Skimming and Scanning Strategies in Enhancing High School Students' Reading Skills by Using TOEFL Questions

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of skimming and scanning strategies in enhancing students' TOEFL reading skills. Conducted through Classroom Action Research (CAR), the study involved 36 eleventh-grade students from a private high school in Batam. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, assisted by the former teacher. The research was carried out in four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. A pre-test and a post-test were administered to evaluate student progress, along with field notes to document classroom observations. The effectiveness of the intervention was assessed by comparing the pre-test and post-test results. The findings revealed a statistically significant improvement in students' TOEFL reading comprehension. The average pre-test score increased from 69.47 to 82.23 in the post-test, which is classified as "very good" according to the scoring criteria. These results suggest that incorporating skimming and scanning strategies into TOEFL reading instruction significantly enhances comprehension skills. The study highlights the effectiveness of these strategies in improving students' reading abilities and overall TOEFL performance. Future research could explore the long-term effects of skimming and scanning strategies and compare them with other reading methods in TOEFL preparation.

Keywords: *Reading Strategies; Scanning; Skimming; TOEFL Reading.*

INTRODUCTION

In English, four macro skills are essential for communicating effectively in English. There are reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Among these, reading plays a crucial role in language acquisition since it facilitates the development of interconnected abilities such as grammar, vocabulary, and writing Parhadjanovna, (2023). Reading is a valuable means of acquiring information that may provide both enjoyment and a wealth of knowledge Cárdenas & Andrés, (2020). In academics, reading requires the ability to comprehend the information. It aligns with Asmara et al., (2022) and Destiara & Mutiarani, (2024), who mentioned that learning English reading skills is important. Students are being asked to process the information from their text through intellectual engagement, analysis, and interpretation of the text. To comprehend the writer's message and ascertain its meaning, the reader's cognitive ability is engaged by examining

characters, the alphabet, punctuation, and exclamation marks Khan et al., (2020). Despite its importance, reading is one of the most challenging areas in the education system. Most students' difficulties include lack of interest, limited reading material, difficulty understanding the meaning of English, limited English environment, and effective reading strategies Ahmed, (2021); Eriksson, (2023); Septia et al., (2022). Vaughn et al., (2019) claim that students struggle with reading in English due to the difficulty of remediating persistent reading difficulties, particularly among English learners still in the process of acquiring academic proficiency. Furthermore, developing strong reading skills is an often-overlooked key to unlocking true English proficiency. It is not just about decoding words; it is about actively engaging with written language to build a robust foundation for academic and professional success.

This broader issue is also evident locally in one of Batam's schools, where the students face several challenges. During observations, the researcher identified a knowledge gap within the class, where some students exhibited outstanding intelligence while others struggled to engage in English. As a result, teachers are required to use both English and Bahasa Indonesia in their instruction. Some students also show sign of reading anxiety. Additionally, many seem bored and uninterested in reading, often complaining about handling lengthy texts. To address these issues, teachers may need to adopt strategies that effectively engage students during reading sessions, such as incorporating interactive activities or providing extra support for struggling students. Malikovna et al., (2022) noted that interactive methods can boost student motivation. By addressing these challenges, teachers can help improve students' confidence and comprehension in both languages. Consequently, students might find learning to read difficult and sometimes frustrating.

Research conducted by Mambua et al., (2020) found that two factors have contributed to improving students' reading comprehension: students' actions in response and the advantages of the techniques. The techniques engage students in the reading process, improving comprehension and potentially developing students' reading skills. Morevover, the researcher found some reading strategies that can echance the students reading skill. By using skimming and scanning strategies. Both strategies are differ in its purpose. Skimming refers to the act of reading quickly to have a broad understanding of the content. Grabe, (2009), mentioned that skimming is used when the readers are expected to read a more difficult text so that the readers have a sense of where the text will lead and what the readers may need to know to understand it. According to Ikhtiyarovna & Aziza, (2023) to effectively skim a text, students should focus on the following elements: read the title, the introduction or the first paragraph, the first sentence of every other paragraph, and any headings and subheadings. They should also pay attention to pictures, charts, graphs, and any italicized or bold words or phrases. Reading the summary or last paragraph can provide a quick overview. Additionally, Sulaeman et al., (2021) stated In skimming techniques students have to concentrate fully on the reading to improve students' understanding.

