



EUFONI Vol. 8 (1) (2024)

**Journal of Linguistics, Literary and  
Cultural Studies**

<http://openjournal.unpam.ac.id/index.php/EFN/index>



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## **Improving Students' Reading Skills in Recount Texts Through the Natural Approach**

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### **Abstract**

*This study focuses on teaching reading of recount texts using the Natural Approach, based on the theory proposed by Krashen and Terrell (1983). The primary objectives were to determine the effectiveness of the Natural Approach in teaching recount text reading and to assess the improvement in reading skills among eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Makmur Parung Panjang. A pre-experimental research design was employed, utilizing a one-group pre-test and post-test framework, which included three meetings with treatment sessions. The study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative research methods for data collection. A total of 33 students from class 8.1 participated in the study. Qualitative data were gathered through observation guidelines during the recount text reading sessions, while quantitative data were obtained by analyzing the students' scores from the pre-test and post-test. The results were derived from a five-question essay test administered before and after the treatment. The mean scores demonstrated significant improvement: the pre-test average was 4.36, while the post-test average increased to 8.06. This improvement is further supported by the t-test results, which indicated a t-value of 12.737, exceeding the t-table value of 2.036. Thus, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected. Based on the findings, the use of the Natural Approach effectively enhances reading skills among eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Makmur Parung Panjang, indicating that this approach is a valuable method for improving students' reading proficiency.*

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**Keywords:** *Natural approach, Teaching reading, Recount text, Pre-experimental research*

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p-ISSN: 2597-9663

E-ISSN: 3048-4448

## INTRODUCTION

English is useful not only now, but also in the future. Some students from many places around the world learn English. Learning English has become a necessity for everyone who wants to be involved in international interaction. They try to adjust and develop themselves by learning English in the modern era.

According to Khoirudin (2016), "In Indonesia, English is foreign language and has become one of the major subjects that should be learned by all students. Most learners who want to study abroad are obligated to learn English. Some of the learners also prepare themselves to master English because it is equated to better education". Based on the statement above means that English as a foreign language in Indonesia is important to be learned by all the students in Indonesia. Particularly, for the students who want to go to school abroad and get a good job in the future.

Chitra Sharma (2021, p. 34) says that "there are four skills that should be taught to the students at the school to learn English, such as reading, speaking, listening, and writing". From the statement above means that in learning English it is important to learn all the English skills. Learning English is not easy for students. In this case, students have difficulty to reading texts and comprehending the meaning in English. Particularly, for Indonesian students. Because, they were accustomed to using Indonesian and the local language every day, that is the reason why students in Indonesia difficult to read text in English. Reading is one of the basic skills in learning English. Every student not only understands the meaning when learning English but also must learn to read a word in English clearly. It needs to know the way to read English well. Motivation is needed by students to read texts or books. Most students think that reading is something to be bored.

As Nunan says (2003, p.68), "Reading is a fluent process of the reader combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning". From the statement above, it means that the reading process helps students understand and improve their abilities when learning English. Learning about recount text can make students understanding the meaning in every story and increase student's English reading skill. In this study, the writer uses a natural approach as an approach to teaching English, particularly reading.

There is a reality in private junior high schools in West Java, which is that the students speak Indonesian and Sundanese daily. It becomes their difficulty to accept foreign language, particularly English. The majority of students live in a village, so they do not get more motivation to learn English. The environment also affects people in the village to accept foreign languages such as English. In fact, English becomes one of the important languages to learn. Because if students can speak, read, write, and listen to English well, the students will have a sufficient knowledge of English skills that are needed to get a job and improve their reading skill.

Reading is not easy to be learning so teachers not only focus on the success of learning but also find ways to make learning that appeals to students. Here are some researches related topics created by the authors. The first of them was from Lani Suryani (2015). from Universitas Yogyakarta conducted the initial study. "Improving Student's Reading Skill by Using the Mind Map Technique" was the study's title. The mind map method is employed in her study to raise students' reading proficiency. She gathers the data using a qualitative approach. The mind map method helps increase pupils' lexical proficiency and creativity. Making kids read texts more effectively and efficiently by employing the mind map technique is an intriguing application of this method. The text is readily understood by the students. According to the study's findings, mind maps can

help pupils become better readers. It is evident from the high test results kids receive after using the mind map method to learn to read.

Rara Diska Nurhani conducted the second study (2014). The study, "Improving Student's Reading ability with Interactive Multimedia," is from Universitas Yogyakarta. According to her research, a teacher facilitates the learning process, and media also plays this role. A medium is used by a computer. When students are engaged in technology-based group projects or even when they are in the course of learning, the computer operates independently. Following the distribution of the materials and the reading of the texts by the students, the teacher and the students debate the various words used in the text. He is combining qualitative and quantitative research in this project. As a result of her research, it is expected that the students will assist one another in preparing for class by studying.

Krisna Septiana (2018) of Universitas IAIN Metro Lampung conducted the third study. The study's title is "Improving Students' Descriptive Text Reading Skills through Extensive Reading." He employs a method that involves a lot of reading. For prolonged reading, students can select engaging readings and read them both in and outside of class. The reading content is simple to understand, and the students read as much as they can to gain knowledge and a broad understanding of the text. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis will be used as the data analysis method in this study. According to the study's findings, students scored 63.86 on the pretest and 75.00 on the follow-up test. It implies that in-depth reading can help kids' reading abilities.

## METHODS

This research applied qualitative and quantitative research and used pre-experimental one-group pre-test strategy to explain the learning process and a post-test to analyze the data related to improving students' reading skills of recount text by using a natural approach. According to Sugiyono, (2002, p. 109) States that "the pre-experimental design is the research which includes only one group or class is given a pre-posttest, the one group pretest, and posttest is carried out on one group without comparison group". The statement above means that in pre-experimental research, only uses one class or one group to get the data.

