

**ENHANCING EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENT'S READING
COMPREHENSION USING RECIPROCAL TEACHING METHOD AT
SMP MUHAMMADIYAH AT TANWIR METRO**

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Abstract

This study focuses on enhancing reading comprehension of descriptive texts among eighth-grade students at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in At Tanwir Metro. The objectives of this study were first to determine whether the Reciprocal Teaching Method can improve the reading comprehension skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah At Tanwir Metro and second to explore the factors that influence this improvement. This study used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology. This study was conducted at eighth-grade students of Al Fath class at SMP Muhammadiyah At Tanwir Metro, consisting of 30 participants. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests (multiple-choice questions on descriptive texts), observation sheets to assess student activities, and questionnaires to collect student responses. This method proved effective, as evidenced by the increase in students' post-test scores from an average of 55.6 in the pre-test, to 66.5 in Cycle I, and reaching 72.16 in Cycle II. The second research question was addressed through qualitative data from observations and questionnaires, revealing that factors such as group discussions, teacher support, active questioning, and vocabulary assistance significantly contributed to students' progress. Most students responded positively to the method, reporting better comprehension, greater confidence, and a more enjoyable learning experience. Seven out of ten indicators met or exceeded the 70% criterion, confirming that Reciprocal Teaching is a practical, student-centered approach that fosters deeper understanding and active classroom participation.

Keywords: Eight-Grade Students, Enhancing, Reading Comprehension, Reciprocal Teaching Method

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most essential skills in English language learning, as it plays a crucial role in expanding vocabulary, strengthening understanding of grammar and sentence structure, and introducing learners to diverse language styles. Moreover, reading helps students connect classroom learning with authentic contexts, making language learning more meaningful. Strong reading skills are not only vital for academic achievement but also for developing critical thinking abilities. Without adequate reading skills, students may struggle to master other competencies such as writing, speaking, and listening (Putri et al., 2024).

Reading comprehension itself operates at multiple levels. Okebukola et al., (2024) classify comprehension into inferential comprehension where readers interpret implied meanings beyond the literal text and evaluative comprehension, which requires critical thinking to assess and respond to content. Mastering these higher-order comprehension skills is particularly challenging for junior high school students, who often face diverse learning needs depending on their classroom contexts. This situation can also be seen at SMP Muhammadiyah At-Tanwir Metro, where eighth-grade students are divided into three classes: Al Fath, An Najm, and Ar Rahman. A preliminary survey conducted with English teachers revealed that each class has unique characteristics. Among them, Al Fath presented the greatest challenges, as many students demonstrated low reading comprehension, lack of motivation, and limited interest in reading activities. For this reason, class VIII Al Fath, consisting of 30 students, was chosen as the focus of this study. The same students who participated in the preliminary study later became the research participants in the main study.

The challenges encountered in Al Fath stemmed from several factors. Students struggled with limited vocabulary, overreliance on translation tools, difficulty maintaining concentration, and lack of motivation to engage in reading tasks. Additionally, their limited exposure to English outside the classroom restricted opportunities to practice in authentic contexts. This lack of exposure weakened their reading fluency, comprehension, and overall confidence, often leading to a cycle of avoidance and frustration. To address these problems, this study applies the Reciprocal Teaching Method, a collaborative learning strategy involving four core activities: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. This method fosters structured dialogue between teacher and students, while also encouraging peer collaboration (Nirwana, 2017). Reciprocal Teaching is considered effective for students who learn better through interaction and discussion, as it promotes active engagement with texts, develops critical thinking, and builds confidence.

While previous research has demonstrated the positive impact of Reciprocal Teaching on reading skills, gaps remain regarding its role in improving comprehension of specific text types. Therefore, this study is designed to investigate whether Reciprocal Teaching can enhance eighth-grade students' comprehension of descriptive texts and to identify the effects following its implementation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the research design. According to Zulhijjah (2023), CAR is a comprehensive approach that investigates classroom situations while promoting democratic change and collaboration between teachers and students. The model follows Kemmis and McTaggart's cycle, consisting of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, conducted iteratively to improve learning practices.

The research was carried out in Class VIII Al Fath at SMP Muhammadiyah

At-Tanwir Metro. The researcher acted as both the teacher and the designer of the learning process, applying the Reciprocal Teaching Method to enhance students' reading comprehension.

