

## **Students' Perceptions of Using Reciprocal Teaching Groups Strategy in Extensive Reading Activities**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Reading plays a pivotal role in language learning, particularly in acquiring proficiency in English. However, Indonesian secondary students often struggle with comprehending reading materials due to their difficulty level exceeding their proficiency and a less conducive learning environment that contributes to disengagement. This gap in reading comprehension prompted the initiation of this research, which aimed to investigate how reciprocal teaching groups could enhance extensive reading activities for students. This research conducted qualitative methods within a micro ethnography framework, the study engaged six junior high school students as participants. Data collection involved observations, interviews, and students' reflective journals to gather comprehensive insights. The results highlighted that implementing reciprocal teaching group strategies positively impacted students' motivation and comprehension levels during reading activities. Moreover, these strategies fostered a more interactive and independent learning atmosphere, addressing the monotony often associated with traditional reading sessions. By actively involving students in reciprocal teaching groups, they were able to deepen their understanding of the study materials more effectively. Thus, the findings suggest that integrating reciprocal teaching group strategies is a beneficial approach to enhancing students' learning outcomes in extensive reading. This research underscores the potential of collaborative learning methods in improving reading proficiency among secondary school students, offering insights into how educators can innovate teaching practices to better support students' language learning needs.

**Key words:** Perception; Reciprocal Teaching; Extensive Reading

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reading plays an important role and must be considered when learning a language, especially English. Reading ability is crucial for people living in non-English speaking countries, as it allows them to keep up with rapid progress in life. Reading

is the process of performing activities to understand written texts by extracting information from words and letters in them (Muslim & Borneo, 2020). By expanding our knowledge, we acquire new terminology that we can use to convey thoughts and information to others. In view of the importance of reading, students should be diligent in cultivating their early reading skills in order to understand the material they encounter in their daily lives effectively.

Nevertheless, secondary Indonesian students need help in understanding reading material. According to the research of Syahabuddin, Yusny, & Zahara (2019), Indonesian junior high school students consider reading comprehension the most challenging aspect of learning English. The 2022 PISA assessment revealed that only about 25% of Indonesian students reached proficiency level 2 (OECD, 2023). The score below the OECD average of 2022 is 74%. Studies show that the literacy rate of students in Indonesia still needs to be improved, which hinders their understanding of the text. Moreover, over time, people become disinterested in reading because of the need for more compatibility between their reading material and their reading ability.

According to the researcher's experiences during their participation in Kampus Mengajar Angkatan 6, it was determined that students experienced boredom while reading due to a mismatch between the text they were reading and their reading abilities. Frequently, the text provided to children surpasses their comprehension level. For instance, in narrative text materials, they must acquire a substantial amount of vocabulary, and visual aids are seldom included alongside the text. This leads to a deficiency in students' desire and curiosity as they perceive a need for assistance in comprehending the content they are about to study. The teacher's learning technique was perceived as solely offering explanations and assignments, resulting in a passive class climate. An unvarying instructional methodology can diminish student engagement and drive and establish an unfavourable learning atmosphere (Islam, 2020). This suggests that the techniques and methods employed by teachers have a substantial influence on the teaching and learning activities that take place in the classroom.

In light of the aforementioned issues, The researcher suggests addressing challenges in students' reading proficiency and motivation by exploring factors, establishing a dynamic classroom atmosphere, and selecting a reading approach that caters to individual reading proficiency and preferences. The effectiveness of their actions would be ensured if English teachers implemented suitable instructional approaches and procedures in the classroom (Islam, 2020)

Reading instruction involves two primary methodologies: extensive reading and intensive reading. Extensive reading involves frequent and substantial reading exercises, focusing on books aligned with students' interests and proficiency levels. This approach enhances reading skills and allows students to familiarize themselves with various texts (Ateek, 2021). Moreover, the reciprocal teaching strategy, which involves four stages of reading, enhances comprehension. In reciprocal teaching

groups, students assume the role of an instructor, fostering leadership qualities and promoting independent thinking. The reciprocal teaching technique provides students with four unique reading stages that actively enhance their comprehension: questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and predicting (Oktarina, 2018). These skills are crucial for success in both academic and personal spheres.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Previous Related Study**

