiction story. These expert definitions show that narrative text is more than just storytelling; it is a structured form of writing that helps readers understand events, human experiences, and values through imaginative language.

Previous Research

Many studies had already investigated how to use the skimming technique to improve students' reading comprehension. There are several previous studies that have been found to be relevant prior studies have been selected by the researcher.

For the first thesis by Rona Masdelima Galingging (2020), entitled "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension to Find Out Main Idea through Skimming Technique at Grade XI of MAS Baharuudin." The method used in this study was Classroom Action Research (CAR), which was conducted in two cycles. The results showed that the students' reading comprehension was improved after being taught by using the skimming technique. The improvement could be seen from the mean of the students' scores which increased from 64.75 in cycle 1 to 79.35 in cycle 2. The technique helped students find main ideas quickly and increased their interest and engagement in reading activities.

3. METODOLOGI

Research methodology is a systematic and planned approach that includes theoretical principles, scientific processes, and

practical techniques used to investigate a problem or phenomenon. It involves steps such as problem identification, hypothesis formulation, data collection and analysis, and reflection on findings. According to Paltridge and Starfield (2007), as cited in Napitupulu and Manalu (2017), research methodology refers to the theoretical paradigm or framework adopted by a researcher, including the justification of approaches and the instruments or materials used in conducting the research. This methodology emphasizes participation, contextual inquiry, data collection, and evidence-based decision making (Burns, 2010).

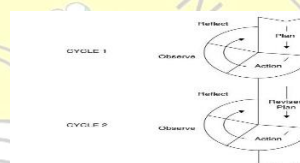
Research Design

This study adopts a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, as it aims to enhance students' writing skills. According to Burns (2010), the primary goal of action research is to identify problematic situations that participants believe are worth investigating in a more structured and systematic way. Burns further explains that the term "action" refers to efforts aimed at deliberately improving or resolving these issues.

Denscombe (2007) outlines four key characteristics of action research: practicality, change, cyclical process, and participation. First, it addresses real-life problems, particularly in educational settings. It is practical because the researcher is directly involved as a practitioner. Second, change is a fundamental component, serving as a method to gain deeper insight into the issues or phenomena being studied. Bryman (as cited in Denscombe, 2007) emphasizes that change is a way to better

understand how something works. Third, action research follows a cyclical process, consisting of several repeated cycles where each cycle builds upon the outcomes of the previous one. Finally, participation involves all actors in the research process, including teachers and students.

As stated by Kemmis and McTaggart (in Burns, 2010), action research typically involves four stages within each cycle: planning, action, observation, and reflection. These cycles are repeated until the researcher achieves satisfactory outcomes.



1) Planning

In this phase you identify a problem or issue and develop a plan of action in order to bring about improvements in a specific area of the research context.

This is a forward-looking phase where you consider:

- i) what kind of investigation is possible within the realities and constraints of your teaching situation; and
- ii) what potential improvements you think are possible.

2) Action

The plan is a carefully considered one which involves some deliberate interventions into your teaching situation that you put into action over an agreed period of time. The interventions are

‘critically informed’ as you question your assumptions about the current situation and plan new and alternative ways of doing things.

3) *Observation*

This phase involves you in observing systematically the effects of the action and documenting the context, actions and opinions of those involved. It is a data collection phase where you use ‘open-eyed’ and ‘open-minded’ tools to collect information about what is happening.

4) *Reflection*

At this point, you reflect on, evaluate and describe the effects of the action in order to make sense of what has happened and to understand the issue you have explored more clearly. You may decide to do further cycles of AR to improve the situation even more, or to share the ‘story’ of your research with others as part of your ongoing professional development.

(Adapted from Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, pp. 11–14)

Setting of The Research

Place of the Research

The researchers held the research in SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar which was located in Jl. Kartini No.4, Proklamasi, Kec. Siantar Barat

Time of the Research

This research was implemented to improve students reading skill in comprehension. The activity of the lesson is using skimming technique in two

meetings. The research was started from May 7-28 2025.

