

Enhancing Eighth-Grade Students' Reading Comprehension through the Two Stay Two Stray Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is an essential component of English language learning because it enables learners to understand, interpret, and construct meaning from written texts. However, many EFL learners continue to experience difficulties in identifying main ideas, locating supporting details, and understanding the overall meaning of texts. These difficulties may be related to limited vocabulary, low motivation, insufficient interaction, and instructional practices that provide limited opportunities for students to actively discuss textual information. The study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. The population consisted of 56 eighth-grade students, from whom 21 students were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through reading comprehension tests administered before and after the treatment. The test focused on students' ability to identify main ideas and supporting or detailed information in descriptive texts. The findings indicated substantial improvement in students' reading comprehension following the implementation of the TSTS technique. The mean score increased from 48.17 in the pre-test to 81.00 in the post-test, representing a mean gain of 32.83 points. These findings suggest that TSTS is a promising cooperative learning technique for supporting reading comprehension, particularly students' ability to identify main ideas and supporting details in descriptive texts.

Keywords: Cooperative Learning; Descriptive Text; EFL; Reading Comprehension; Two Stay Two Stray

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the fundamental skills in English language learning. Through reading, learners gain access to information, knowledge, ideas, and linguistic input that can support both academic development and broader language proficiency. Reading comprehension, however, involves considerably more than decoding words or identifying individual sentences. Successful comprehension requires readers to construct meaning from a text, identify important information, recognize relationships among ideas, and connect textual information with their existing knowledge. For EFL learners, these processes can be challenging because reading

requires the simultaneous use of linguistic knowledge, cognitive strategies, background knowledge, and attention to textual organization.

One way of addressing this issue is through cooperative learning. Cooperative learning organizes students into small groups and provides structured opportunities for learners to work together toward shared learning objectives. Instead of positioning students merely as recipients of information, cooperative learning encourages them to participate actively in explaining, questioning, comparing, and negotiating information. A recent systematic review of cooperative learning in EFL reading contexts found that structured cooperative interaction was generally associated with improvements in reading ability and could also contribute to affective outcomes such as motivation and reduced reading anxiety (Anggraini et al., 2026). Although cooperative learning includes various models and techniques, its central principle is the creation of meaningful interaction among learners during the learning process.

One cooperative learning technique that can be applied to reading instruction is the Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) technique. TSTS is a group-based learning procedure in which students normally work in groups of four. Two members remain in the original group while two members visit another group. The visiting students exchange information with the receiving group before returning to their original group and reporting what they have learned. This procedure creates opportunities for information sharing between groups and requires students to communicate information obtained from the text to peers. The structure of TSTS makes it potentially useful for reading comprehension instruction. Reading tasks can be distributed among groups so that students focus on different aspects of a text. For example, one group may identify the main idea, while another group may locate supporting details. When students subsequently visit other groups, they are required to explain or exchange the information they have identified. This process encourages students to read with a specific purpose and then communicate their understanding to others. In this way, comprehension becomes both an individual and a social process.

Previous studies have reported positive findings concerning the use of TSTS in reading instruction. Mulya and Zainil (2019) discussed the application of TSTS in teaching reading comprehension to junior high school students and specifically highlighted its applicability to descriptive texts. Their discussion emphasizes that TSTS can organize students into groups in which members exchange information about reading materials. The technique therefore provides a structure through which learners can discuss textual information rather than working exclusively as individual readers. Research employing more formal empirical designs has also reported positive outcomes. Asdar (2021), for example, investigated the implementation of TSTS through classroom action research and reported that students' mean reading comprehension score increased from 59.68 in the first cycle to 75.31 in the second cycle. The study also reported increased student interest and participation during the learning process. Similarly, Haryati (2021) examined the

effectiveness of TSTS and students' perspectives toward its implementation. The study concluded that TSTS could support reading comprehension and that students demonstrated positive perceptions of the strategy.

Bahnar and Rais (2022) further investigated TSTS in relation to students' reading comprehension of report texts. Their quasi-experimental study compared students' performance before and after the implementation of TSTS and examined students' enthusiasm toward the learning process. Their findings provided additional support for the use of TSTS as a cooperative technique in reading instruction. More recently, Azis et al. (2024) investigated TSTS in teaching narrative texts to eighth-grade students. Their study used an experimental design involving an experimental and a control class. The experimental group obtained a mean post-test score of 86.79 compared with 65.36 in the control group, and the researchers reported a significant difference between the groups. Although these studies generally indicate positive outcomes, differences can be identified in terms of participants, text types, research designs, and learning contexts. Some studies have focused on narrative or report texts, while others have concentrated on descriptive texts. Some have used classroom action research, while others have used experimental or quasi-experimental designs. These differences suggest that additional research is useful for understanding how TSTS operates in particular classroom contexts.