Table 1 *Pre-Experimental one Group Pre-test and Post-test Research Design*

O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
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Table 1, shown the reserch design of pre-experimental used to got the result of this study. O<sub>1</sub> (pre-test) before giving treatment, X (treatment), O<sub>2</sub> (post-test) a test given to students after the treatment.

The population of this study is students in eight grade of MTs. Al-Makmur ParungPanjang academic year 2020/2021; the writer conducted the study on eighth-grade students that involve

teaching reading using a natural approach. The sample of this study is only one class in eighth 1 grade (VIII 1), which consists of 33 students. The pre-experimental took in three meetings. The collection of data was carried out to obtain qualitative data were taken notes and documentation. Meanwhile, to obtain quantitative data, the writers asked the students to do a pre-test and a post-test. The implementation of a pre-experimental research one group pre-test and post-test includes three steps:

1. Pre-test, a test given before a unit of study to ascertain content already mastered.
2. Treatment, the act to apply the approach in the research especially teaching reading using natural approach.
3. Post-test, a test designed to show mastery over a whole unit of study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were derived from the pre-test and post-test results administered to the eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Makmur Parung Panjang, using a five-question essay format. This research aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Natural Approach in enhancing students' reading skills, particularly in understanding recount texts.

Before the intervention, students displayed a low level of reading comprehension, with an average pre-test score of only 4.36. This score indicated that many students struggled to grasp the material effectively. The low performance highlighted the need for innovative teaching methods to improve students' reading abilities. Such a situation is not uncommon in educational settings, where students often face difficulties in engaging with reading materials, especially in a language that may not be their first language (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

After implementing the Natural Approach over a series of instructional sessions, the post-test results revealed a notable improvement in the students' reading skills, with an average score of 8.06. This increase indicates that the Natural Approach significantly impacted the students' understanding and engagement with recount texts. The difference in mean scores between the pre-test and post-test illustrates that students not only became more familiar with the content but also improved their ability to analyze and interpret texts, which is crucial for their overall language development (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

To statistically analyze the effectiveness of the Natural Approach on reading skills, the researcher calculated the T-test scores using SPSS 20. This analysis is vital in determining whether the observed improvements in reading skills were statistically significant. The T-test produced a score of 12.737, which was compared to the T-table score of 2.036. The T-table score serves as a threshold; if the T-test score exceeds this value, it suggests that the intervention had a significant effect. In this case, the T-test score was indeed higher than the T-table score ( $12.737 > 2.036$ ), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ).

The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that the Natural Approach does, in fact, lead to an improvement in students' reading skills. This conclusion is aligned with previous research that emphasizes the importance of engaging and meaningful instructional strategies in enhancing language acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The Natural Approach, which prioritizes exposure to language in a context that fosters comprehension and interaction, proved effective in this study, supporting its broader applicability in teaching English as a second language.

Additionally, the results reflect a shift in students' attitudes towards reading. With the implementation of the Natural Approach, students were likely to feel more motivated and engaged in the learning process. Motivation plays a crucial role in language learning, as it can significantly affect learners' willingness to engage with texts and practice reading skills (Dörnyei, 2001). The Natural Approach encourages students to connect with the material on a personal level, thus enhancing their intrinsic motivation to read.

Moreover, the improvement in reading skills can also be attributed to the instructional techniques employed during the study. The Natural Approach emphasizes the importance of meaningful communication and comprehension, which allows students to acquire language skills more naturally, much like how they would learn their first language (Krashen, 1982). This methodology contrasts sharply with traditional approaches that often rely heavily on rote memorization and repetitive drills, which may not adequately prepare students for real-world language use.

The study's findings underscore the need for educators to adopt more innovative and engaging teaching methods, particularly in the context of language instruction. Given the positive outcomes observed in this study, it is recommended that educators at MTs Al-Makmur Parung Panjang, and similar institutions, consider integrating the Natural Approach into their curricula. This approach not only addresses the immediate challenges of reading comprehension but also fosters a more positive and interactive learning environment for students.

In conclusion, the results from the pre-test and post-test evaluations clearly demonstrate that the Natural Approach can significantly improve students' reading skills at MTs Al-Makmur Parung Panjang. The statistical analysis further supports this claim, indicating that the approach is effective in enhancing students' comprehension and engagement with recount texts. Therefore, implementing the Natural Approach in language instruction is a valuable strategy for educators aiming to improve student outcomes in reading and overall language proficiency.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the preliminary research on "Improving Students' Reading Skill of Recount Text through the Natural Approach" reveals a significant enhancement in the reading abilities of eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Makmur Parung Panjang during the 2020/2021 academic year.

Prior to the treatment, the students' reading skills were classified as poor, evidenced by a mean pre-test score of 4.36 and a standard deviation of 2.088. This indicates that many students struggled with comprehension and engagement in reading tasks.

Following the implementation of the Natural Approach, the post-test results reflected a notable improvement, with a mean score of 8.06 and a standard deviation of 1.368. This change suggests that the Natural Approach effectively facilitated better understanding and engagement among students, enhancing their reading skills.

The findings underscore the importance of employing engaging and effective teaching methodologies, such as the Natural Approach, to foster active participation and comprehension in the learning process. By utilizing such methods, educators can create a more dynamic and supportive environment that encourages students to take an active role in their learning, particularly in the context of English reading. Overall, this study emphasizes that innovative approaches in teaching reading not only improve student performance but also enrich the overall educational experience.

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