

IMPROVING STUDENTS ABILITY TO IDENTIFY MAIN IDEAS THROUGH GUIDED READING STRATEGY GRADE VIII

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in learning English, as it enables students to understand written texts effectively and construct meaning from what they read. One of the main problems faced by junior high school students is difficulty in identifying the main idea of a text, which often results in poor overall comprehension. This difficulty is commonly caused by students' limited reading strategies and lack of guided support during the reading process. Therefore, an effective instructional strategy is needed to help students improve their reading comprehension skills. This study aimed to improve students' ability to identify main ideas through the implementation of the Guided Reading strategy in Grade VIII of SMP Swasta Teladan. The research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design conducted in two cycles, each consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. In each cycle, Guided Reading activities were implemented through pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages, including teacher guidance, group discussion, and comprehension exercises. The participants of this study were 30 eighth-grade students. Data were collected using reading comprehension tests, observation sheets, and field notes. The results of the study showed a substantial improvement in students' reading comprehension after the implementation of the Guided Reading strategy. The mean score increased from 61.2 in the pre-test to 82.0 in the post-test of Cycle II. In addition, the percentage of students who achieved the minimum mastery criterion (70) increased from 13% in the pre-test to 93% in the final test. Observation results also indicated that students became more active, motivated, and confident during reading activities. In conclusion, the Guided Reading strategy was effective in improving students' ability to identify main ideas and enhancing their overall reading comprehension. This study implies that Guided Reading can be an effective strategy for supporting students' reading development in junior high school.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research; Guided Reading Strategy; Main Idea; Reading Comprehension

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is one of the most essential skills in English language learning, as it enables students to understand written texts and develop overall language competence. Through reading activities, students can expand their vocabulary, enhance critical thinking skills, and acquire information from various sources. However, reading in a second or foreign language such as English often becomes challenging because it requires not only word recognition but also the ability to construct meaning from the text. According to Kahar et al. (2024), reading comprehension involves active thinking and the ability to connect ideas within a passage.

During the researcher's teaching practicum (PPL) at SMP Swasta Teladan, it was observed that many Grade VIII students experienced difficulties in identifying the main ideas of the texts they read. Although most students were able to read fluently and

pronounce words correctly, they often failed to grasp the central meaning of a paragraph. Instead, they focused on individual words or sentences without integrating them into a coherent idea. As a result, students struggled to answer comprehension questions and summarize texts effectively. This problem is significant because identifying the main idea is a fundamental aspect of reading comprehension. Without this skill, students may misunderstand the purpose of a text and lose motivation to read. Nirmala (2024) stated that comprehension occurs when readers are able to identify and organize the most relevant information in a passage. When students are unable to do this, they tend to become frustrated and disengaged during reading activities.

One instructional strategy that can be used to address this issue is the Guided Reading strategy. Guided Reading is a small-group instructional approach in which teachers provide structured support during the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages. Previous studies have reported that Guided Reading contributes positively to students' reading comprehension and reading strategies (Juliana et al., 2025; Kahar et al., 2024). However, most of these studies focus on general reading comprehension skills and are conducted at the elementary or senior high school levels. Moreover, limited research has specifically examined the use of Guided Reading to improve students' ability to identify main ideas through Classroom Action Research in Indonesian junior high school contexts, particularly in private schools.

Therefore, there is a need for a more focused investigation on how Guided Reading can be implemented systematically to enhance students' main idea identification skills in real classroom settings. This study fills this gap by applying Guided Reading through a Classroom Action Research design in Grade VIII of SMP Swasta Teladan and examining its impact on students' reading performance and classroom engagement. The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically by providing empirical evidence and instructional guidance for English teachers in improving students' reading comprehension. Therefore, this study aims to improve students' ability to identify main ideas through the implementation of the Guided Reading strategy at Grade VIII of SMP Swasta Teladan. It is expected that this strategy will not only enhance students' reading comprehension but also encourage them to become more active, confident, and motivated readers.

2. METHODS

2.1 Participants/Subject

All participants took part in both cycles of the Classroom Action Research (CAR) as a target class for instructional improvement. This class was selected based on pedagogical considerations, including students' low reading comprehension performance, difficulties in identifying main ideas, and limited participation during reading activities. These conditions indicated the need for systematic intervention to enhance students' reading skills. During the implementation, students were involved in reading activities using the Guided Reading strategy, which consisted of pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages. The researcher served as the teacher during the implementation, while an English teacher from the school acted as the collaborator to

observe classroom activities and evaluate students' participation and progress throughout the learning process.