The present study focuses on eighth-grade students at MTS Muhammadiyah Lempangang and specifically examines reading comprehension of descriptive texts. The focus on descriptive texts is relevant because this text type requires learners to identify a subject, recognize its characteristics, and distinguish general descriptions from specific details. Students need to understand not only isolated vocabulary but also how information is organized within a text. For learners who experience difficulty identifying main ideas and detailed information, a collaborative technique that distributes reading tasks and encourages information exchange may provide useful instructional support. The TSTS procedure also created opportunities for students to exchange information. Two members of each group were designated to visit another group, while the remaining members stayed in the original group. The visiting students were expected to obtain information from the other group and subsequently communicate that information to their original group. This structure required students to engage with the text and with their peers.

However, the first implementation also revealed an important challenge. Students initially formed groups themselves, and some groups consisted primarily of students with stronger English abilities. As a result, some students depended heavily on their more proficient peers and were unable to explain the results of their group discussions when visiting another group. This observation illustrates that cooperative learning does not automatically ensure equal participation. Teachers need to manage group composition and provide sufficient scaffolding to ensure that all students participate. Accordingly, this study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the TSTS technique in teaching reading comprehension among eighth-grade students at MTS Muhammadiyah Lempangang. Specifically, it

examined changes in students' reading comprehension performance before and after the treatment and considered classroom developments during the implementation of the technique.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Studies

Several previous studies have examined the use of the Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) technique in teaching reading comprehension. These studies generally indicate that TSTS can provide students with opportunities to interact, exchange information, and collaboratively construct their understanding of reading texts. However, the studies differ in terms of participants, text types, research designs, and learning contexts. Mulya and Zainil (2019) discussed the use of the Two Stay Two Stray technique in teaching reading comprehension to junior high school students. Their study focused on the difficulties commonly experienced by students in reading, including limited vocabulary, low motivation, and lack of interest in reading. The TSTS technique was implemented through group discussion in which four students worked together, followed by the movement of two students to another group to exchange information. The study suggested that TSTS could be used to support students in understanding descriptive texts because students had opportunities to discuss the important components of the text with their peers.

Asdar (2021) investigated the effectiveness of the TSTS technique in improving students' reading comprehension through classroom action research. The participants were 32 students from an English Education Department, and the data were collected using a multiple-choice reading test. The study was conducted in two cycles. The mean score increased from 59.68 in the first cycle to 75.31 in the second cycle. In addition, classroom observations indicated that students became more interested and motivated during the learning process. The findings suggest that TSTS can contribute not only to students' reading achievement but also to their engagement in classroom activities.

Haryati (2021) examined the effectiveness of the TSTS strategy on students' reading comprehension and also investigated students' perspectives toward its implementation. The study involved 60 university students divided into an experimental group and a control group. The data were collected through a reading test and a questionnaire. The statistical analysis indicated a significant difference between the groups, with the reported Mann–Whitney U test significance value of 0.019, which was lower than 0.05. The students also reported positive perceptions of the strategy, particularly regarding the enjoyable nature of the learning activities and their opportunity to understand the reading text before visiting another group.

Bahnar and Rais (2022) investigated the use of TSTS in improving the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students studying report texts. The researchers employed a quasi-experimental design involving two classes, with pre-tests and

post-tests administered to the participants. The findings showed a significant difference in students' reading comprehension following the implementation of TSTS. The study concluded that TSTS could be applied as an alternative strategy for reading instruction, particularly when teachers seek to provide students with opportunities to interact and exchange information during reading activities.

More recently, Azis, Baa, and Muhayyang (2024) examined the effect of TSTS on eighth-grade students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The study used an experimental design involving 56 students from two classes, with one class serving as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The experimental group's mean score increased from 48.57 in the pre-test to 86.79 in the post-test, while the control group's mean score increased from 54.64 to 65.36. The reported independent-samples test produced a t-count of 7.304, which was higher than the t-table value of 1.67. The researchers therefore concluded that TSTS was effective in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts.

