

## UTILIZING RECIPROCAL TEACHING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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### ABSTRACT

*This research aimed to find out the extent to which Reciprocal Teaching Strategy can improve students' reading comprehension and some factors which influence students' improvement. This research used a Classroom Action Research by implementing two cycles which consisted of four stages (planning, action, observation, and reflection) in each cycle. The participants of this research were from the second year students of English Department of STKIP Muhammadiyah Sungai Penuh in academic year 2016/2017. The result showed that Reciprocal Teaching Strategy had improved students' achievement in each cycle. It was found that in pre-test the students got 55 of mean score in getting main idea, 58 in detailed information, 60 in vocabulary and 54 in summary. The data showed that there were significant improvements in cycle II (mean score of main idea was 87, detailed information was 86, vocabulary was 96, and summary was 87). The factors that influenced students' improvement are it encouraged students' motivation, helps students in applying reading strategies, and assists students to do cooperative learning.*

**Keywords:** *Reciprocal Teaching, Reading, Reading Comprehension*

### INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is one of the important skills in English Department of STKIP Muhammadiyah Sungai Penuh, students need to be exercised and trained regularly in their curriculum such as Reading Comprehension I, II, III and Extensive Reading. People can improve their own knowledge which ensures the continuing personal growths and adapts the changes in the word. Harmer (1998:68) argues that many students want to be able to read text in English either for their careers, for study purpose or simply for pleasure. Anything we can do to make reading easier for them must be good idea or instructions. Unfortunately, many students in higher education, especially in STKIP Muhammadiyah Sungai Penuh, face difficulties in reading because of poor ability of text comprehension. The data which was gained from academic stuff showed that 45% of students got good marks of Reading Comprehension in each level during academic year of 2014/2015 up to 2016/2017. There are so many problems gained from teaching learning process including students' perception toward reading comprehension class.

Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from the text and the aim of all reading instruction is ultimately targeted at assisting a reader comprehend text. Mendonca (2012) explains that reading comprehension is the level of understanding of text. This understanding comes from readers' interaction between the text and how they use their knowledge outside the text. Comprehension involves thinking as there are various levels of comprehension. Comprehension skill is divided into literal reading, interpretative reading, critical reading and creative reading (Smith, 1997:107).

In order to comprehend the text the readers should know each purpose of reading in a certain text. According to Nunan (1999:33), it is important to know that reading is not an invariant skill due to the fact that there are different types of reading skill which correspond to the many different purposes we have for reading. Then, Rivers and Temperly (1978:187) also explain that there are seven main purposes for reading; to obtain information for some purpose or because we are curious about some topic, to obtain instructions on how to perform some tasks, to act in a play, play a game, do a puzzle, and to keep in touch with friends by

correspondence or to understand business letters. To overcome the problems in teaching reading, Brown (2001:306) suggested some classroom techniques to be set in classroom activities; (a) Identifying the purpose of reading, (b) using graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding especially for beginning level learners, (c) using efficient silent reading technique for relatively rapid comprehension, (d) skimming, (e) scanning for specific information, (f) using semantic mapping or clustering, (g) guessing when you are not certain, (h) analyzing vocabulary, and (i) distinguishing between literal and implied meanings.

An alternative strategy in teaching reading comprehension in this case is Reciprocal Teaching Strategy. According to Oczkus (2013), Reciprocal teaching is a scaffolded discussion technique that involves four strategies that good readers employ when they read (*predict, question, clarify, and summarize*). Moreover, Reciprocal teaching is an instructional strategy based on modelling and guided practice, in which the instructor first models a set of reading comprehension strategies and then gradually cedes responsibility for these strategies to the students (Brown & Palinscar, 1989; Palinscar, 1986; Palinscar & Brown, 1984). The goals of reciprocal teaching according to Oczkus, 2003, are:

- a. Using four strategies to improve comprehension;
- b. Teacher scaffold instruction of the strategy by modelling, guiding, and applying the strategies;
- c. Guide student to become metacognitive and reflective in their strategy use;
- d. Help students monitored their reading comprehension;
- e. Use the social nature of the learning to improve and scaffold reading comprehension;
- f. Instruction is provided through a variety of classroom setting – whole –group, guide reading groups and literature circle.

