The Effectiveness of Summarizing Strategy to Improve Senior High School Students' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the summarizing strategy in improving reading comprehension of 10th grade high school students. The background of this study is based on the low ability of students to understand English reading, especially in identifying main ideas and compiling summaries. This study uses a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design, involving two classes as the experimental and control groups. The instruments used are multiple-choice pretests and posttests that measure students' reading comprehension. The results of the analysis showed that there was a significant increase in the posttest scores of students in the experimental group compared to the control group. The independent sample t-test produced a significance value (p = 0.001), and the effect size calculation showed an eta square value of 0.40 (large effect). These findings indicate that the summarizing strategy is effective in improving students' reading comprehension at the high school level..

Keywords: summarizing strategy, reading comprehension, high school students, reading learning

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas strategi summarizing dalam meningkatkan pemahaman bacaan siswa kelas 10 SMA. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasarkan pada rendahnya kemampuan siswa dalam memahami bacaan berbahasa Inggris, khususnya dalam mengidentifikasi ide pokok dan menyusun ringkasan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan desain eksperimen semu (quasi-experimental design), melibatkan dua kelas sebagai kelompok eksperimen dan kontrol. Instrumen yang digunakan berupa pretest dan posttest pilihan ganda yang mengukur pemahaman membaca siswa. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peningkatan signifikan pada skor posttest siswa kelompok eksperimen dibandingkan kelompok kontrol. Uji-t sampel independen menghasilkan nilai signifikansi (p = 0,001), dan perhitungan effect size menunjukkan nilai eta kuadrat sebesar 0,40 (large effect). Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa strategi summarizing efektif digunakan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa pada tingkat SMA.

Kata kunci: strategi summarizing, pemahaman membaca, siswa SMA, pembelajaran reading

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a foundational skill in English language learning, enabling students to construct meaning from texts beyond mere word recognition. As a core outcome of reading activities, comprehension reflects the ability to process, internalize, and evaluate information, making it a crucial indicator of learning success (Avivah, Hilmiyati, & Khaeroni, 2022). Strong reading comprehension empowers

students to identify main ideas, interpret supporting details, and connect new information with prior knowledge—skills essential for developing higher-order thinking and academic performance across disciplines.

Despite its significance, reading comprehension remains a persistent challenge for Indonesian students. The 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reported that only 30% of Indonesian students achieved. Level 2 or higher in reading literacy—the threshold for basic comprehension skills (Pusat Penelitian Kebijakan Kemendikbud, 2021). This low achievement highlights students' struggles in understanding written texts and suggests a lack of effective reading strategies. Compounding this issue is a nationwide disinterest in reading, with UNESCO data revealing that only 0.001% of Indonesians can be considered active readers (Darmiyanti & Taufik, 2021). This lack of engagement not only limits students' reading habits but also impairs their motivation and comprehension.

At the school where this study was conducted, these national trends were reflected in classroom observations. Many tenth-grade students appeared disengaged during reading activities and often relied on word-for-word translations, struggling to grasp the overall meaning of the texts. They had difficulty identifying main ideas, interpreting supporting information, and understanding the author's message. Informal discussions with English teachers revealed that reading instruction was primarily limited to traditional practices—such as reading aloud and answering literal comprehension questions—without incorporating strategy-based instruction. As Mohammed (2019) argues, such approaches are inadequate for cultivating independent and strategic readers.

To address these challenges, the selection and implementation of appropriate reading strategies become vital. Effective reading strategies should align with the text type and reading purpose (Sari, Yunita, & Harahap, 2020). Teachers play a key role in modeling strategic reading habits and guiding students to choose appropriate strategies, which can significantly enhance learning outcomes (Triana, 2021). This is particularly important for tenth-grade students, who are transitioning to more complex texts that require critical engagement and logical reasoning.

In this context, analytical exposition texts provide a meaningful avenue for fostering critical reading skills. As a factual genre presenting opinions supported by arguments, analytical exposition follows a logical structure—thesis, arguments, and reiteration—that can help students recognize and organize key ideas (Burhan et al., 2023). These texts often address familiar social issues, making them more relatable and engaging for students. However, many students continue to struggle with identifying main arguments and supporting evidence in such texts, underscoring the need for strategies that promote deeper comprehension.

Summarization is one such strategy that holds promise for enhancing students' understanding of analytical exposition texts. Summarizing encourages learners to actively identify and restate main ideas in their own words, promoting deeper engagement with the text (Dorgham, 2024). It helps students condense key information, structure their thoughts, and develop interpretations. As noted by Sari et al. (2020), summarizing aids in extracting essential information and facilitates retention and understanding. While prior studies have highlighted the general benefits of summarizing for reading comprehension, limited research has explored its specific application to analytical exposition texts at the

senior high school level. Moreover, existing research often overlooks the logical and argumentative structure that defines this genre.