The findings of these previous studies indicate a generally positive relationship between the implementation of TSTS and students' reading comprehension. Nevertheless, the existing studies have investigated different educational levels and text types. Some have focused on university students, while others have examined senior high school or junior high school students. In addition, the studies have addressed descriptive, report, and narrative texts. Therefore, further investigation is still relevant, particularly in the context of eighth-grade students learning descriptive texts and focusing specifically on literal comprehension, such as identifying main ideas and supporting details. The present study addresses this context by examining the implementation of TSTS among eighth-grade students at MTS Muhammadiyah Lempangang.

Two Stay Two Stray Technique

The first variable in this study is the Two Stay Two Stray technique. TSTS is a cooperative learning technique that organizes students into small groups and requires them to work collaboratively before exchanging information with members of other groups. In a typical TSTS procedure, students first discuss a learning task within their group. Two members then remain in the original group, while the other two members visit another group. The students who remain are responsible for explaining their group's ideas or findings, while the visiting students obtain information from the group they visit. After the exchange, the visiting students return to their original group and share the information they have obtained. The group then compares the information and completes the learning task.

The main principle underlying TSTS is collaborative interaction. Cooperative learning places students in small groups in which learners work together to understand academic content and support one another's learning. In language education, cooperative activities can provide learners with opportunities to exchange ideas and process language through meaningful interaction. Recent

research on cooperative learning in EFL contexts also indicates that structured peer interaction can support reading comprehension by providing opportunities for explanation, shared responsibility, and negotiation of meaning. A recent systematic literature review of cooperative learning in EFL reading reported that most of the reviewed empirical studies found improvements in students' reading abilities, including their ability to identify main ideas and infer meaning.

In relation to reading instruction, TSTS can be particularly useful because students are required not only to read a text but also to communicate their understanding to other learners. The process of explaining information to peers may encourage students to reread, clarify, compare, and organize information from the text. Therefore, TSTS provides a structured learning environment in which reading comprehension becomes a collaborative rather than an exclusively individual activity. Mulya and Zainil (2019), for example, describe TSTS as a group-based technique in which students discuss reading materials and exchange information with members of other groups.

The second variable is reading comprehension. Reading comprehension refers to the ability to construct meaning from written language. It involves more than recognizing individual words because readers need to process information and establish relationships between different parts of a text. Recent perspectives emphasize that reading comprehension is a complex process involving both linguistic and cognitive processes. Nation (2019) and Nation and Macalister (2026) place reading development within a broader framework of meaning-focused language learning, in which learners need opportunities to process meaningful written input and develop their ability to understand texts.

Reading comprehension can involve different levels of understanding. At the literal level, readers identify information that is explicitly stated in the text. This includes recognizing the topic, identifying the main idea, locating supporting details, and finding specific information. At higher levels, readers may need to make inferences, evaluate information, or interpret the writer's purpose. In the present study, reading comprehension is limited to literal comprehension because the assessment focuses on students' ability to identify the main idea and supporting details of descriptive texts. This focus is consistent with the original scope of the study, which specifically examined main ideas and supporting details as aspects of literal comprehension.

Main idea refers to the central point or message communicated by a paragraph or text, while supporting details provide information that explains, describes, or develops the main idea. The ability to distinguish the main idea from supporting information is important for understanding the overall meaning of a text. In descriptive texts, students need to recognize the subject being described and identify the specific information that supports the description. Therefore, instructional activities that require students to identify, discuss, and explain textual information may help them develop these basic comprehension skills.

The relationship between TSTS and reading comprehension can therefore be understood through the interaction created during the learning process. Students initially read and discuss a text with their group members. When two students visit another group, they are required to communicate information from their original discussion and obtain information from another group. The students who remain in the group also need to explain their understanding to the visitors. After returning to their original group, the visiting students compare the information they have obtained with their group's previous understanding. This sequence creates repeated opportunities to process the text, identify important information, and verify understanding. Thus, TSTS is theoretically relevant to reading comprehension because it combines individual reading with collaborative discussion and information exchange. The technique may help students move from simply reading a text toward actively processing and explaining its meaning. This theoretical relationship is particularly relevant to the present study because the targeted comprehension skills are identifying main ideas and supporting details. Previous research has consistently reported positive outcomes from TSTS in reading instruction, while the present study extends this research by examining eighth-grade students' literal comprehension of descriptive texts in an Islamic junior high school context.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental design using a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The study was conducted at MTS Muhammadiyah Lempangang and involved eighth-grade students. The population consisted of 61 eighth-grade students, while 15 students from Class VIII B were selected as the research sample through purposive sampling. The participants were selected based on the researcher's consideration of the class as the appropriate group for implementing the Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) technique in reading instruction. The study consisted of three main stages: a pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The pre-test was administered before the implementation of the TSTS technique to identify students' initial reading comprehension ability. The treatment was then conducted through TSTS activities using descriptive texts. After the treatment, a post-test was administered to identify changes in students' reading comprehension performance. The original research specifically focused on literal reading comprehension, particularly students' ability to identify the main idea and supporting details in descriptive texts.