On the other hand, scanning technique is a quick-reading technique to find certain information or specific information in a reading Efrani et al., (2024). This is in line with

the previous researcher, according to Aslam, (1992), Scanning is looking through a text quickly but involves locating information, especially local information. The reader in this case knows what information he or she is looking for. So students should think about the answer and what clues might help them locate that information. Utilizing headings and other visual aids can assist in identifying the sections that may contain the desired information. The combination of scanning and skimming allows the reader to search for information. Skimming and scanning are two distinct reading strategies that employ swift eye movement and the usage of keywords to efficiently navigate through material, serving slightly distinct objectives. Both skimming and scanning require quick eye movements and focused attention to understand the text effectively Nasution, (2023).

Widyawati & Simanjuntak, (2023) claim that using scanning and skimming in teaching English can improve students' ability to master reading comprehension and vocabulary. Additionally, Hanggara Rosa & Marsuki, (2023) point out that teachers, University students, and researchers need to know and apply these techniques in teaching reading. Yanti et al., (2022) explained that having good reading comprehension may contribute to classroom participation in a good learning process. It aligns with several research findings on the positive impact of such strategies across diverse learning materials Afriani et al., (2022); Andriyani, (2021); Rosmarie & Mualimin, (2020); Sandi, (2020). The implementation of reading comprehension strategies transcends the realm of simply improving comprehension scores. It fosters a more positive learning environment characterized by increased student confidence, active participation, and heightened engagement Arifitriyanti et al., (2021); Banditvilai, (2020); Fatmawan et al., (2023); Wandira et al., (2023).

In line with these findings, this research seeks to improve students' English skills by utilizing skimming and scanning strategies. Several studies implemented skimming and scanning strategies to improve students' reading comprehension Agustin et al., (2023); Azmi et al., (2019); Fauziana, (2019); Hanggara Rosa & Marsuki, (2023); Nirwana Gulo, (2020). These studies emphasize that skimming and scanning effectively boost students' reading skills if applied properly. Other studies also found that skimming and scanning increased students' interest in learning Hanggara Rosa & Marsuki, (2023); S. M. Sari, (2023). Prior studies also found that skimming and scanning help students save time Mawarni & Usman, (2022). Another researcher also used Kahoot! In implementing the strategies, the researcher believes that it can improve a fun and positive learning atmosphere Mala et al., (2023).

As mentioned before, reading skills are a vital part of English skills. With the problems urged teachers must find solutions to overcome them. Overall, previous studies have shown that skimming and scanning skills can improve students' reading skills, improving, engaging, and saving students' time in reading. Therefore, the researcher would like to improve student reading skills by skimming and scanning in teaching narrative text by focusing on TOEFL reading skills 1-10.

METHOD

The researcher will use a classroom action research method to enhance students' competencies in this study. Classroom Action Research originated from Action Research concept developed by American Social Psycholog, Kurt Z. Lewin (1890 – 1947). In action research, teacher performance is measured through the criteria of daily practice activities in education. Educational development based on academic research only establishes teachers as objects of educational development, thus giving teachers less role in improving their own educational practices Parnawi, (2020). In CAR, the researcher must follow the four cycles: Plan, action, observe, and reflect.
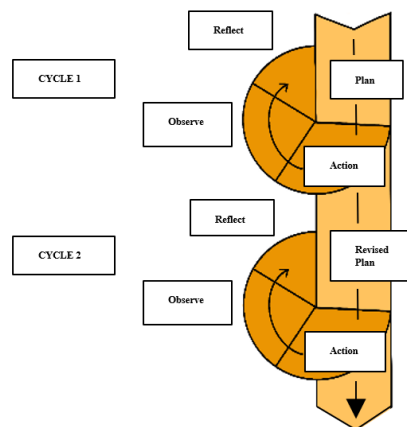

Figure 1. Kemmis & Taggart CAR Cycles

The study took place at a private senior school in Batam. The researcher conducted the study in this location because it is one of the outstanding schools in Batam, accredited by A, and is known for its high academic achievement, which means that the researcher can observe the performance of the students while in the classroom and determine strategies that are suitable for learning to enhance students' competencies in one of English skill. The researcher employed purposive sampling to provide the most relevant or insightful information. In deciding on the participants, the researcher discussed with the English teacher to ensure the selection of participants and provided suggestions to assist the researcher in the study. CAR is implemented in grade 11.6, comprising 38 students. This class was selected for this study due to the students' inadequate reading skills. The researcher conducted the study in April and May, and took four meetings (observation, pre-test, teaching the strategies, and post-test), each lasting one hour and twenty minutes. The observations concentrate on student engagement, participation, and comprehension of the targeted skills Syahraini et al., (2024). Before implementing the cycles, the researcher observed the class and discussed with the English teacher each class's score reading performance. Subsequently, the researcher administered a pre-test and totalled the results to determine the class's average score by categorizing the scores according to the following criteria.