Several researchers, including Islam (2020), Dewi (2023), and Lenchuk (2021), have examined the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching strategy in reading activities. Through qualitative approaches and action research designs, they have found that reciprocal teaching can significantly improve students' reading comprehension and positively impact their motivation to learn. Additionally, studies conducted by Islamiyah & Wijaya (2019), Zaw et al. (2021), Mawlood (2022), and Wargadinata et al. (2023) have demonstrated the effectiveness of the reciprocal teaching style in improving students' reading comprehension. These studies employed a quantitative approach with an experimental design. Most previous studies focused on the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching practices in improving reading comprehension. Despite extensive research on the practice of reciprocal teaching in reading instructions, further investigation is still needed using qualitative approaches and microethnography designs. To resolve the gap, this study will use qualitative methodology using microethnography design. Its main purpose is to investigate students' perceptions of in the context of extensive reading. The study's findings can help teachers adopt innovative instructional approaches, such as using reciprocal teaching during extensive reading, to improve the effectiveness of their teaching and the reading comprehension of their students.

### **Extensive Reading**

In order to increase reading fluency, comprehension, and general language skills in a stress-free setting, students who engage in extensive reading read a substantial amount of engaging, level-appropriate content. By encouraging simple and pleasurable reading, emphasising information over language study, and developing reading abilities for enjoyment, extensive reading helps students become more fluent readers (Wutthisingchai, 2022). Extensive reading increases student engagement and comprehension by letting students select their own books according to their reading abilities and interests. The secret to lengthy reading is self-selection of reading material. This results from students selecting simple-to-read literature rather than works that require them to comprehend each word or sentence (Day & Bamford, 2002; Harmer, 2007; Widodo, 2010). Stated differently, it implies that students read based on their interests or likes, aptitudes, and ambitions, inspiring them to read with excitement. Reading activities that are extensive rather than intensive. Extensive reading focuses more on understanding the meaning than the syntax (Januarty, 2018).

## **Reciprocal Teaching Groups**

The reciprocal teaching method, developed by Palincsar and Brown in 1984, involves problem-solving activities that aim to foster critical thinking while reading. In order to enhance the learning process, teachers and students engage in discussions on text passages that are structured using four distinct techniques: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting (Taka, 2020). Furthermore, in order to facilitate the discussion, both the teacher and students alternate in assuming the role of instructor. A reciprocal teaching group is a specific grouping of students who collectively engage in reciprocal teaching practices. Students will be organised into small, cooperative learning groups. The members of this learning group engage in collaborative efforts and employ four reading methods: clarifying, summarising, questioning, and predicting. These tactics serve to enhance their understanding of texts within a small group context (Schünemann et al., 2017). Reciprocal teaching is a method that helps students improve their reading skills and remember information from books. It is beneficial for learners at all levels, mainly when classrooms include more informational materials and provide support for accessing more complex texts (Oczkus, 2013).

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Samples**

This research employed a qualitative methodology and micro-ethnographic research techniques. Additionally, the researcher uses student reflection journals, interviews, and observation as data sources. Rather than being presented as a statistic, the data will be presented as a written narrative. The researcher conducted the study in a junior high school in Karawang. The students possess diverse social and familial origins and varying degrees of expertise. Typically, they employ *Bahasa Indonesia* and their regional languages, such as *Bahasa Sunda* and *Bahasa Jawa*, for their regular communication in everyday life. The subjects of this study consisted of eighth-grade students enrolled at a junior high school in Karawang. There were six students who participated in this research. Each category is represented by individuals who possess distinct abilities.

### **Instrument and Procedure**

This research was developed based on the Reciprocal Teaching Method, which includes three phases of reading activities: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. This research obtained data from several sources, including observation sheets, interview guidelines, and student reflective journals. Observations are made during learning activities and supported by field notes to record detailed matters that occur during learning activities. All questions in the interview guidelines were asked of 6 participants to describe students' perceptions in extensive reading activities using reciprocal teaching group strategies, and researchers used semi-

structured interviews to take information even more. Moreover, students' reflective journals were written at the final learning meeting to gain in-depth insights during extended reading activities using reciprocal teaching groups.

### **Data Analysis**

The data that has been gathered is examined using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method used in qualitative data analysis where researchers explore datasets to identify, evaluate, and document recurring patterns and themes within the information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are six phase, including:

1. Familiarizing with the data. The researcher thoroughly reads and comprehends the collected data, repeatedly evaluating the context and content to go deeper into the data and seek significance and patterns.
2. Generate initial codes. The researcher gathers and analyzes important information about the research topic, such as quotes, phrases, or paragraphs. Each item of studied and identified data is then assigned a code.
3. Searching for themes. The researcher sorted the obtained codes into prospective themes from the data using visual representation.
4. Reviewing themes. The researcher assesses all identified potential themes, classifies them, and arranges the codes connected with each theme. Furthermore, each theme should highlight a significant feature of the data and be relevant to the study issue.
5. Defining and naming themes. The researcher provides each theme a clear and descriptive label that captures the core of the data.
6. Producing the report. The researcher gathers and prepares a report that explains theme findings, examines their implications in the research environment, and links the findings to related literature.