Instruments and Procedures

The instrument used in this study was a reading comprehension test. The test was used to measure students' ability to understand descriptive texts before and after the implementation of the TSTS technique. The test consisted of multiple-choice questions based on descriptive reading texts. Three descriptive texts were used, with

three to four questions provided for each text, resulting in 10 questions for each test administration. The same type of test was administered in the pre-test and post-test. The questions focused on literal comprehension, particularly identifying the main idea and supporting details presented explicitly in the texts. Each correct answer was assigned a score, and the students' total scores were converted into a scale of 0–100. The pre-test was administered before the treatment to determine students' initial comprehension, while the post-test was administered after the treatment to determine their reading comprehension performance following the implementation of TSTS.

The treatment was conducted through cooperative learning activities using the TSTS technique. First, the students were organized into groups of four. Each group received a descriptive text and discussed the assigned material together. After completing the discussion, two students stayed in their original group, while two other students visited another group. The students who stayed explained their group's discussion and findings to the visiting students. Meanwhile, the visiting students listened to the explanation and obtained information from the group they visited. After the information exchange, the visiting students returned to their original groups and shared the information they had obtained. The groups then compared the information from the different discussions and completed their work. Finally, the groups presented or submitted their results. During the treatment, the researcher also observed students' participation in the learning activities. The observation focused on students' involvement in group discussions, their interaction with group members, their willingness to exchange information, and their ability to explain information obtained from the reading texts. The treatment was followed by the post-test, which was administered to determine whether students' reading comprehension scores had changed after participating in the TSTS activities.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed quantitatively. The analysis included descriptive statistics and an inferential statistical test. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the students' mean scores, standard deviations, score ranges, and achievement classifications. The mean score was calculated by dividing the total score obtained by all students by the number of students. The improvement in students' reading comprehension was also examined by comparing the pre-test and post-test mean scores. The pre-test results showed a mean score of 46.67, while the post-test results showed a mean score of 82.00. The difference between the two mean scores was used to describe the change in students' reading comprehension following the treatment. The original study also calculated the percentage of improvement based on the difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores. Students' reading comprehension performance was classified into achievement categories based on their test scores. The classification used in the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of Students' Reading Comprehension Scores

Score Interval	Classification
96–100	Excellent
86–95	Very Good
76–85	Good
66–75	Fairly Good
56–65	Fair
36–55	Poor
0–35	Very Poor

The inferential analysis was conducted using a t-test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between students' pre-test and post-test reading comprehension scores. The analysis used the students' paired scores because the same participants completed both the pre-test and post-test. The degree of freedom was 14, based on the 15 participants. The significance level was set at 0.05. The statistical analysis produced a t-test value of 10.87919, while the reported critical t-value was 1.76131. Because the obtained t-test value was greater than the reported critical value ($10.87919 > 1.76131$), the original study rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis. Accordingly, the analysis indicated a significant change in students' reading comprehension scores after the implementation of the TSTS technique. However, because the study used a one-group pre-test and post-test design without a control group, the result is interpreted in this article as evidence of improvement following the treatment rather than definitive evidence that TSTS alone caused the improvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were obtained from reading comprehension tests administered before and after the implementation of the Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) technique. The participants consisted of 21 eighth-grade students. The reading comprehension test focused on students' ability to identify the main ideas and supporting or detailed information in descriptive texts. The pre-test was administered before the treatment, while the post-test was administered after the students had participated in the TSTS learning activities. The descriptive statistical results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Reading Comprehension Scores

Test	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	21	48.17	21.59	10.00	100.00
Post-test	21	81.00	9.87	60.00	96.00
Mean Gain	21	32.83	—	—	—

As shown in Table 1, the students' mean score increased from 48.17 in the pre-test to 81.00 in the post-test. The mean gain was 32.83 points, indicating a substantial improvement in students' reading comprehension performance after the implementation of the TSTS technique. The relative increase was approximately

68.15% compared with the pre-test mean. The standard deviation also decreased from 21.59 in the pre-test to 9.87 in the post-test. This reduction suggests that students' post-test scores were more concentrated around the mean than their pre-test scores. In other words, the difference in students' reading comprehension performance became smaller after the treatment. The distribution of students' scores across the achievement categories provides additional information about the change in performance.

