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THE USE OF RECIPROCAL STRATEGY IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

This study reports on the use of reciprocal strategy in teaching reading comprehension. It aims at investigating the effects of the use of reciprocal teaching strategy on the students' reading comprehension. The study employed a quasi-experimental design and involved second graders of senior high school in one public school in Riau, Indonesia. 30 students in one class acted as the experimental group, while 30 students in another class acted as the control group. In the study, the researcher acted as the teacher. The study used three types of data collection techniques including reading comprehension tests and a questionnaire. The data was analyzed based on the theories of reciprocal teaching strategy (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Meyer, 2010, P.41; and Klinger, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007).The findings showed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and the control groups in terms of the scores. It can be seen from the result of independent t-test of post-test scores, t-value (t= -3.267, df= 59) was higher than critical value (2.00). Moreover, the data from the questionnaire demonstrated that the reciprocal strategy used in the experimental group provided three effects to the students' reading comprehension encompassing (1) obtaining clear idea of the concept and of the use of four reading strategies; (2) developing their self-confidence in sharing their ideas; and (3) enjoying learning atmosphere. Based on the findings, it is recommended that English teachers apply this strategy to develop better students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: reciprocal teaching strategy, four reading strategies, reading comprehension

1. INTRODUCTION

There are at least three aspects why reading is very significant in English as second or foreign language. First, reading in second language or foreign language settings is increasingly important as English continues to spread, not only as a global language but also as a language of science, technology and advanced research (Grabe and Stoler, 2002).

Second, the implementation of Genre Based Approach in Curriculum 2013 in Indonesia which is text-based will enhance students to deal with many types of texts, providing an implication that reading is necessary. Finally, reading is one of skills tested in national final examination in secondary schools, indicating that reading skill needs to be mastered by the students.

Based on the importance of reading for the students, teaching reading to the students is a necessity. In order for the students master the skill optimally, teaching reading strategies to the students is one way as also outlined by Hoein & Lundberg (2000), Grabe and Stoller (2002), and Pressley (2002) stating that when students learn to read they need to be taught how to use specific strategies to understand the text. One of the strategies used in the teaching context is reciprocal strategy. It was introduced by Palinscar and Brown in 1984. It is a strategy in which the teacher explains and teaches four reading strategies explicitly namely *prediction, clarification, questioning and summarizing.* Then the teacher and the students take turn (Pressley & McCormick in Westwood, 2001) and incorporate the four reading strategies collaboratively in dialogue (Palinscar and Brown, 1984; Rosenshine and Meister, 1993; Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007) to internalize the text. This strategy also highlights explicit instruction which is needed to achieve reading comprehension (May, 2010; see also Palinscar and Brown, 1984; Rosenshine and Meister, 1993).

Reciprocal teaching has been found as a successful teaching strategy in improving students' reading comprehension not only English as first language (see Palinscar and Brown, 1984; Ozckus,

2003) but also English as second and foreign language (see AlMakhzoomi, 2012; Jaya; 2013). However, most of the research was conducted at the university level (Palinscar & Brown. 1984; Moore, 1988; Wisaijorn, 1994; Seymour & Osana, 2002; Oczkus. 2005; Meyer, 2010; May, 2010; AlMakhzoomi, 2012; Jaya; 2013). As far as the study concerns, there is still little attention paid to the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching strategy in improving reading comprehension at the secondary level (Nasution, 2009; Astuti, 2013).