Table 1. Scoring interpretation based on (Marsevani, 2023)

Score	Category
10-39	Very Poor
40-60	Poor
61-70	Average
71-80	Good
81-100	Very Good

The researcher asked the students open-ended questionnaire questions. The lessons taught during the subsequent session implemented skimming and scanning strategies. After that, the researcher administered a post-test to evaluate the progress made in the students' reading skills. Additionally, the researcher asked the students questionnaire questions once more to collect data regarding the strategies utilized.

In the context of classroom action research, implementing the Cycle depends upon students' problems in the class. Usually, when a cycle fails or the outcome is unsatisfactory, the educator tries again in the subsequent action until the educator is satisfied with the results Elvyra & Pratiwi, (2023). This Cycle serves as a means for students to resolve their issues effectively. Additionally, it represents an extension of the reflection and critical self-reflection that an educator employs daily in the classroom Clark et al., (2020). Hence, an indicator is required that may demonstrate the level of effectiveness of the technique employed. If the findings have met the predetermined criteria, Cycle I can be stopped. However, if the criteria have yet to be obtained, Cycle II will be implemented, and so forth, until the criteria are attained. Prior to commencing, here is how the researcher would carry out each Cycle:

a) Plan

The researcher plans the learning, starts with choosing the material that fits with the problem found, determines the learning objectives, arranges activities and learning media, and provides assessment indicators.

b) Action

The researcher carries out what has been planned. The researcher teaches the students, then conducts a pre-test to collect the data.

c) Observe

In this step, the researcher identifies and analyses the data collected during the treatment.

d) Reflect

Reflection involves analyzing the obtained data to assess the success or failure of the action. It is essential to determine the requirements for the upcoming cycle that must be completed. To ascertain the success of the cycle, it must adhere to the following criteria:

1. The average score of the class can achieve a good or very good category.
2. More than 70% of students are satisfied with the strategies.

To analyze the data, the researcher collected the data from the questionnaire and pre- and post-test results. Questionnaires were conducted twice during the pre- and posttest using English and Bahasa Indonesia so the participants could express themselves fully. The questionnaire for the pre-test provided 10 questions about students' perspectives on their reading skills that were adapted from previous researchers Gustanti & Ayu, (2021); Li & Yu, (2022); Ruslin et al., (2022) and the questionnaire questions about students' understanding and the benefit of the strategies for the post-test consisted of 8 questions that were adapted from other researchers as well D, (2016); Umar, (2018). Ruslin et al., (2022) mentioned that to acquire in-depth information from informants, the researcher set open-ended questions dealing with what, how, who, and how. The researcher used Google Forms as the media to distribute the questionnaire questions. On the other hand, the student score performance, pre-and post-test, consists of 20 questions adapted from the TOEFL book by Phillips, (2001). The tests have an estimated time of 35 minutes. The questions contain ten sub-skills in reading comprehension. For the cycle to be completed and indicate the success of the strategies, students must have achieved an average score of 80 or higher. Table 2 shows the distribution of sub-skills in each passage adapted from other researchers.

Table 2. Sub-skill distribution in test (Elfiondri et al., 2020)

Sub-skills	Passage 1	Passage 2	Passage 3	Passage 4
Main idea	1	1		
Organization of an idea	1			1
Stated detail	1	1		
Unstated detail	1		1	
Pronoun referents	1		1	
Implied detail		1	1	
Transition				2
Definition		1		1
Determine meanings from word parts			1	1
Use context to determine meaning of difficult words		1	1	
Total	5	5	5	5

To determine the most challenging sub-skill, the researcher utilized a boxplot chart to visualize the data and concluded based on the mean percentage of right answers for each sub-skill. Furthermore, to ascertain the statistical significance of the results for each sub-skill assessed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Developing reading and comprehension skills, especially in English, from a young age is critical to success in education. However, to be good at reading, students must encounter some challenging parts of reading that need to be improved. 11.6 class is categorized as having low reading skills. Many CAR studies have also conducted the study by focusing on reading skills Amin & Wahyudin, (2022); Hanggara Rosa & Marsuki, (2023); Imbaquingo & Cárdenas, (2023); N. K. Sari et al., (2019). 11.6 class is

chosen based on the field notes observation and data analysis. Field notes observations are text (or words) recorded by the researcher, who analyzes the data using mathematical procedures called statistics. These analyses consist of breaking down the data into parts to answer the research questions during an observation in a qualitative study Creswell, (2012). Most of the students claim that they lack reading skills, especially when it comes to reading comprehension. Some researchers also encounter this problem Agustin et al., (2023); Azmi et al., (2019;) Mambua et al., (2020); Yusuf et al., (2017). The researcher uses skimming and scanning as strategies to overcome the problem.