2.2 Instruments

In this study, several instruments were used to collect the data. The main instruments included observation sheets, reading comprehension tests, and field notes. These instruments were designed to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data that reflected students' progress and learning behavior throughout the implementation of the Guided Reading strategy. The observation sheet was used to record students' activities, participation, and engagement during the learning process. It helped the researcher and collaborator identify how actively the students were involved and whether they could apply the strategy effectively. The field notes were used to document the researcher's reflections, classroom atmosphere, and unexpected events that occurred during the implementation of each cycle. These qualitative instruments provided a deeper understanding of the students' learning process. Meanwhile, the reading comprehension tests were given at the end of each cycle. The tests consisted of short reading passages followed by comprehension questions designed to measure students' ability to identify main ideas. The pre test was administered before the first cycle to determine the students' initial ability, while the post test was conducted after each cycle to assess improvement. The comparison between pretest and post test results indicated whether the Guided Reading strategy effectively enhanced students' reading comprehension skills. The data collection process took place over two cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. During each cycle, the researcher implemented the Guided Reading strategy in the classroom, observed student participation, and administered reading comprehension tests to evaluate progress.

2.3 Data Collection

Data collection in this study was conducted systematically during the implementation of Classroom Action Research (CAR), which was carried out in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four stages, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The purpose of data collection was to obtain comprehensive information regarding students' improvement in identifying main ideas through the Guided Reading strategy, as well as their participation and behavior during the learning process. This study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data were collected through reading comprehension tests, while qualitative data were obtained through classroom observations and field notes. The use of multiple data sources aimed to support data triangulation and to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a complete picture of the students' progress. The quantitative data were obtained from the students' reading comprehension test results, while the qualitative data were taken from observation sheets and field notes. The quantitative analysis involved statistical calculations such as mean, standard deviation, standard error, and t

test, while the qualitative analysis described students' participation, motivation, and responses during the learning process.

Table 1. Scoring Rubric

Criteria	Description	Score
Excellent	Accurately identifies all main ideas with clear understanding	90 - 100
Good	Identifies most main ideas correctly with minor errors	80 - 89
Fair	Identifies some main ideas but lacks full comprehension	70 - 79
Poor	Struggles to identify main ideas or misinterprets them	<70

A. Calculating the Test Scores

Students' test scores were calculated using the following formula:

$$S = \frac{R}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

S = Student's score

R = Number of correct answers

N = Total number of test items

B. Mean

The mean score was calculated to determine the students' average achievement in each test. The formula is:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where:

\bar{X} = mean score

$\sum X$ = Sum of all students' scores

N = Number of students

C. Classification of Students' Scores

Students' reading comprehension ability was classified into several categories based on their total scores

Score Range	Category
90–100	Excellent
80–89	Good
70–79	Fair
<70	Poor

Students were considered successful if they obtained a score of **70 or higher**, which represented the **Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM)**.

D. Standard Deviation

The standard deviation was used to measure the spread of students' scores around the mean. It shows how consistent the students' performance was in each test.

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})^2}{N}}$$

Where:

SD = standard deviation

X = individual student's score

\bar{X} = mean score

N = number of students

E. Standard Error Mean (SEM)

The Standard Error Mean (SEM) shows how accurately the sample mean represents the population mean. The smaller the SEM, the more reliable the mean score.

$$SEM = \frac{SD}{\sqrt{N}}$$

Where:

SEM = Standard Error Mean

SD = Standard Deviation

N = Number of students

F. T test

To determine whether there was a significant difference between students pre test and post test scores, a **t test** was used. The formula is:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{SD_1^2}{N_1} + \frac{SD_2^2}{N_2}}}$$

Where:

t = t value,

\bar{X}_1 = mean of post test,

\bar{X}_2 = mean of pre test,

SD₁, **SD₂** = standard deviation of both tests,

N₁, **N₂** = number of students in each test.

G. Degree of Freedom

The degree of freedom (df) was calculated to determine the critical value of the t test using the formula:

$$df = N_1 + N_2 - 2$$

Where:

df = degree of freedom,

N_1, N_2 = number of students in each test.

3. RESULTS

This section presents the results of the implementation of the Guided Reading strategy in improving students' ability to identify main ideas. The data were obtained from reading comprehension tests, observation sheets, and field notes collected during the pre-test, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The quantitative data were derived from students' test scores, while the qualitative data were obtained from classroom observations and field notes. These data illustrate students' progress in identifying main ideas after the systematic implementation of the Guided Reading strategy.

3.1 Students' Reading Comprehension Test Results

The students' reading comprehension ability was measured through a pre-test and post-tests in Cycle I and Cycle II. The results show an improvement in students' mean scores and learning achievement.

Table 1. Students' Mean Scores in Pre-test, Cycle I, and Cycle II

Test	Mean Score	Category
Pre-test	61.2	Poor
Post-test Cycle I	72.5	Fair
Post-test Cycle II	82.0	Good

Based on Table 1, the students' mean score in the pre-test was 61.2, which was categorized as poor. After the implementation of Guided Reading in Cycle I, the mean score increased to 72.5, categorized as fair. In Cycle II, the mean score further increased to 82.0, which was categorized as good.