Regarding its importance and necessity for the students to learn reading in the secondary level, in line with the present curriculum, this study applies reciprocal strategy in the context of secondary level. Therefore, this study was conducted to serve the purpose and was aimed to explore the effect of reciprocal strategy on the students' reading comprehension.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading comprehension refers to a process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction, involvement with written language (Lenski, 2008, p. 171; Snow, 2002, p. xiii) and connection of previous knowledge (Gibbons, 2002). Its process also involves the use of reading strategy (Palinscar and Brown, 1984) and variables related to the text such as understanding the text types into the text (Snow, 2002).
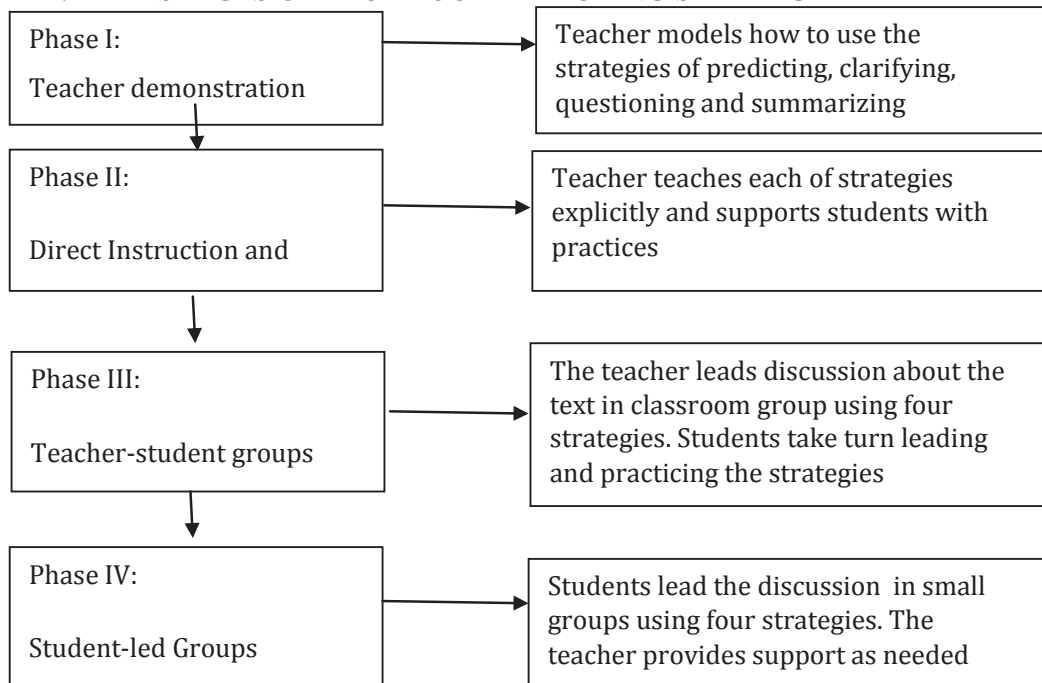
.A good teaching reading comprehension might develop proficient reader in comprehending and prevent reading comprehension problems (Snow, 2002, p. 29). Snow (2002) explains that a good teaching reading should promote readers' ability to comprehend the text. One of the ways to enhance the readers' comprehension is by using reciprocal teaching strategy,

Reciprocal teaching is defined as a dialogic instructional strategy (Mayer, 2010) designed by Palinscar & Brown (Palinscar & Brown, 1984) to promote students reading comprehension that supports students within the context of a collaborative community of learners, to be active leaders in small group reading discussions. It involves teaching explicitly and guided- practice of four reading strategies (Rosenshine and Mester, 1993) before the teacher and the students take turn to read, to question (Rosenshine and Mester, 1993; Pressley & McCormick in Westwood, 2001) and to incorporate the four strategies collaboratively in a dialogue (Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007) so that the text is internalized. In short, reciprocal teaching strategy refers to the practice of providing explicit teaching of cognitive strategies and applying them in reciprocal teaching dialogue.

The four cognitive strategies in reciprocal teaching strategy are prediction, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing. The students apply these strategies while discussing the text with the teacher or their peers (Rosenshine and Meister, 1993; Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007, p. 131). These four strategies were selected because they can provide a dual function, that of enhancing comprehension and at the same time affording an opportunity for the students to check whether it is occurring. That what is so-called *comprehension-fostering* and *comprehension-monitoring* (Palinscar & Brown, 1984).

There are some different stages of reciprocal teaching implemented by some researchers; however this study applies reciprocal teaching strategy adapted from Palinscar and Brown (1984), Hartman (1994), Klingner,Vaughn & Boardman (2007) consisting of four stages. They are teacher demonstration, direct-Instruction and guided practice, teacher-student groups, student-led Group (see Chart 2.1) for the step by step guide.