Planning

The Reciprocal Teaching Method is designed to promote reading comprehension through collaborative dialogue between educators and students. Researchers created a lesson plan to ensure a smooth and streamlined learning process. The test is multiple-choice and administered in the first cycle. If any issues need to be addressed, the implementation process will continue in subsequent cycles.

Acting

The lesson was implemented using the Reciprocal Teaching Method, which includes three stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading Butar et al. (2023). In the pre-reading stage, students were divided into groups of four. The teacher showed pictures related to the topic and asked questions to help students share their ideas. During the while-reading stage, students used four strategies: predicting, explaining, questioning, and summarizing.

Indicators included attentiveness, questioning, summarizing, group discussion, and reading interest. Referring to Firdaus et al. (2023), a success criterion of 70% participation was set. Reflection was then conducted to analyze whether the method improved students' reading skills and to determine if further cycles were necessary.

Observing

The researcher observes problems, advantages, disadvantages, and conclusions from implementing Reciprocal Teaching Method to enhance students reading comprehension. The researcher wrote the important thing on the observation sheets and field notes to see all of the events before, during, and after the implementation of the Reciprocal Teaching Method and whether it could enhance students reading comprehension in descriptive texts.

Reflection

Reflection in Classroom Action Research is a critical evaluation stage carried out by teachers to analyze data from actions and observations during learning. The goal is to assess the effectiveness of the methods used in achieving learning objectives and improving student learning outcomes.

The variables of the study were: (1) the independent variable, Reciprocal Teaching Method, which emphasizes four strategies summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting; and (2) the dependent variable, students' reading comprehension, measured by their ability to identify main ideas, details, vocabulary, inferences, and text structure. The instruments used included tests, observation sheets, and questionnaires. The tests consisted of a pre-test and post-test with 20 multiple-choice items, assessing comprehension based on main ideas, supporting details, vocabulary, inferences, and text structure. Observation sheets Firdaus et al. (2023) were employed to assess student engagement, while

a questionnaire Ranganathan & Caduff (2023) with 10 items was given to 30 students to evaluate their experiences with Reciprocal Teaching.

Data collection combined these instruments, while data analysis used both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Observational and questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively, while test scores were calculated using the mean formula ($X = \sum Xi / N$). Classical completeness was determined by the percentage of students achieving the minimum mastery score of 70. According to Wahyuningsi (2023), success in CAR is achieved if at least 70% of students reach this criterion. The combination of descriptive results and scores improvements demonstrated the effectiveness of Reciprocal Teaching in enhancing reading comprehension.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the application of the Reciprocal Teaching Method to improve the reading comprehension skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah At-Tanwir Metro. The research was conducted in two cycles of Classroom Action Research (CAR), each consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. Data were collected through pre-tests, post-tests, observations, and questionnaires to measure both student achievement and classroom engagement. Before the implementation, a pre-test was administered to assess students' initial reading comprehension. The results revealed that 50% of students scored in the —very poorll category (0–45), while only a small number, 16.66%, scored above the —fairly goodll category (66–75). The average pre-test score was 55.6, which was far below the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 70. This finding clearly indicated the need for a new instructional strategy.

During Cycle I, the Reciprocal Teaching Method was introduced through group discussions focusing on predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing descriptive texts. Students' activities began to show progress. For example, 43.3% responded to the teacher in the first meeting, increasing to 50% in the second meeting. Likewise, those who answered questions rose from 13.33% to 20%. Post-test results in Cycle I also improved, with the average score rising to 66.5, showing an 11-point increase from the pre-test. However, most students still had not reached the KKM, and some remained passive, prompting the continuation to Cycle II.

In Cycle II, improvements were made to the learning process, such as more engaging materials and clearer group guidance. Student activities showed stronger participation: 73.33% of students responded actively to the teacher in the first meeting, which increased to 80% in the second. Similarly, students answering questions rose from 33.33% to 50%. The post-test results confirmed this progress, with the average score reaching 75.2, thereby meeting the KKM. The distribution of scores also shifted positively: 6.67% of students achieved—Excellentll (96–100), 13.33% —Very Goodll (86–95), and 13.33% —Goodll (76–85), while the percentage of —Very Poorll students dropped

significantly.