Given these gaps, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of the summarization strategy in improving tenth-grade students' reading comprehension, particularly in identifying main ideas and supporting details within analytical exposition texts.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest non-equivalent control group to examine the effectiveness of a summarizing strategy in improving students' reading comprehension. The design enabled comparison between two intact classes of tenth-grade students with comparable English proficiency, as indicated by their previous achievement scores. Random assignment was not applied, as the school had predetermined class groupings. This approach ensured contextual relevance and preserved the natural classroom setting.

The participants consisted of 60 tenth-grade students (30 in the experimental group and 30 in the control group) from a senior high school in Gresik. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria, including similar English proficiency, regular attendance, and availability throughout the research period. Ethical clearance was obtained from the school, and participants' confidentiality was maintained.

A reading comprehension test comprising 20 multiple- choice items was developed as the main research instrument. The test assessed key aspects such as main idea identification, supporting details, text structure, language features, and summarizing skills. Items were adapted from the Kurikulum Merdeka and validated by an English education lecturer and a senior English teacher for content and face validity. A pilot test was conducted in a parallel class, and item analysis (difficulty index and discrimination power) ensured the quality of test items.

Data were collected through a pre-test, two classroom intervention sessions, and a post-test. The intervention, conducted over two 90-minute sessions, followed a structured summarizing instruction model based on Carnine et al. (1990), integrated with project-based learning. In the first session, students received explicit instruction and teacher modeling on summarizing analytical exposition texts. In the second session, students practiced summarizing texts individually and received peer and teacher feedback. The control group received conventional reading instruction without summarizing training. Both groups completed the same post-test at the end of the intervention.

To ensure instrument validity and reliability, expert validation was conducted using a structured checklist, and the instrument was revised accordingly. The internal consistency of the test was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.861, indicating high reliability.

Data analysis included a normality test (Shapiro-Wilk) and a homogeneity test (Levene's Test) using SPSS to ensure that parametric assumptions were met. An independent samples t-test was then conducted to determine significant differences between the experimental and control groups' post-test results. Additionally, effect size was calculated using the Eta Squared (η^2) formula to measure the magnitude of the treatment effect.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In order to establish an appropriate baseline prior to intervention, a pre-test was administered, and tests for homogeneity and normality were conducted.

Table 1

Homogeneity Test – Pre-test

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Hasil Pre-test	Based on Mean	3.014	1	68	.087
	Based on Median	2.433	1	68	.123

The output in Table 1 showed that the significance value (Sig.) based on mean was 0.087, which is > 0.05. A significance value above 0.05 indicates that the assumption of equality of variance is met and parametric analysis can be used (Pallant, 2020).

Table 2

Normality Test – Pre-test

Tests of Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test x-8	.884	35	.002
Pre-test x-11	.872	35	<.001

As shown in Table 2, the significance value for the experimental group (X-8) is 0.002, and the control group (X-11) is less than 0.001. Based on Pallant (2020), this justified the use of a non-parametric test.

Table 3

Mann-Whitney U Test – Pre-test

Ranks

	Kelas	N	Mean Rank
Hasil Pre-test	x-8 (experiment)	35	35.24
	x-11 (control)	35	35.76
	Total	70	

Test Statistics

	Hasil Pre-test
Mann-Whitney U	603.500
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.915

Shown in Table 3, the mean rank of the experimental group 35.24, while the control group is 35.76. The asymptotic significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.915, which is much greater than 0.05, this shows that there is no significant difference between the two groups in terms of pre-test scores.

After the intervention using summarizing, both experimental and control groups undertook a post-test to measure the effectiveness of summarizing strategy in improving

reading comprehension. To verify whether the data fulfilled the requirements for conducting parametric tests, normality and homogeneity analyses were carried out.

Table 4

Normality Test – Post-test

Tests of Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk		
post-test x8	.956	36	.166
post-test x11	.949	36	.099

According to Table 4, the post-test score of the experimental group (x-8) produced a Shapiro-Wilk significance value of 0.166, while the control group (x-11) showed a value of 0.099. According to the interpretation criteria outlined by Sari et al. (2024), a data set can be classified as normally distributed if the p-value exceeds 0.05, while a p-value equal to or below 0.05 indicates a deviation from normality.

Table 5

Homogeneity Test – Post-test

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Post Test	Based on Mean	316	1	70	576
	Based on Median	135	1	70	714

Based on the table above, the significance value (Sig.) for Levene's test based on the mean is 0.576, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the variances between the two groups are not significantly different. This result indicates that the data meets the requirements for further parametric analysis, as the assumptions of normality and homogeneity are met.