CHART 2.1 THE STAGES OF RECIPROCAL TEACHING STRATEGY

Phase I: Teacher demonstration	→	Teacher models how to use the strategies of predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarizing
Phase II: Direct Instruction and	→	Teacher teaches each of strategies explicitly and supports students with practices
Phase III: Teacher-student groups	→	The teacher leads discussion about the text in classroom group using four strategies. Students take turn leading and practicing the strategies
Phase IV: Student-led Groups	→	Students lead the discussion in small groups using four strategies. The teacher provides support as needed

Adapted from Palinscar and Brown (1984), Hartman, (1994), Klingner,Vaughen & Boardman, (2007).

Phase I: Teacher Demonstration

Teacher demonstration or in another term is known as teacher presentation (Rosenshine and Meister, 1993) refers to demonstrating the strategy of predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarizing (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Rosenshine and Meister, 1993; Hartman, 1997; Oczkus, 2003; Seymour & Osana, 2003). It aims to give students "big picture" of implementing the four strategies (Rosenshine and Meister, 1993; Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007). The amount of support including the session provided depends on the need of students as they would take more practices of the use of those four reading strategies in the next phases.

Phase II: Direct Instruction and Guided Practice

This second stage is based on the assumption "cognitive apprenticeship" in which the teacher is the expert of practice and students are as the apprentice (Seymour & Osana, 2007). In this stage, teacher teaches each of strategies deeply starting from prediction, clarification, questioning and summarizing. The teacher explains explicitly how to implement the four reading strategies and supports students with prompts and reminders as they practice the strategies (Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007). This stage is conducted for ensuring that all students have obvious information of the implementation of the four strategies that they can use them and get involved in the next stage in the forms of dialogue or discussion of the text (Rosenshine & Meister, 1993; Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007).

After conducting explicit-instruction, students learn and practice in using the four reading strategies (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Hartman, 1997; Oczkus, 2003; Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007) by having more guided-practice of them. Next, they are assisted and guided by the teacher to implement the four reading strategies with prompts and feedback (Rosenshine & Meister, 1993; Klinger, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007).

Phase III: Teacher-student Groups

In this phase, the teacher leads the discussion about the text in the class, prompting the students to use the strategies and maintaining to support them and give feedback as needed (Hartman, 1997; Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007). The teacher gradually minimizes his assistance as the student become more proficient. When there are some students become more proficient, they can lead

the classroom discussion in internalizing a text by using four reading strategies. This scaffold process is intended to help students to develop their comprehension by using the four reading strategies (Oczkus, 2003).

Phase IV: Student-led Groups

In this phase, the students take turn leading the discussion of the text in small group and prompting their group members to use the four strategies (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Hartman, 1997; Oczkus, 2003; Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007). During the discussion students give feedback on strategy used among others (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Hartman, 1997; Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007). The teacher moves from one group to other groups observing progress and providing support as needed. The interaction among students and teacher's facilitation are expected can create supportive learning atmosphere which helps them develop their confidence in sharing and exchanging their idea (Tomlison, 2009, p.21).

At the end of each session, the teacher and the students conclude what they have learned in that session and give feedback. This activity is to clarify the unclear understanding of the four reading strategies and of the idea of the text (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008).

The procedures above show scaffolding of instruction in reciprocal teaching strategy. The teacher guides the students in using the strategies and gradually turns over this responsibility of strategy application for students themselves.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quasi-experimental design in the form of non-equivalent (pre-test and post-test) control group design which involved two groups in which both groups had pre-test and post-test but only experimental group received the treatment (Cresswell, 2009, p.160).

To collect the data for this research, multiple data collection techniques were applied including pre-test and post-test of reading comprehension, and questionnaire.

The items of tests were tried out and modified to ensure the reliability and the validity of them (Hatch and Farhady, 1982, p. 253; Brown, 1988, p.99-104). The try-out was conducted to another group of students who was not involved in the study to find out the level of difficulty to gain 25% of easy, 50% of medium and 25% of difficult items (ANATES Guidance, 2003). There were 45 items were constructed but only 40 items were chosen for the tests. Then, both tests were given to control and experimental group. The data from reading comprehension test were analyzed by using independent t-test using SPSS V.16.

In line with the questionnaire, it was employed after the entire teaching program was completed. In accordance with the effectiveness and comprehensibility of questionnaire, a pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted before using it in the study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001).

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

To see the effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on the students' reading comprehension, the post test scores of the experimental group and of control group were analyzed using SPSS V. 16 in several steps.

