

# Improving students' reading comprehension in Narrative text through Schema activation strategy at third grade at SMPN 1 Bukit Kemuning Lampung Utara

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## ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are to investigate whether there is a significant difference in the students' reading comprehension achievement before and after the implementation of schemata activation strategy and which aspect that improves the most in reading comprehension after being taught schema activation strategy.

This research was conducted at the third-grade students of SMPN 1 Bukit Kemuning in the academic year 2020/2021. The researcher took class IX. The instrument used to get the data in this research was a reading comprehension test. Reading tests in the forms of pre-test and post-test were done to collect the data. Then, the t-test was used to test the hypothesis.

The result of the hypothesis test proves that schemata activation gives a positive effect on students' reading comprehension achievement. In addition, determining reference was the aspect of reading skills which improved the most after being taught by Schema Activation Strategy. This evidence proved that teaching reading using Schema Activation Strategy facilities more in determining reference. In conclusion, this study suggests that Schema Activation Strategy can be used to improve students' reading comprehension.

**Keywords:** *improving, reading comprehension, schema activation strategy.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the important skills to master is reading skill. Compared to the other skills, reading may be considered the most frequently used skill in school. The students are expected to read the information that is mostly written in English. In addition, reading will also be useful as they achieve a higher level, for instance: TOEFL and IELTS. In other words, reading dominates the teaching material and tests in students and higher levels.

Furthermore, the aim of teaching reading is to enable the students to understand and comprehend a short English text. For reading to be meaningful, it must be accompanied by comprehension. To achieve comprehension, the students are expected to be able to identify the aspects such as identifying the main idea, explicit and implicit specific information, reference, word meaning, phrase, and sentence of the short simple essay.

In Junior high schools, teaching reading focuses on seven types of text, recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, discussion, exposition, and news item. Among the texts offered, the narrative should be easily understood. On the contrary, the students think that narrative is difficult to learn. They often find difficulty in finding the answers for narrative texts.

The narrative text itself is the way humans communicate ideas chronologically and this type of text is usually used by the students to learn English more interestingly. A narrative is a text that tells a story or an account of a sequence of events that focuses on a specific participant; a narrative is written to gain readers' interest by entertaining them. So, by reading narrative text, the students can engage themselves in fictitious experiences. Besides, they can take wisdom from the story. According to Willingham, D.T. (2004) stories are easy to comprehend and easy to remember, and that's true not just because people pay close attention to stories; there is something inherent in the story format that makes them easy to understand and remember. Thus, this research uses familiar text to make the students easy to comprehend the reading text. Nevertheless, the purpose of narrative text is to amuse and entertain the reader, it could not be reached if the student's reading ability is poor.

After conducting the pre-observation at SMPN 01 Bukit Kemuning, several problems were objectively found. For example, the students frequently find it difficult to comprehend the text. As a result, they should open a dictionary to translate word by word into Indonesian to know the content of the reading text. This unfortunate condition is

sometimes found to indicate that many students had difficulties in understanding and comprehending the text since they were not able to understand and obtain knowledge of the content that has been explained in the text. It is now clear that the students' reading comprehension was still low. During the interview with the teacher, she said that the mean score of the students' reading test was under 70 the minimal standard (KKM) because they were not able to understand required the elements of reading skills.

To address this problem, the researcher resorts to students' schema. According to Al-Isa, Ahmad (2006) reading is a multilevel and interactive process in which readers construct a meaningful representation of text using their schemata. He suggests that the ability of the students to comprehend or to understand the printed text to get some information connected to students' background knowledge to the printed text.

Understanding the role of schema in the reading process provides further insight into why students may fail to comprehend text material. For example, when students are familiar with the topic of the text they are reading (i.e. possess content schema), aware of the discourse level and structural make-up of the genre of the text (i.e. possess formal schema), and skillful in the decoding features needed to recognize words and recognize how they fit together in a sentence (i.e. possess language schema), they are in a better position to comprehend their reading assignment. Deficiency in any of the above schemas will result in a reading comprehension deficit (Carrell P.L. 1988). In addition, Al Salmi, M. (2011) states that schema is the prior knowledge that is gained through experiences that are stored in one's mind. It is an abstract structure of knowledge. It means that the more the students have schemata the more they can comprehend the reading text.

The researcher chooses SMP Negeri 1 Bukit Kemuning as the setting of this research to implement the schema activation strategy. The researcher focuses this research on reading comprehension and he uses schema activation strategy as the solution as student's schemata is very likely to have an impact to increase student's reading comprehension achievement and schema activation strategy could encourage students to actively be engaged in constructing meaning from text (Shahan, T., and Lomax, R. G. 1986). Because of the importance of reading strategy in improving students' comprehension of the source text, this study is conducted to find out whether or not schema activation strategy can improve students' achievement in reading comprehension of narrative text. Therefore, the researcher expects that teaching narrative text through schema activation strategy can overcome the difficulty in reading comprehension.

**II. METHODS**

The designs of research are qualitative and quantitative design. This research was conducted in the third grade of SMPN 01 Bukit Kemuning, the researcher chose IX A as the object of research by using random sampling. The object was chosen since the class reached the highest score in doing English exercise among all of the classes. Moreover, the instruments were reading test. On other hand, reading test was adapted from final examination by Ministry of Education and Culture. To know the improvement in students' reading comprehension after being taught by using scemata activation strategy. The data were analyzed by using SPSS 16.0 paired sample t-test.