Table 6

Independent Sample T-Test

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means							
				Significance				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	6.914	70	<.001	<.001	16.39	2.371	11.661	21.117
	Equal variances not assumed	6.914	69.4	<.001	<.001	16.39	2.371	11.660	21.118

The results showed a t-value of 6.914 and a significance value (p) < 0.001, which is below 0.05. This indicates a significant difference in the post-test scores between the two groups. The experimental group, who were taught using the summarizing strategy, scored higher than the control group, with a mean difference of 16.39. This confirms that the summarizing strategy effectively improves students' reading comprehension.

To assess the magnitude of the effect, Eta Squared was calculated. The resulting value was 0.406, indicating a large effect size (Cohen, 1988), confirming that summarizing strategy had a substantial impact.

The findings of this study show that the summarizing strategy had a statistically and pedagogically significant effect on improving tenth-grade students' reading comprehension. Pre-test results analyzed using the Mann- Whitney U test (U = 603.50; p = 0.915) confirmed no significant difference between groups, indicating comparable initial reading levels. However, the post-test scores revealed a highly significant difference ($p < 0.001$), with an eta squared (η^2) value of 0.406, indicating a large effect according to Cohen's criteria. This suggests that the summarizing strategy accounted for more than 40% of the observed improvement, demonstrating not only statistical effectiveness but also meaningful instructional impact.

These results align with previous studies by Lutfia and Susanti (2021), Qomariyah (2020), and Avivah et al. (2022), which similarly found that summarizing enhances students' ability to extract key ideas and construct meaning. Unlike prior research, this study focused specifically on analytical exposition texts and applied a structured intervention model, providing further evidence for the effectiveness of summarizing in argumentative reading contexts.

Prior to the intervention, students demonstrated limited comprehension skills, struggling to identify main ideas, distinguish relevant details, and rephrase content meaningfully. This reflects what Harmer (2007) describes as passive reading behavior, where learners read without active mental engagement. Snow (2002) also emphasizes that comprehension requires active cognitive processing, not just decoding. The summarizing instruction based on Carnine et al. (1990) helped address this gap through explicit teaching, modeling, and guided practice. Over time, students exhibited not only improved test scores but also more active reading behaviors, including the ability to independently summarize key arguments—indicating a shift in both comprehension and cognitive strategy use.

The success of this strategy may be attributed to three main factors. First, it directed students' attention to central ideas, which is essential when dealing with the argumentative nature of analytical exposition texts. Second, it required learners to analyze, organize, and synthesize information—processes that activate critical thinking. Third, the predictable structure of exposition texts (thesis, arguments, reiteration) provided a framework that supported the summarization process. These factors, supported by findings from Sari et al. (2020), Lutfia and Susanti (2022), and Anderson & Anderson (2003), worked synergistically to improve students' comprehension performance.

More broadly, the findings support the theoretical view that reading comprehension is a complex, cognitively demanding activity. As argued by Snow (2002), comprehension involves selecting, organizing, and integrating information. Summarizing serves as a metacognitive scaffold that helps students internalize meaning and reformulate it concisely. The significant learning gains observed in this study reinforce the notion that explicit strategy instruction fosters deeper comprehension and academic literacy. In line with studies by Bahrami and Rahimy (2020) and Triana (2021), summarizing enables students not just to understand what is written, but to interpret and express its meaning independently—an essential skill in academic reading tasks.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the effectiveness of the summarizing strategy in enhancing the reading comprehension of tenth-grade students, particularly in understanding analytical exposition texts. The results indicated a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group, with a large effect size confirming the pedagogical impact of the strategy. These findings support the conclusion that summarizing is a powerful tool for helping students identify main ideas, distinguish supporting details, and reconstruct meaning in structured argumentative texts.

From the discussion, three key factors explain the success of the strategy: its alignment with the text structure, its role in promoting critical thinking, and its ability to guide students toward more focused reading. Beyond test outcomes, the strategy fostered active, reflective reading habits, which marked a shift from passive reading behavior to deeper cognitive engagement. This suggests that summarizing is not only beneficial for short-term achievement but also for developing long-term reading strategies aligned with academic literacy goals.

Despite its contributions, the study was limited to analytical exposition texts at the high school level and relied on a quantitative approach. Future research should explore the application of this strategy to other genres and age groups, and adopt mixed methods to capture the cognitive processes involved. Practical implementation may also benefit from longer intervention periods and teacher training. Overall, summarizing presents a valuable avenue for improving reading instruction and should be considered in curriculum development and further educational research.

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