

## THE USE OF RECIPROCAL TEACHING PROCEDURE IN TEACHING NARRATIVE TEXTS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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**Abstract:** This study was aimed at investigating the implementation of Reciprocal Teaching Procedure (RTP) to improve students' reading comprehension and finding out the students' responses toward this method. Reciprocal Teaching Procedure is one of the teaching extensive reading methods that include four strategies: *predicting*, *clarifying*, *summarizing*, and *questioning*. The quasi-experimental design was utilized in order to collect the data, in which two classes were taken as the samples of this study. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test which were analyzed by using SPSS 20 and ANATES v5 for Windows. The data analysis of the independent t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the post-test means of the control group and the experimental group. Moreover, the data analysis of the dependent t-test showed that there was an improvement of the experimental group's scores in post-test. Therefore, it could be said that the use of Reciprocal Teaching Procedure was considered effective in improving the students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, based on the findings of the questionnaire, Reciprocal Teaching Procedure has lots of benefit in teaching reading, such as helping the students to comprehend the text easily, encouraging the students to be more active and communicative in every activity, and improving students' interest in reading. Thus, it could be concluded that the students' responses toward the application of Reciprocal Teaching Procedure were positive.

**Keywords:** Reciprocal Teaching Procedure, reading comprehension

### Introduction

In Indonesia, final examination has become an issue for several years, especially English subject. The skills tested are the reading skill and the listening skill. However, it is obvious that the reading skill is dominantly tested in the examination. Therefore, the high

school students are likely demanded to have a proficient reading comprehension in order to achieve a good result in their final examination. This condition eventually makes the teachers tend to focus more on the reading skill rather than the other skills.

Teaching reading, however, still deals with the complex structure of language and long reading passage. As the results, students might find difficulties and lack interest and motivation. In addition, English teachers tend to use Bahasa Indonesia during classroom activity. Therefore, students do not get an exposure and a real model of target language. Finally, students tend to translate a particular text either sentence by sentence, or, word by word to find out the whole meaning. Therefore, teachers have to find out an appropriate strategy to help the students to improve the students' reading comprehension. In English as Foreign Language (EFL) context, reading has been a part of skills which is needed to master the language since it helps the EFL students to enrich vocabularies and learns how to create sentences. Harmer (2001) states that reading texts provide opportunities to study language: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and the way we construct sentences, paragraphs, and texts.

Reading, according to Brown (2001, p. 312), may be categorized into intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading focuses on the linguistic details of a text. It calls students' attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of

understanding literal meaning. Meanwhile, extensive reading focuses on the general meaning of the text. It is further described by Brown (2001) that extensive reading is a reading activity that aims to achieve a general understanding of a text. In line with, some experts, according to Alyousef (2006), describes extensive reading as skimming and scanning activities.

In the EFL context, literature suggested that one best way to learn English, other than living among its speakers, is to read extensively in it (Nuttall, 1996, cited in Wisaijorn, 2008). Nuttall (1996, cited in Pan, 2009) also states that getting students to read extensively is most effective way to improve their reading skills.

According to Brown (2001, p. 313-316), there are some principles that have to be considered in teaching reading skills. First, teachers have to choose material that is relevant to the students' goals. Brown (2001) offers two kinds of text to be chosen; simple text and simplified text. Simple refers to authentic resources. In contrast, simplified refers to modification or adaptation that teachers can do to suit the students reading ability level. However, the process of simplification can remove so much natural redundancy (Brown, 2001, p. 314) and some

linguistics feature. Nuttall (1996, in Brown, 2001) offers three criteria to choose reading text including suitability, exploitability, and readability. Suitability refers to interesting, enjoyable, challenging, and appropriate content as the goal. Exploitability is text facilitation to the achievement of language skills that can be integrated to the other skills for the instructional tasks. Readability is difficulty level of lexical and grammatical feature of the text. Second, teachers have to encourage the development of reading strategies. Third, teachers should include both bottom-up and top-down technique in teaching reading skills. Fourth, teachers subdivide the techniques into pre-reading, during-reading, and after reading phases. Lastly, teachers must be able to assess accurately the students' comprehension and development of skills

There are several strategies to achieve reading comprehension that have been introduced for several years. The common strategy to achieve reading comprehension is to find out 5W and 1H (what, who, when, where, why and how). On the other hand, Chard (2008) describes some strategies that students should learn to successfully achieve reading comprehension. These include summarizing, finding the main ideas, generating and answering questions,

making connections, previewing and predicting, and self-monitoring and clarifying.

One method that is regarded to effectively be able to improve students' reading skill is Reciprocal Teaching Procedure (RTP) which was created by Palincsar and Brown in 1984 in order to help the students to comprehend texts, at the same time, to improve their reading comprehension. The term 'reciprocal' itself is described as the nature of interactions since one person acts in response to another. Therefore, RTP is carried out in a form of dialogues between teacher and students concerning sections of each paragraph of a text. The teacher and students take turns assuming the role of the leader.