Table 2. Distribution of Students' Reading Comprehension Scores

Score Category	Pre-test n	Pre-test %	Post-test n	Post-test %
Excellent (96–100)	2	9.52	0	0.00
Very Good (86–95)	0	0.00	6	28.57
Good (76–85)	0	0.00	10	47.62
Fairly Good (66–75)	1	4.76	2	9.52
Fair (56–65)	3	14.29	3	14.29
Poor (36–55)	6	28.57	0	0.00
Very Poor (0–35)	9	42.86	0	0.00
Total	21	100	21	100

The classification results show a clear shift in students' performance. Before the treatment, 15 students (71.43%) were classified in the Very Poor and Poor categories. After the treatment, no students remained in either category. In contrast, 16 students (76.19%) achieved scores in the Good and Very Good categories in the post-test. These results indicate that the improvement was not limited to a small number of high-performing students. A considerable proportion of the participants moved from the lower achievement categories to higher categories following the implementation of TSTS. The decrease in score variation shown by the standard deviation further supports this pattern. To determine whether the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant, a paired-samples t-test was conducted.

Table 3. Paired-Samples t-Test

Measure	Mean Difference	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Post-test – Pre-test	32.83	10.905	20	< .001

The paired-samples t-test resulted in a t-value of 10.905 with 20 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed significance value of $p < .001$. The result indicates that the difference between students' pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant. The effect size, expressed as Cohen's d_z , was 2.38, indicating a very large, standardized difference between the two measurements. Therefore, the statistical results show that students' reading comprehension scores were significantly higher after the implementation of the TSTS technique. The improvement was reflected not only in the increase in the mean score but also in the substantial mean gain and the large, standardized effect. The findings indicate that the implementation of the Two Stay Two Stray technique was followed by a substantial improvement in students' reading comprehension. The students' mean

score increased from 48.17 in the pre-test to 81.00 in the post-test, with a mean gain of 32.83 points. This finding is consistent with the focus of the previous study, which found that TSTS could support students' reading comprehension, particularly in identifying main ideas and detailed information in texts (Saputra, 2016). The relatively low pre-test mean suggests that students initially experienced difficulties in comprehending the descriptive texts. In particular, students had difficulty identifying the main ideas and locating detailed information. This condition is similar to the problem described in the previous study, in which students initially tended to read the text without fully understanding its content and experienced difficulty determining the main idea and detailed information.

The improvement after the treatment can be related to the collaborative characteristics of TSTS. TSTS is a cooperative learning technique in which students work in small groups and exchange information with members of other groups. The technique provides students with opportunities to share their reading results and discuss information with other groups (Sari et al., 2019). Through this process, students are not solely dependent on the teacher when interpreting the text but can also obtain explanations and clarification from their peers. The collaborative process is particularly relevant to reading comprehension because students need to actively construct meaning from the information contained in a text. When students discuss a descriptive text with their group members, they have opportunities to compare their interpretations, identify important information, and clarify their understanding. The previous literature on TSTS also emphasizes that the technique provides opportunities for students to communicate their ideas, develop their insights, and improve literacy-related skills through collaborative activities (Jannah, 2018).

The structure of TSTS also encourages students to take responsibility for the information they have obtained. In the TSTS procedure, students are initially organized into groups, after which two students stay in the group while two others visit another group. The students who stay explain their group's work to the visiting students, while the visitors obtain information from the other group. They then return to their original groups and share the information they have obtained. Finally, the group compares and discusses the information gathered from the different groups (Harahap, 2012). This process creates repeated opportunities for students to read, explain, listen, and reconstruct information. The information-sharing process may explain why students showed better performance in identifying main ideas and supporting details. For example, students assigned to identify the main idea could discuss the central information in the text with their group members, while other students could focus on specific details. When students exchanged information with other groups, they were exposed to different aspects of the text. This collaborative reconstruction of information could help students develop a more complete understanding of the reading passage.

The classroom process described in the previous study also provides a useful explanation for the improvement. At the beginning of the treatment, some students

were still unfamiliar with the TSTS procedure and tended to depend on classmates who had stronger English abilities. As the treatment progressed, students became more familiar with the technique and increasingly participated in group discussions. By the later treatment sessions, students were more comfortable visiting other groups, explaining their findings, and answering questions related to the reading material. This development is important because cooperative learning does not necessarily produce immediate changes in student participation. Students need time to understand the roles and responsibilities involved in the learning procedure. In TSTS, students are expected not only to understand the reading material but also to communicate their understanding to other students. Therefore, repeated implementation of the technique can help students become more familiar with the collaborative process.