First, to see whether the scores of both groups had normal distribution the test of normality was conducted.

TABLE 4.1: TABLE OF TESTS OF NORMALITY

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
POSTTESTCONTROL	.119	30	.200[*]	.976	30	.715
POSTTESTEXPERIMENT	.142	30	.125	.938	30	.080

Table 4.1 indicates that both groups' scores have normal data. Since the data are normal then, it can be calculated its significant difference by using independent t-test (Hatch and Farhady, 1982) to test the null hypothesis

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Second, to see whether there was a difference in achievement of both groups, the mean and the standard deviation were calculated. Table 4.2 provides the description of the reading comprehension post-test scores of both groups.

TABLE 4.2: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF READING COMPREHENSION POSTTEST SCORES OF CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Groups	N	Mean	Std deviation
Control	31	23.71	5.008
Experimental	30	27.40	3.692

Table 4.2 shows that the mean of experimental group is higher than that of the control group but the standard deviation of control is higher than that of the experimental group. The mean score of the experimental group is 27.40 and that of the control group is 23.71. It indicates that the treatment in experimental group which used reciprocal teaching strategies is more successful than the treatment in the control group. The standard deviation of the experimental group is 3.692 and control group is 5.008. The result of standard deviation of the experimental group is lower than the control group, showing that the range of highest grades (high achievers) and the lowest grades (lower achievers) is smaller. There is a smaller gap between both of high and lower achievers which indicates the improvement of reading comprehension between high and low achievers in experimental group. In this case, the students' grades in experimental group spread better than that of the control group. It shows that high and low achievers collaborated well in the program. They assisted among others related to sharing the idea of what they know about the texts by applying the four reading strategies; prediction, clarification, questioning and summarizing. This collaboration shows that the principle of cooperative learning occurred in the study which achieved better result than that of working by him/herself in comprehending the text. This finding supports the findings of Al-Makhzoomi (2012), Jafarigohar, Soleimani and Soleimani (2013) who mention that reciprocal teaching strategy can improve both higher and lower achievers.

However, Hatch and Farhady (1982) mention that the mean scores cannot be judged that the experimental group is better than the control group, they proposed to calculate independent-t test to measure the difference of both experimental group and control group.

TABLE 4.3: INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST OF READING COMPREHENSION SCORES OF EXPERIMENTAL
AND CONTROL GROUP.

Lavene's test for equality of variance			T-test for equality of means		
	F	Sig	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
Equal variance assumed	2.231	.141	3.267	59	.02

Table 4.3 shows that the t-value (-3.267), with degree of freedom 59 is higher than that the critical value 2.00. Since the t-value is higher than that critical value, it reveals that the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected which means that there is a significant difference in reading comprehension between the two groups. The significance level of two-tailed which lays on 0.02 supports the finding that there is a significant difference in reading comprehension between the group which got treatment of reciprocal teaching strategy and the group which was not treated by using reciprocal teaching strategy.

The results of analyzing post-test of control and experimental group show that reciprocal teaching strategy effect positively in improving the students' reading comprehension. This finding supports previous research (Nasution, 2009) that the use of reciprocal teaching strategy is effective in improving the students' comprehension. Moreover, related to the effect of reciprocal teaching strategy that enhances and develops the students' reading comprehension, this is also supported by many researchers (Palinscar, 1984; Palinscar, Ransom & Derber, 1989; Hartman, 1997; Lenski & Lewis, 2008; Al-Makhzoomi, 2012; Palinscar & Klenk in Ahmadi, Ismail & Abdullah, 2013; Allen, 2003 in Ahmadi, Ismail & Abdullah, 2013; Jafarigohar, Soleimani and Soleimani, 2013).

Supporting the data from the tests, the data from questionnaire, it was found out that all participants said that their interaction with the teacher during the program helped them to comprehend

a text. This finding supports the previous study conducted by Jaya (2013). Based on the data from the questionnaire, there are two benefits of the teacher-students interaction.