Subject and Object of the Research

This research was conducted at Pematangsiantar State Junior High School (SMP) 4 using the Classroom Action Research method. The details of the research subject and object as follow:

1. Research subject

The subject of this research will be conduct in class VIII at SMP N 4 Pematangsiantar in North Sumatera, Pematangsiantar.

2. Research object

The object of this research is the students’ reading comprehension in find the main idea in reading narrative text with skimming technique.

4. HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Research Discussion

Based on the results of the test in Cycle I, it can be concluded that the reading comprehension ability of Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar was still relatively low. The data showed that only **10 out of 30 students** achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of **75**, with a percentage of **33.3%**, while **20 students (66.7%)** did not meet the criterion. The average score in Cycle I was low, and the analysis also indicated that many students had difficulty understanding the main ideas and specific information in the texts provided. This condition reflects the need for improvement in reading

instruction, especially in guiding students to comprehend texts more efficiently.

After the implementation of the **skimming technique** in Cycle II, there was a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension. In Cycle II, **23 out of 30 students (76.6%)** successfully passed the KKM, while only **7 students (23.4%)** were still below the standard. This increase shows that the use of the skimming technique as a reading strategy was effective in helping students locate key ideas and understand the general meaning of the texts more quickly.

The improvement occurred because the skimming technique encouraged students to become more active readers by focusing on identifying main points rather than reading every single word. It also helped them manage their time more efficiently during reading tasks. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of the skimming technique was effective in improving the reading comprehension ability of Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar. The findings of this study support the concept of student-centered learning and the importance of using appropriate reading strategies in senior high school English instruction.

5. KESIMPULAN

This chapter describes the conclusion obtained from the results of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, along with the improvement of

students' reading comprehension particularly their ability to identify the main idea in narrative texts after being taught using the skimming technique.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research conducted at Grade VIII of SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar, it can be concluded that the application of the skimming technique significantly improved students' reading comprehension, especially in identifying the main idea in narrative texts. The technique enabled students to read more purposefully by focusing on topic sentences and key information rather than reading every single word. This strategic approach helped students comprehend texts more efficiently and confidently. The improvement was clearly shown in the results of the students' reading comprehension tests: in Cycle 1, only 10 out of 30 students (33.3%) passed the minimum score, while 20 students (66.7%) failed. However, after refining the implementation of the skimming technique in Cycle 2, the number of students who passed increased dramatically to 23 students (76.6%), with only 7 students (23.4%) remaining below the passing criteria. This indicates that skimming is an effective instructional strategy that not only boosts students' comprehension of narrative texts but also enhances their ability to identify main ideas quickly and accurately. The success of the technique also contributed to increased student motivation and participation in reading activities. Therefore, skimming can be considered a valuable method in improving reading outcomes in EFL classrooms, especially for junior high school learners.

Suggestion

Based on the research conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar, several challenges were identified during the process of improving students' reading skills using the skimming technique. These challenges stemmed from various factors, including student abilities, the classroom environment, and teaching methods.

The main problems encountered were as follows:

1. Students' Difficulty in Identifying Main Ideas

Many students struggled to quickly identify the main ideas in reading texts, leading to a shallow understanding of the content. This difficulty hindered their ability to comprehend and summarize key points effectively.

2. Limited Vocabulary for Skimming

A significant number of students lacked the vocabulary needed to efficiently skim through texts. This limited their ability to quickly grasp important information and slowed down their reading process, affecting their overall reading fluency.

3. Lack of Focus and Concentration During Reading

Some students demonstrated low concentration levels while reading, which resulted in missed key information during skimming. This often caused confusion and frustration, further decreasing their motivation to engage with the text.

4. Instructional and Environmental Factors

Teachers reported challenges in finding effective methods to teach skimming techniques, and the classroom environment sometimes lacked the necessary resources to support focused and independent reading activities.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed as solutions:

- For Problem 1 (Identifying Main Ideas)

Teachers should incorporate targeted exercises focused on skimming strategies, such as practicing how to quickly identify titles, headings, and key phrases. Students could engage in activities where they summarize paragraphs or sections after a brief glance, with regular feedback to improve their ability to pinpoint main ideas.