The four strategies of Reciprocal teaching according to Oczkus (2013), are:

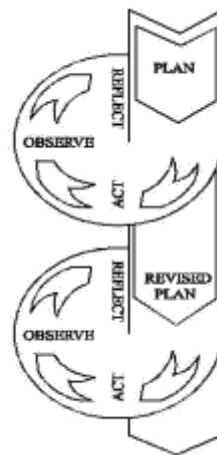
- **Predict:** Students draw inferences and use evidence from the text throughout the reading process.
- **Question:** Students ask and answer questions to understand the text. They draw on multiple sources, including digital items, to answer questions.
- **Clarify:** Students know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words in texts. They also use context to confirm or self-corrected, and the reread when necessary.
- **Summarize:** Students can identify main ideas and details in paragraphs and in multiparagraph texts. They also compare and contrast the overall structure of a text. Students determine themes and summarize poems, dramas, or literature.

As mentioned above, to overcome the problems faced by the students in reading comprehension class, the researcher employed Reciprocal Teaching Strategy as an alternative strategy. There are some reasons of using reciprocal teaching in improving reading. Biggs et al. in Cooper and Greive (2009:47) explained that reciprocal teaching makes the basic of effective reading comprehension visible to all students. Therefore, all students can practice and able to use the basic of effective reading comprehension (predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing). Also, Marzano in Omari and Weshah (2010:30) state other reasons of using reciprocal teaching, as follow: (1) reciprocal teaching encourages cooperation, responsibility and leadership, (2) reciprocal teaching raises students' motivation for learning, (3) reciprocal teaching develops their social relations, and (4) reciprocal teaching decreases undesirable behaviours in the classroom. Thus, there are many advantages of using reciprocal teaching for students. It helps students in thinking and getting meaning of text, to have a chance to share their idea, to learn how to work in team and how to appreciate others' thinking, and it can help the instructors manage students' behaviour.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by following the principal working of Classroom Action Research (CAR) that contains of four stages (*planning, action, observation, and reflection*

where the researcher pays more attention to the teaching and learning process. Kemmis and Mc Taggart (2000:564) state that classroom action research activities involve repeated cycles, each consisting of plan, action, and reflection. Furthermore, classroom action research can be as a process of studying in a real school or class situation to improve the quality of action or instruction (Johnson, 2005:211). Therefore, classroom action research is part of activities of professional instructor to improve the quality of their instructional performance in order to regularly solve their classroom problems. The participants of this research were the second year students in academic year 2016/2017. The instruments were observation checklist, field notes, and test. The data were collected from two types of data; they are qualitative and quantitative data. The procedures of Classroom Action Research can be seen in the following chart:



*Classroom Action Research Procedures* (Kemmis and Mc Taggart, 2000)

The research procedures begin with planning, action, observe, and reflection in cycle I and cycle II.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consists of 4 meeting (*pre-test, meetings, and post-test*). The data showed that the students' achievement had improved in each meeting as shown in their follow-up activities. It was, moreover, empirically proved that Reciprocal Teaching Strategy is a necessary alternative strategy in which instructors can use to assist students in comprehending certain texts and applying reading techniques as well.

### 1. The extent to which Reciprocal Teaching Strategy improved the students' reading comprehension

The data showed that the improvement of students' reading comprehension can be seen in each indicator of pre-test, cycle I and cycle II. The graph below describes the progress of students' reading comprehension for each cycle.

### The Improvement of Each Indicator of Students' Reading Comprehension in Pre-test, Cycle I and Cycle II

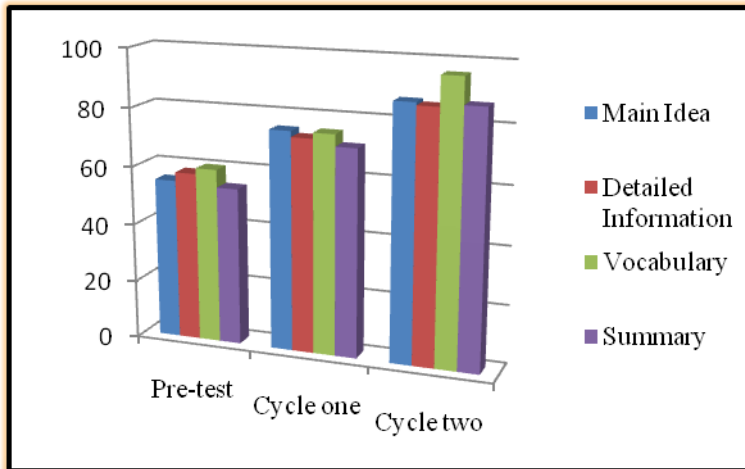


Figure above shows that the progress of reading comprehension indicators got from pre-test, test in cycle I and cycle II. In short, it can be said that the students made the progress for each indicator. In other word, the entire indicator made progress.

a. Main Idea

Main idea consists of informational questions related to topic of each paragraph, topic sentences or main ideas of each paragraph. The following findings showed that students got 55 in a pre-test. After getting treatments in cycle I, students gained 75 of mean score. It means that students' achievement had improved up to 20 points from the early mean score. Furthermore, the students made more progress up to 12 points in cycle II. It was found that the students got 85 of mean score.