RTP is "conducted based on modeling 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 & Palincsar, 1989; Palincsar, 1986; Palincsar & Brown, 1984, cited in Doolittle et al., 2006). According to Panmanee (2009), RTP focuses on background knowledge, reading strategy and group discussion. There are four strategies emphasized in RTP including *predicting*, *clarifying*, *questioning*, and *summarizing* which are packaged in a form of dialogues.

*Predicting* encourages students to think ahead based on their prior knowledge and experience to the following plot or paragraph (Panmanee, 2009). It provides students an opportunity to combine the new knowledge they will obtain from the text to the basic knowledge they already have. In this stage, they are going to confirm whether or not their predictions are acceptable.

*Clarifying* helps students to decrease confusion they face during reading activity. It can happen whenever students find unfamiliar words, phrases and structural-difficult sentences.

*Summarizing* is the process of identifying the important information and ideas within a text. Summarizing may be based on a single paragraph, a section of text, or an entire passage. "Summarizing provides the impetus to create a context for understanding the specifics of a text." (Doolittle et al, 2006)

*Questioning* provides a context for students to explore the text more deeply and assure the meaning construction (Doolittle et al, 2006). It is used to check students' understanding of the text including main idea of each paragraph and some important information of the text (Panmanee, 2009).

Besides, RTP is a kind as group-based learning. Group work, in this case, provides an opportunity to students to participate through commenting other

students' summary and predictions, requesting clarification on the parts they do not understand, requesting questions, and help others to decrease misunderstanding (Rosenshine & Mesiter, 1994, in Panmanee, 2009, pp. 17-18). In addition, it can also increase students' speaking skills to interact with the others in the discussion.

Recent studies have revealed the effectiveness of the application of Reciprocal Teaching Procedure. Sarasty (2002) and Freaht' and Al-Makhzoomi's (2012) found that the use of RTP improve the students' reading comprehension behavior after the training and demonstrate its effectiveness to the subjects' reading comprehension behavior. Moreover, the most participants found that reciprocal teaching is a fun activity.

In high school context, there are several genres to be taught in which narrative is one of them. Narrative text was selected as the data in the study since this kind of text is included in the curriculum of senior high school and SKL (Standard Kompetensi Lulus). The narrative text was used as the reading items in the final examination for senior high school from 2007 to 2012. Therefore, it has likely more chance to appear in the following final examination.

According to Joyce & Feez (2004, cited in Emilia, 2011, p. 135), “narrative is a text type which tells a story in which people encounter a problem or crisis that they need to overcome – it shows how people or groups of people overcome a problem or crisis in their lives.” Derewianka (1990, cited in Bruce, 2008), further states that the basic purpose of narrative is to entertain the readers and to gain the readers’ interest in a story-line of narrative. Moreover, narrative may also seek to teach or inform, to embody the writer's reflections on experience, and most important to extend the reader's imagination. In addition, narrative gives an exposure of how a sentence in a form of past tense is constructed.

Based on this phenomenon, the research was conducted to investigate the use of Reciprocal Teaching Procedure (RTP) in teaching reading narrative. This study tried to find out whether or not there was a significant improvement of the students’ reading comprehension of narrative text. This study was also conducted to know the students’ response toward the use of RTP in the classroom activity.

**Methodology**

The research used quantitative method in which the researcher was

demanding to use numbers in all steps of the research. In quantitative study, according to Creswell (2012, p. 15), the researchers analyze the data using mathematical procedures, called statistics that deal with numbers. This study was specifically conducted as a quasi-experimental research. Quasi-experimental design, according to Hatch and Farhaday (1982), can control many variables as researchers wish and limit the interpretation they make about cause-effect relationship. The quasi experimental design using nonrandomized control group pre-test and post-test design can be figured as follows:

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
Control	O <sub>3</sub>	-	O <sub>4</sub>

Note:

- O refers to observation/measurement
- X refers to treatment given to experimental group.

The population involved in the research was eleventh grade students from a Junior High School in Cirebon, whereas the samples taken were two classes, namely XI-IPA4 as the experimental group and XI-IPA3 as the control group.

Since the researcher listed two research questions, there were two kinds

of research instrument in this study included test (pre-test and post-test) and questionnaire. The data gained from the instruments were analyzed to determine whether or not Reciprocal Teaching Procedure improve the students' reading comprehension.

### **Data Presentation and Discussions**

The data taken from pre-test was firstly analyzed. The result showed that the experimental and control groups scores were not significantly different, approximately equal. In order to prove that the means of both groups were not significantly different, the independent t-test was performed.

The result showed that  $t_{obtained}$ , 0.177, did not overstep the table of critical value at  $p=0.05$  and  $df=66$ , 1.996. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states there is no significant difference between the mean of experimental group and control group, was accepted. It means that the students' reading comprehension of the experimental and the control groups were

After the treatments were given to both groups for several meetings, the post-test was performed. The result revealed a significant difference of the means of the two groups students' score. In order to prove that the scores of the two

groups were significantly different, independent t-test was used.