- For Problem 2 (Limited Vocabulary)

It is recommended to incorporate vocabulary-building exercises into reading lessons, focusing on key terms that are commonly found in texts relevant to students' interests. Students could maintain a vocabulary journal where they record new words and their meanings, and engage in vocabulary games to strengthen their reading comprehension skills.

- For Problem 3 (Lack of Focus and Concentration)

To improve students' focus, teachers could introduce mindfulness activities or reading strategies that promote

active engagement, such as prediction exercises before reading and quick group discussions afterward. Implementing short reading bursts followed by interactive activities can also help maintain students' attention.

- For Problem 4 (Instructional and Environmental Factors)

Teachers should be provided with professional development opportunities that emphasize skimming and scanning techniques. Schools could enhance the classroom environment with more resources, such as reading corners or digital tools, that facilitate interactive and independent reading practices

By addressing these challenges with the proposed solutions, it is expected that students' reading comprehension skills, particularly through the use of skimming techniques, will improve significantly. This will lead to better overall reading performance. Future research is encouraged to explore the integration of skimming with other reading strategies to further enhance students' reading abilities.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

- Anjarani, D. R., & Indahwati, R. (2019). An analysis of students' errors in using simple past tense in translating narrative text. *Prosodi*, 13(2), 68-74.
- Anthony, E. M. (1963). Approach, method and technique. *English language teaching*, 17(2), 63-67.
- But, D., Fahey, R., Feez, S., Spinks, S., & Yallop, C. (2000). Using Functional Grammar: An explore's guide (2nd Ed.). Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research Macquarie University.
- Brown, H. Douglas. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman, 2001, 308.
- Diaz, S., & Laguado, J. C. (2013). Improving reading skills through skimming and scanning techniques at a public school: Action research. *Opening Writing Doors Journal*, 10(1), 133-150.
- Firmadini, F., & Masrul, M. (2024). The Effect of Skimming Method towards Students' Reading Comprehension. *Journal of English Language and Education*, 9(1), 1-8.
- Fitria, T. N. (2020). Error Analysis Found in Students' Writing Composition in Simple Past Tense of Recount Text. *ENGLISH FRANCA: Academic Journal of English Language and Education*, 4(2 November), 141-160.
- Galingging, R. M. (2020). Improving students' reading comprehension to find out main idea through skimming technique at grade XI (eleven) of MAS Baharuddin (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Padangsidimpuan).
- Grellet, F. (1981). *Developing reading skills*. Cambridge university press.
- Huebener, Theodore. 1969. How to Teach Foreign Languages Effectively. New York: New York University Press.
- Ifianti, T. (2018). Enhancing First Grade Students Reading Comprehension Skill of Man Malang 1 on News Item Text Through Skimming Technique. *Journey: Journal of English Language and Pedagogy*, 1(1), 15-22.

- Kustaryo, S. (1988). Reading technique for college students. *Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Tinggi*.
- Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical english language teaching*.
- Rosmarie, A., & Mualimin, M. (2020). The Impact of Using Skimming Strategy in Narrative Text towards Students' Reading Comprehension of SMP Advent of Semarang. *Culturalistics: Journal of Cultural, Literary, and Linguistic Studies*, 4(1), 65-69.
- Sugiarto, D., & Sumarsono, P. (2014). The implementation of think-pair-share model to improve students' ability in reading narrative texts. *International journal of English and Education*, 3(3), 206-215.
- Souhila, Rouai. 2014. *The Use of Reading Strategies in Improving Reading Comprehension*. University Kasdi Merbah
- Wahyuningsih, L. S. (2021). Meningkatkan Kemampuan Reading Comprehension Siswa SMA Negeri 1 Kebomas Melalui Extensive Reading. *Jurnal Paedagogy*, 8(1), 112. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v8i1.3325>
- Widiyanto, S. (2017). Peningkatan Reading Comprehension Siswa SD Melalui Penggunaan Media Kamus Bergambar Bahasa Inggris. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 1(1), 73-78. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v1i1.157>
- Hong. 2013. *Teaching of Skimming at Tertiary Level: Theoretical and Pedagogical Issues*. UOB Journals: University of Barhain
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Longman.