This research is conducted in one cycle. The pre-test included several reading TOEFL skills from skills 1 to 10, such as identifying the main idea, organizing ideas, answering detailed questions, finding unstated details, identifying pronoun referents, answering implied and transition questions, defining words from structural clues and word parts, and using context to determine the meanings of difficult words. These skills were taught to the students using prepared materials from Longman's book and other additional materials. Additional support and resources are needed to help students comprehend the meaning and message of the texts they read and to establish a consistent and regular English reading practice Imbaquingo & Cárdenas, (2023). According to the questionnaire results, students identified several difficulties they encountered while reading, including disruptions caused by loud noises, minor disturbances from classmates, and the presence of electronic gadgets such as phones. Several students also expressed experiencing feelings of boredom, drowsiness, and lack of motivation, particularly when encountering tedious passages. Lastly, some individuals mentioned that advanced vocabulary is also a concern.

The researcher selected scanning and skimming to help students with their reading practice. The Google Forms reading exercise consisted of ten questions, each containing a skill. Google Forms is beneficial as it is free for all students, enhances participation, involves them in their learning, and effectively assesses their understanding. Moreover, it is user-friendly, easy to administer, and helps instructors save paper and time grading assignments Nguyen et al., (2018). The researcher engaged and discussed the incorrect answer to strengthen the student's reading abilities. Johanna et al., (2023) mentioned that discussion is a learning method that can be used to implement problem-solving-based learning strategies, it increases student participation in the learning process and independence in the process of exchanging thoughts, experiences and ideas.

Following that, the students received detailed explanations on how to identify different types of reading questions on the TOEFL exam, how to answer them, and how to effectively employ skimming and scanning techniques. Additionally, students practiced answering questions using these strategies under timed conditions, reviewing incorrect responses in detail. This process enhanced the students' understanding of the various question types and helped them apply the strategies effectively. After several practice sessions, the students took a post-test. This post-test was similar to the pre-test, consisting of 20 questions with an estimated completion time of 35 minutes. All students participated in the test.

Table 3. Scoring results

Aspects	Score	Category
Pre-test scores	69.47	Average
Post-test scores	82.23	Very Good

The first cycle of the study was completed, and students' scores improved from 69.47 to 82.23. The researcher observed that the students effectively applied strategies such as using hand movements to scan the text, enabling them to read quickly and answer questions before time expired. Most students agreed that these strategies were beneficial as they helped them tackle various types of academic material, kept them engaged, and saved time. Students could achieve even higher scores if they read regularly and built a broader vocabulary. It is essential for students to know which strategies to use when faced with different types of reading materials and situations. Although not all students achieved higher scores, it has been proven that the strategies successfully improved reading skills. It takes time to fully apply these strategies, but they significantly changed the students' perspective on reading. Most students agreed on the questionnaire that these strategies were helpful.

Previous researchers support the results of this study. It is proven that both strategies effectively improve students' reading skills. Despite the encouraging results, the study had several limitations. The sample size of 36 students may limit the generalizability of the findings from this particular private high school. Additionally, the study's short duration made it challenging to determine the long-term effectiveness of the intervention. Another issue was that the study focused solely on TOEFL reading skills 1–10, overlooking other reading methods and comprehension strategies. Including individuals from diverse educational backgrounds and skill levels in future studies could help address these limitations. A longer investigation could uncover the long-term effects of skimming and scanning strategies. Additionally, exploring reading practices such as inference-making and critical thinking may enhance students' comprehension. Comparative studies of skimming and scanning versus other reading methods could also provide valuable insights into TOEFL preparation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study confirm that skimming and scanning are effective strategies for enhancing students' reading skills, particularly in the context of TOEFL reading comprehension. After implementation, the improvement of the strategies increased from average to very good category, with the final score of 82.23. These strategies help students process information more efficiently, maintain engagement, and navigate reading tasks with more easily. From a psychological perspective, these strategies align perfectly with cognitive processing theories, providing a solid scientific basis for their effectiveness. They support efficient information retrieval and reduce cognitive load during reading. However, reading comprehension is not solely dependent on these techniques. A strong vocabulary remains a crucial factor for deeper

understanding. This study reinforces the importance of integrating strategic reading instruction with vocabulary development to optimize students' reading performance.

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