The first benefit is the students get a clearer understanding of the concept and the implementation of four reading strategies; prediction, clarification, questioning and summarizing in comprehending a text as expressed in:

S9: Sure, by having a discussion with the teacher **I can get easier to comprehend** the text as **she helped me** to have a clearer understanding of the four reading strategies such as when I did not know the meaning of some words **she reminded me t**o resound the words or ask my friends or consult to a dictionary

In the above excerpt, she regarded the teacher as a reminder who assisted her in understanding the four reading strategies which further helped her to comprehend the text. In this regard, she expressed that the teacher sometimes asked her to resound the unfamiliar word to connect it to the prior knowledge, ask friends or consult to the dictionary when she did not know the meaning of the words. This indicates that teacher-students interaction help students in both comprehending through learning four reading strategies applied in reciprocal teaching strategy which supports the findings of some previous experts (Palinscar, 1984; Tsong, 2012; Hartman, 1997) which reveal that the teacher-student interaction assists the students in comprehending as well as understanding the concept and the implementation of four reading strategies (Van Garderen, 2004 in Ahmadi, Ismail & Abdullah, 2013).

The discussion between teacher and students shows scaffolding principle in which the teacher provides assistance when the students need it and helped students to monitor their comprehension (Palinscar, 1984; Hartman, 1997; Tsong, 2012).

The second benefit of teacher-student interaction is developing the students' self-confidence. This might happen as the structure of the dialogues or interactions which happened between teacher and the students required an ideal learning atmosphere (Palinscar, 1984; Hartman, 1997; Tsong, 2012). The teacher-student interaction developed their confidence to express their ideas and ultimately supported their reading comprehension. This is in line the previous study (Hasney in Ahmadi, Ismail and Abdullah, 2013) that in the use of reciprocal teaching strategy, the students improve their confidence.

As presented before the interaction in reciprocal teaching strategy also included interaction among students. From the questionnaire, it was found that there are three reasons that the interaction enhanced their reading comprehension. These included (1) the possibility to share idea, (2) the enjoyment of learning atmosphere and (3) the confidence to express their ideas.

The findings are in accordance with the previous research (Palinscar and Brown, 1984, p.40) that during the discussions the students are provided opportunity to have different points of view which help and develop their comprehension., Furthermore, the strategy facilitates peer-to-peer communication which require all students to participate and create an ideal learning atmosphere (Palinscar, 1984; Tsong, 2012; Hartman, 1997) as students with more experience and confidence helps other students in their group to decode and understand the text (Palinscar, 1984; Lenski & Lewis, 2008; Tsong, 2012; Carter, Palinscar & Brown, Palinscar, Brown & Campione, Plainscar & Klenk in Ahmadi, Ismail & Abdullah, 2013)

Based on the data from the questionnaire, it was figured out that learning the four reading strategies, namely prediction, clarification, questioning and summarizing helped students in understanding the text for four reasons. First, by learning four reading strategies, it was easier for them to understand the text. Second, it fostered students in grasping the idea of the text. Third, it assisted students to memorize the idea of the text. Fourth, it improved their reading strategies. The following quotations present the evidence.

S3: Yes, learning four reading strategies helped me to understand the text easily understand how to clarify difficult words, identify main ideas and summarize paragraphs or the whole text.

S4: Yes, it helped me much to get the main idea of a passage faster.

S6: yes, I know how to predict, to clarify, to question and to summarize which is useful to assist me in memorizing what I have read.

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5. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on the students' reading comprehension, the findings show that reciprocal teaching strategy enhanced the students' reading comprehension, which was indicated by the post-test scores of the students who were treated by using reciprocal teaching strategy. The scores of experimental group were higher than those of control group. The students who were taught by using reciprocal teaching strategy improved their comprehension. Therefore, the use of reciprocal strategy could be beneficial for the students when taking comprehension tests such as National Examination later because the indicators of comprehension used in this study were based on students' graduate competence.

Moreover, reciprocal teaching strategy developed the students' reading comprehension encompassing: (1) the students get clearer idea of the concept and the use of four reading strategies (prediction, clarification, questioning and summarizing) and (2) the students developed their self-confidence for sharing their ideas including sharing understanding and at the same time their confusion of vocabularies, reading strategies and content of the text; (3) the students enjoyed the learning atmosphere which supported them in comprehending the texts. It reveals that the interaction or discussion either teacher-students discussion or students lead discussion developed the students' reading strategies and self-confidence which ultimately improved the students' comprehension.

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