### **RESULT AND DISUSSION**

In this section, the researcher shares the results derived from field research—the research findings from observations, interviews, and students' reflective journals which is to investigate the Students' Perceptions of Using Reciprocal Teaching Groups Strategy in Extensive Reading Activities.

- 1) Reciprocal teaching groups boost student motivation in reading.

The use of reciprocal teaching groups in prolonged reading tasks is novel and unfamiliar to students. This type of activity enhances students' motivation to read more. These findings are based on how students express themselves through semi-structured interviews, as seen below:

*It's motivating for me since I'm studying with the group, and the stories told by the teacher are diverse. The visuals in the stories help me grasp them and make me want to read more. (Student's Vignette 1)*

The participants emphasized that employing reciprocal teaching groups during extensive reading activities has a significant positive impact on students' motivation. They noted that it also enhances their interest in reading. This approach involves conducting discussions in small groups, which has been observed to increase students' enthusiasm for reading significantly. By providing opportunities for students to share their perspectives and insights with their peers, the strategy fosters a sense of involvement and encourages active participation among students. As a result, they are more motivated to engage deeply with the reading material and contribute meaningfully to the learning process. This is consistent with Dewi (2023) statement that working in groups motivates students to be more involved and critical about their knowledge of materials. The selection of reading material also greatly influences motivation for reading. Because of the usual reciprocal teaching groups strategy, the choice of reading material is not diverse, and students cannot choose the text they are interested in. As in Lenchuk (2021) stated that students' reading material has been determined, and students cannot choose text based on their interests. That discovery differs from this study, making reading material an important factor in spurring students' motivation to read. Students who choose simple reading to read thus increasing students' motivation by letting students choose their own reading according to their reading ability and interests (Day & Bamford, 2002; Harmer, 2007; Widodo, 2010).

## 2) Reciprocal teaching enhances students' reading comprehension

It has been discovered that reciprocal teaching groups enhance students' reading comprehension when they engage in extensive reading activities. Students are better equipped to comprehend and analyse the information in the texts they read when they participate in group discussions, take on alternating responsibilities like predicting, clarifying, asking questions, and summarizing, and are allowed to choose the books they are interested in. As the participants mentioned in the reflective journal they wrote.

*Through the text, we learn new vocabulary. Although initially confused, we finally discover and comprehend the story's message, which is quite beneficial. (Student's Vignette 3)*

*During the discussion session, I gained how to read the text in a better way (Student's Vignette 1)*

Participants' answers demonstrated that the use of reciprocal teaching groups in extensive reading activities enhanced students' reading comprehension. They also acquired new vocabulary through this approach, which aided their understanding of the text. Additionally, implementing reciprocal teaching groups in extensive reading activities can expand students' vocabulary while enhancing their reading comprehension. They discover that assuming specific roles within these groups, such as predictors, questioners, summarizers, and clarifiers, enables them to engage deeply with the stories they read and enhances their comprehension abilities.

Wargadinata et al. (2023) their research support that learning through reciprocal teaching can enhance students' reading proficiency because students apply strategies like predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing during activities. This small group discussion of learning involves collaborative students and uses four stages of reading: clarifying, summarizing, questioning, and predicting serves to improve their understanding of the text (Schünemann et al., 2017). Besides enhancing reading comprehension, students also report gaining new vocabulary from their readings. Implementing the reciprocal teaching strategy in extensive reading activities is shown to boost students' vocabulary acquisition. Students participating in reciprocal teaching not only improve their reading skills but also retain more of the information they learn from texts (Oczkus, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

The research was about to know junior high school students' perceptions of extensive reading activities through reciprocal teaching groups. This research shows that students respond positively to reciprocal teaching group strategies in reading activities, citing increased motivation and enhanced reading comprehension due to engaging discussions and interesting text choices. The prediction, questioning, summarizing, and clarifying stages enhance students' understanding of the stories. Teachers should adopt diverse learning strategies, selecting materials that align with students' interests and ensuring a comprehensive understanding of reading content. The reciprocal teaching group strategy can be used as a strategy to be applied in learning because it creates a new atmosphere so that students are more active and independent in class. Other researchers should explore using technology applications as reading activity tools, as this approach could provide new insights into student engagement and learning outcomes.

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