Indicator	Cycles	Mean Score
Main Idea	Pre-test	55
	Cycle I	75
	Cycle II	85

b. Detailed Information

Detailed information consists of informational questions such as *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *how*. The figures above showed the description of students' achievement in detailed information. It was found that in pre-test, the mean score was 53 and it was improved becoming 73 in cycle I. Also, it was increased up to 13 points in cycle II becoming 86.

Indicator	Cycles	Mean Score
Detailed Information	Pre-test	53
	Cycle I	73
	Cycle II	86

c. Vocabulary

The vocabularies were contained in each test consists of common words, proper nouns, contextual meaning, textual meaning and technical words. It can be also seen in the following table which describes the achievement of the students to get the meaning of available words or phrases in comprehension test. In pre-test, students' mean score was 62. In cycle I, the mean score was 75 which mean that it was improved in 13 points. Also, it was found that there had improved at 5 points or the mean score was 80.

Indicator	Cycles	Mean Score
Vocabulary	Pre-test	62
	Cycle I	75
	Cycle II	80

d. Summary

In drawing conclusion or summary of the text, students got 54 in a pre-test. It was increased up to 17 becoming 71 in cycle I and increased up to 16 becoming 87 in cycle II.

Indicator	Cycles	Mean Score
Summary	Pre-test	54
	Cycle I	71
	Cycle II	87

Based on the data presented above, it can be seen that there is significant progress in the students' achievement. The data, moreover, showed that there is simultaneously improvement in their ability of reading comprehension by utilizing reciprocal teaching strategy. This finding is similar with the result of experimental research which was conducted by Choo, Eng & Ahmad (2011) who found that there was significant effect of Reciprocal teaching strategies toward students' reading comprehension. It was found that the paired sample *t*-test analysis showed that the mean score of posttest ( $M=65.15$ ) is significantly greater than the mean score on the pretest ( $M=53.38$ ). The observed mean difference is  $-11.765$ , implying that the performance of the experimental group had improved significantly. This indicates that Reciprocal teaching strategies had indeed helped to significantly elevate the students' performance in reading comprehension of expository texts. The findings of research conducted by Utami (2013), it was also indicated of the increase of the mean of students' reading comprehension score in pre-test and post-test (4.63 to 6.30) in her class room action research.

## 2. The factors that cause the improvements of students' reading comprehension

In order to gain information of factors that influence the improvement, a collaborator assisted the researcher for observing teaching and learning activities, including instructor and students' attitude in the classroom based on checklists and field notes. It was found that there were some factors that also supported the improvements in teaching learning process. This teaching strategy, Reciprocal Teaching Strategy, gave good influence toward students' reading comprehension. Based on observation checklist and field notes, it was found that this strategy is useful in the whole teaching procedures (pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching). It was found that this strategy can improve the students' motivation in reading the text due to the fact that they were divided into some groups with each task or responsible, the students are getting involved in the teaching learning process, it helps the students to interact or share their knowledge with their group or other groups, enhance their cooperative skills. By this strategy, it also assist students to comprehend the text by applying reading strategies such as *predicting*, *questioning*, *clarifying*, and *summarizing*, and it, moreover, provides opportunities for the students to understand the lesson material more by asking other group member without being ashamed and afraid, the students were active in reading activity because there were no students who chatted with their friends or operated their mobile phones as they were busy in their discussion activity.

## CONCLUSION

As an alternative strategy in teaching reading comprehension, based on the findings, it can be concluded that Reciprocal Teaching Strategy let the students getting involved not only in teaching learning process but also applying basic strategy of reading comprehension

(*predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing*). It was empirically proved that this strategy had improved students' ability in comprehending the text. The data also showed that there were some factors influence students' improvement in their achievement. This strategy encourages students' motivation, it helps students in applying reading strategies, and it assists students to do cooperative learning.

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