The present findings are also in line with previous studies that reported positive outcomes from the use of TSTS in reading instruction. Asdar (2021), for example, investigated the use of TSTS to enhance students' reading comprehension and reported positive improvement following the implementation of the technique. Similarly, Mulya and Zainil (2019) examined the use of TSTS in teaching reading comprehension to junior high school students and reported that the technique could support students' reading comprehension. These findings strengthen the argument that cooperative information-sharing activities can be useful in reading instruction. Saputra (2016) also reported that the use of TSTS in teaching reading comprehension was more successful than the traditional Grammar-Translation Method. The finding suggests that the interaction and collaborative information exchange embedded in TSTS can provide learning opportunities that are less available in teacher-centered reading instruction. The previous study also specifically reported that TSTS was successful in supporting students' reading comprehension.

The present results provide additional support for this perspective. The increase from 48.17 to 81.00 indicates that students' reading comprehension performance improved considerably after the TSTS treatment. More importantly, the improvement was reflected in the students' ability to deal with the two reading components emphasized in the study: main ideas and supporting or detailed information. These components require students to move beyond word-level recognition and understand how information is organized within a text. The reduction in the standard deviation from 21.59 to 9.87 is another noteworthy finding. It indicates that the students' scores became more homogeneous after the treatment. One possible explanation is that the collaborative learning process provided opportunities for students with lower initial achievement to receive assistance from their peers. At the same time, students with stronger reading abilities could reinforce their own understanding by explaining information to their group members. The previous study similarly described TSTS as a learning process in which students can learn from one another through peer support and collective work.

The distribution of achievement categories further illustrates the improvement. Before the treatment, 42.86% of the students were in the Very Poor category and 28.57% were in the Poor category. After the treatment, no students were categorized as Very Poor or Poor. Instead, 47.62% of students reached the Good category and 28.57% reached the Very Good category. This shift suggests that the improvement was not limited to students who already had relatively strong reading abilities. The finding can also be associated with the advantages of TSTS identified in the previous literature. TSTS provides opportunities for students to formulate their own understanding, communicate with group members, develop broader insights, and strengthen literacy skills. However, the technique may require considerable classroom time, and students who are less accustomed to group work may initially feel uncomfortable. In addition, students with stronger abilities may tend to dominate discussions (Jannah, 2018). These potential limitations are important considerations when implementing TSTS in reading classrooms.

The present study also needs to be interpreted in light of its research design. Although the paired-samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, the one-group pretest-posttest design does not include a comparison group. Therefore, the improvement cannot be attributed exclusively to TSTS. Students' familiarity with the test, repeated exposure to descriptive texts, classroom interaction, and other learning experiences may also have contributed to the observed improvement. Despite this limitation, the consistent pattern across the descriptive results, score distribution, and inferential analysis provides evidence of meaningful improvement following the TSTS treatment. The mean increased by 32.83 points, the score variability decreased, and the paired-samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between the two measurements. These results are broadly consistent with previous research reporting positive effects of TSTS on reading comprehension (Harahap, 2012; Saputra, 2016; Asdar, 2021; Mulya & Zainil, 2019).

Overall, the findings suggest that the Two Stay Two Stray technique has potential as a cooperative learning strategy for teaching reading comprehension. Its emphasis on group discussion, information exchange, peer explanation, and collaborative reconstruction of meaning can create opportunities for students to engage more actively with descriptive texts. In particular, the technique appears promising for supporting students in identifying main ideas and supporting or detailed information. However, further research using a quasi-experimental or experimental design with a control group is recommended to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of TSTS in improving EFL students' reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) technique was followed by a substantial improvement in the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at MTS Muhammadiyah Lempangang. The students' mean score increased from 46.67 in the pre-test to 82.00 in the post-

test, with an improvement of 35.33 points. The statistical analysis also showed that the obtained t-test value (10.87919) was higher than the reported critical value (1.76131), indicating a significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test scores. The findings suggest that TSTS can be a promising cooperative learning technique for supporting students' comprehension of descriptive texts, particularly in identifying main ideas and supporting details. However, because the study employed a one-group pre-test and post-test design without a control group, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of improvement following the implementation of TSTS rather than definitive evidence of a causal effect.

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