These results indicate that students' ability to identify main ideas improved gradually from Cycle I to Cycle II.

3.2 Students' Achievement of Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM)

Students were considered successful if they obtained a score of 70 or higher based on the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM). The percentage of students who achieved KKM increased in each cycle.

Table 2. Percentage of Students Achieving KKM

Test	Students Passed	Percentage
Pre-test	4 students	13%
Post-test Cycle I	18 students	60%

Table 2 shows that only 4 students (13%) passed the KKM in the pre-test. In Cycle I, the number increased to 18 students (60%). In Cycle II, 28 students (93%) achieved the KKM.

This result indicates that most students were able to reach the required standard after the implementation of Guided Reading strategy.

3.3 Comparison of Students' Scores

The comparison between pre-test and post-test scores shows a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension.

Figure 1. Comparison of Mean Scores

Pre-test: 61.2

Post-test Cycle I: 72.5

Post-test Cycle II: 82.0

Figure 1 shows that the students' mean score increased consistently from the pre-test to Cycle II. The highest improvement occurred in Cycle II after students became more familiar with the Guided Reading stages.

3.4 Statistical Analysis Result (t-test)

To determine whether the improvement was statistically significant, a t-test was conducted between the pre-test and post-test Cycle II scores.

The result of the t-test showed that:

t count = 6.32

t table = 2.04 ($\alpha = 0.05$)

Since t count was higher than t table ($6.32 > 2.04$), it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between students' pre-test and post-test scores.

This result indicates that the Guided Reading strategy had a significant effect on improving students' ability to identify main ideas.

3.5 Observation Results

The qualitative data obtained from observation sheets and field notes showed positive changes in students' learning behavior. During Cycle I, many students were still passive and depended on the teacher's guidance. Some students were hesitant to express their opinions and had difficulty

identifying the main idea independently.

In Cycle II, students showed better participation and confidence. Most students actively discussed the text in groups, answered questions voluntarily, and were able to identify the main ideas correctly. They also showed higher motivation and interest in reading activities. The classroom atmosphere became more interactive and student-centered compared to the initial condition.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this research show that the implementation of the Guided Reading strategy significantly improved students' ability to identify main ideas in reading texts. The students' mean score increased from 61.2 in the pre test to 82.0 in the post test of Cycle II, and the percentage of students achieving the minimum mastery level (70) rose from 13% to 93%. The improvement was also confirmed by the statistical calculation, where the *t* count (6.32) was higher than the *t* table (2.04) at a significance level of 0.05. This improvement occurred because the Guided Reading strategy provided structured support during the reading process. In the pre reading stage, students predicted the content and discussed new vocabulary. This helped activate their prior knowledge and made them more ready to understand the text. During the while reading stage, students worked collaboratively in small groups, focusing on identifying the main idea of each paragraph. The teacher guided them by asking leading questions and giving feedback. Finally, in the post reading stage, students discussed their answers together, which helped them reflect on what they had learned and correct their mistakes.

These results are consistent with the findings of Juliana et al. (2025), who stated that Guided Reading enhances students' comprehension through step by step teacher guidance. Similarly, Kahar et al. (2024) explained that structured reading stages can increase students' engagement and improve their understanding of the text. Nirmala (2024) also emphasized that identifying the main idea is the foundation of reading comprehension, as it enables students to connect supporting details logically. In addition to the numerical improvement, qualitative data from observation sheets showed that students became more active, confident, and motivated to read. During Cycle I, students were still hesitant and dependent on the teacher's explanation. However, in Cycle II, most of them were able to express their thoughts freely and identify main ideas independently. This indicates a shift from teacher centered to student centered learning, which aligns with the purpose of the Guided Reading approach. In summary, the discussion confirms that the Guided Reading strategy not only improved students' test scores but also enhanced their participation, motivation, and critical thinking skills. By providing guidance at every stage of reading, the teacher helped students construct meaning, which led to better comprehension and stronger reading habits.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Guided Reading strategy successfully improved the students' ability to identify main ideas in reading comprehension at Grade VIII of SMP Swasta Teladan. The findings showed a significant improvement from the pre test to post test in both cycles. The mean score increased from 61.2 in the pre test to 82.0 in the post test of Cycle II, and the percentage of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) rose from

13% to 93%. The t test result ($t_{\text{count}} = 6.32 > t_{\text{table}} = 2.04$) also proved that the improvement was statistically significant. The improvement occurred because the Guided Reading strategy provided structured support through pre reading, while reading, and post reading activities. These stages helped students become more focused, collaborative, and confident in identifying the main ideas of a text. It can be concluded that Guided Reading is an effective strategy to improve students' reading comprehension, especially in identifying main ideas.

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