The independent t-test was employed to find out whether or not there was not a significant difference between the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The result showed that  $t_{obtained}$ , 2.016, overstepped the table of critical value at  $p=0.05$  and  $df=66$ , 1.996. Thus, the null hypothesis, which states there is no significant difference between the mean of experimental group and control group, was rejected.

As follow, the dependent t-test was performed in order to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group. The result showed that the value of dependent t-test was 5.107, which exceeded the table of critical value with  $p=0.05$  and  $df=33$ , 2.034. It indicates that there was a significant improvement of the students' score in post-test. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states there is no significant difference between the two groups, was rejected.

In addition, effect size was employed to prove the effect of independent variable to dependent variable. Effect sized was defined as a measure of the strength of relationship between two variables (Field, 2009, p.

57). The correlation of effect size obtain, however, was 0.234 indicating small sized effect. It means the treatments by using Reciprocal Teaching Procedure gave a small influence in improving students' reading comprehension.

The result was supported by some experts' findings. Panmanee (2004) and Freihat & Al-Makhzoomi (2012) had proved that Reciprocal Teaching Procedure improved the students' reading ability. Doolittle et al. (2006) found that Reciprocal Teaching Procedure provide effective strategies to comprehend to text. Therefore, Reciprocal Teaching Procedure can be employed as an alternative method in teaching reading and improving the students' reading comprehension.

In addition, this study was also intended to find out the students' responses towards the use of Reciprocal Teaching Procedure in the classroom activities. Ten items of questionnaire were employed to collect the data.

Most students assumed the four strategies of Reciprocal Teaching Procedure: *predicting*, *clarifying*, *summarizing*, and *questioning*, were useful since they helped the students to comprehend the text in the easier way.

In addition, Reciprocal Teaching Procedure is also motivating. Several students agreed that Reciprocal Teaching

Procedure could increase their motivation to participate in the discussion. The situation in which the students deal with a few students in one group decreased their anxious to take the role in the discussion. It is in line with Freihat (2012) who stated that the anxious students more willing to speak in the group discussion. When there was misunderstanding, the higher achiever students could take the role to give feedback and build the same perceptions of a paragraph. It was supported by Panmanee (2009) Rosenshine & Mesiter (1994) who stated that the students can gain the information from the others including feedback and decrease misunderstanding. Therefore, several students agreed that the classroom situation was more active. As feedback was given in every meeting, it gave positive changes in the students' abilities to generate questions, answer questions, and summarize information (Allen, 2003, cited in Ahmadi et at, 2013).

However, in the application, Reciprocal Teaching Procedure was found to have disadvantage. More than a half of the students confirmed that they faced difficulty to finish four different tasks. Based on the researcher observation to the group worksheet, they tended to have difficulty to make summary, especially in the first meeting. It means that they could not distinguish important information of the text yet. Since one group had a problem

with the summary, the other groups found difficulty to catch the meaning. This indicates that the students need more practice to make summary. Fortunately, there was an improvement at the end of meeting's assignment. The students' questions and summary improved in every meeting.

Based on the discussion of the questionnaire analysis, it was obvious that Reciprocal Teaching Procedure has a lot of benefits in teaching reading skills, such as helping the students understanding the text easily, encouraging the students to be active in the discussion, encouraging the students' interest in reading, and helping the students to improve their English ability. Thus, it can be said that the students' responses toward Reciprocal Teaching Procedure were positive.

## **Conclusions**

The research findings revealed that Reciprocal Teaching Procedure did improve the students' reading comprehension since the dependent t-test value was greater than  $t_{critical}$  value. However, the correlation obtained was in the level of small sized effect. It means that Reciprocal Teaching Procedure gave a small influence in improving the students' reading comprehension.

Furthermore, Reciprocal Teaching Procedure could help the students to improve writing skills in constructing questions and rewriting or summarizing the story. Therefore, Reciprocal Teaching Procedure is potential to provide better learning when it is compared with Grammatical Translation Method.

This was also supported by several strengths revealed in the findings. First, Reciprocal Teaching Procedure helped the students comprehend the text easier. Second, Reciprocal Teaching Procedure could motivate the students to get involved and participate in the discussion of the text. Third, as the students were getting more familiar with the strategies of Reciprocal Teaching Procedure, it motivated themselves to increase their interest in reading. Lastly, since Reciprocal Teaching Procedure did improve the students' reading and writing skills, it did help the students to improve their English ability.

The other research findings, however, revealed a significant weakness of Reciprocal Teaching Procedure that can probably be an obstacle to the benefits of this method. Since Reciprocal Teaching Procedure involves four strategies it caused confusion for the students to finish each strategy's task,

especially, for those who lack interest in learning English. There were some reasons upon this weakness, including: there were too many activities in just comprehended a text or even a paragraph; and there was a problem to catch summary of every paragraph presented by the other groups. However, as teachers can create better instructional design, the weakness may be prevented.

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