**III. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

After the pretest and posttest were administered, the researcher compared the results of pretest with the results of posttest in order to analyze the difference of students' reading comprehension after being taught by using schema activation strategy. It showed in the following table.

**Table 1. The Distribution of Students' Scores of Pretest and Posttest**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
PRETEST	32	42.5	67.5	55.81
POSTTEST	32	70	85	77.27

Table 1 shows the result of the students' pretest mean 69.27. While the result of the students' posttest mean 77.27. It indicates that there is an improvement of students' reading comprehension of narrative text by using schema activation strategy.

**Table 2 Hypothesis Testing**

Tests	n	Descriptive Statistics	Paired T-Test		
		M (std. D)	t	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)
<b>Pre-Test</b>	32	55.78 (6.24)			
<b>Post-Test</b>	32	77.27 (5.29)	19.969	31	.000

Table 2 shows that the result of computation is analyzed by using Paired Sample t-test  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). It means the proposed was accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant improvement of students' reading comprehension of narrative text after being taught by using schema activation strategy. It also could be seen from the result of T-value compared to T-table in which T-value  $>$  T table ( $19.969 > 1.696$ ). To answer the second research question of aspects of reading that improved the most after the students' being taught by using schema activation strategy will be showed in Table below:

**Table 3 Students' Improvement of Each Aspect of Reading Comprehension**

No.	Aspects of Reading Comprehension	Mean Score of Pre-test	Mean Score of Post-test	Gain	Percentage
1.	Main Idea	10.86	12.66	1.80	8.38%
2.	Specific Information	11.64	16.95	5.31	24.71%
3.	Inference	11.02	14.92	3.90	18.15%
4.	Reference	10.08	15.70	5.62	26.15%
5.	Vocabulary	12.19	17.03	4.84	22.52%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>55.78</b>	<b>77.27</b>	<b>21.49</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 shows that there is an improvement of students' reading comprehension in each aspect of reading. All the aspects improve, but the aspect that improves the most is reference and the aspect that improves the least is main idea. It proves by the mean pretest of reference is 10.08 to 15.70 or the gain is 5.62, in addition mean posttest of inference is 10.86 to 12.66 or the gain is 1.80. This is the reason why reference is higher than main idea aspect.

### Discussion

Teaching reading through schema activation strategy could improve the students' reading comprehension in narrative text because schema activation strategy can improve their motivation, fun, inspiring, make the class more attractive, increasing their enthusiasm, and increasing their focus, and make the material become easier to understand. It is because schema activation strategy is unique and different from another strategy. In line with Bransford (1985), Norris and Phillips (1987) who says Schema theorists have advanced the understanding of reading comprehension by describing how prior knowledge can enhance a reader's interaction with the text. Accordingly, comprehension occurs when a reader can use prior knowledge and experience to interpret an author's message. Educators and researchers have suggested numerous instructional strategies to help students activate and use prior knowledge to aid comprehension.

It also in line with the previous studies. The first previous study was done by Hastuti (2015) who asserted

the implementation of Schema Activation Strategy as the learning strategy can improve the students' reading comprehension. Ohoiwutun (2014) states that the use of schema activation strategy can help the students to be familiar with the text they are going to read and the English teacher should not neglect the pre-reading activities which can attract students' to try use this strategy before reading an English text.

In addition, schema activation strategy in teaching reading comprehension improved all the aspects of reading i.e., main idea, specific information, reference, inference and vocabulary. The majority of the students answer the questions regarding inference was the highest score than the other aspects. The score of finding reference was 129 in the pretest and 201 in the posttest. It got the highest gain score 72 (from 129 in the pretest to 201 in the posttest). The improvement of students' score caused they made some questions which helped them to finding reference from the text. In the learning process, the improvement happened because the students could connect one object to another object quickly. Hence, it was easy for the students to connect the pronoun that used in the text with the object before. Besides, the lowest score was determining main idea. The score of determining main idea was 139 in the pretest to 162 in the posttest. The gain score was 23 (from 139 in the pretest to 162 in the posttest). The improvement of students' score caused when the students had a question about the main point of the passage by summarizing its passage and looking for repetition of ideas or words.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

After the researcher has conducted the study at the second grade students of SMPN 01 Bukit Kemuning, North Lampung, and has analyzed the data, it can be concluded that there is a significant improvement after the students being taught by using schema activation strategy in reading comprehension. It proves that mean score from in the pretest 55.78 to 77.27 in the posttest with the most improve is reference and aspect that improve the least is main idea.

This study also has some implications. It is proved that schema activation strategy as the strategy in reading comprehension can make a positive impact to students' reading comprehension. Therefore, English teachers are expected to apply this strategy in the class to help students increase their reading comprehension.

However, this study also has some recommendations for future researchers. The strategy in this research was applied at third grade of junior high school, so that for future researchers are expected to apply this strategy to other levels of students such as elementary students and senior high school level with different number of sample and the further researcher can add another instrument such as a questionnaire to find out students' responses towards schema activation strategy to support the result of the research. Furthermore, this study was conducted by using narrative texts and for future researchers can apply other kinds of texts.

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