Figure 2. The progress comparison of student's activities between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

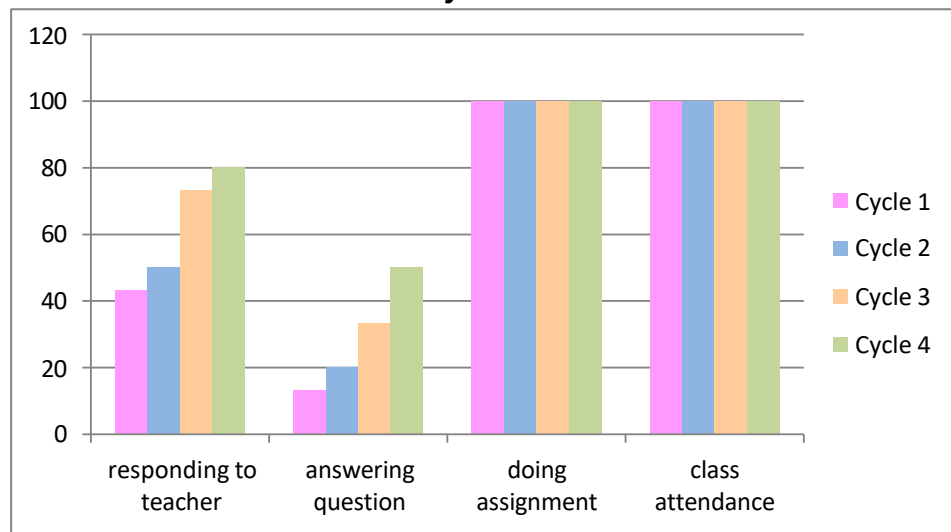
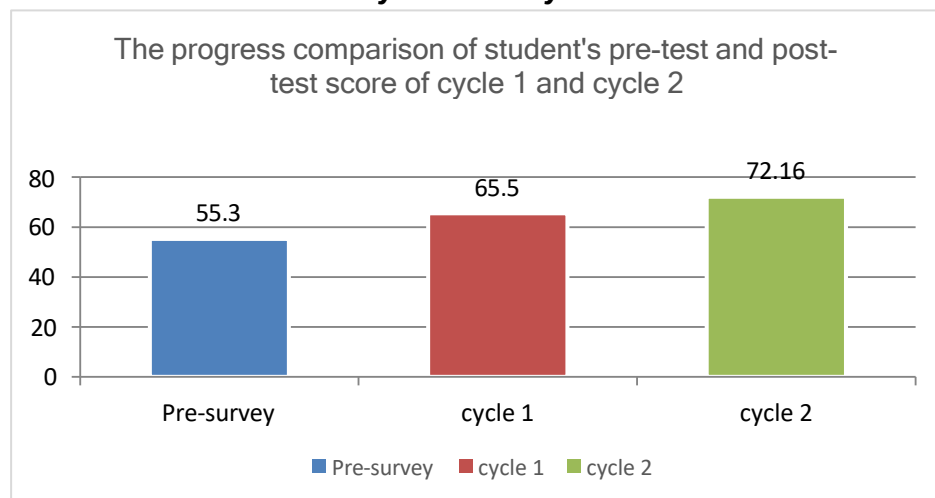


Figure 3. The progress comparison of student's pre-test and post-test score of cycle 1 and cycle 2



The questionnaire results supported these findings. A majority of students agreed that Reciprocal Teaching made it easier to understand texts (53.33%) and helped them recognize difficult vocabulary (83.33%). Group discussions were also valued, with 76.67% of students reporting they often collaborated with peers. Teacher support was highly appreciated, with 93.33% of students acknowledging guidance throughout the process. However, only 36.67% felt more confident in explaining texts to peers, suggesting that confidence-building remains an area for further improvement. These findings align with previous studies by Satria et al. (2024), Yuliyanti (2024), and Putri et al. (2024), which also demonstrated the effectiveness of Reciprocal Teaching in enhancing reading comprehension. Like earlier research, this study confirmed that the four key strategies—predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing—boosted both comprehension and

engagement. However, this study contributes further by emphasizing students' positive perceptions and identifying challenges such as building confidence in presenting ideas.

In conclusion, the Reciprocal Teaching Method proved effective in improving students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts. Not only did average test scores improve across two cycles, but student participation, motivation, and vocabulary development also showed significant gains. While confidence in explaining ideas remains a challenge, the overall results affirm the value of Reciprocal Teaching as an interactive strategy to foster both academic achievement and active learning.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research set out to investigate the effectiveness of the Reciprocal Teaching Method in improving the reading comprehension skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah At-Tanwir Metro during the 2024/2025 academic year. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of Reciprocal Teaching Method successfully addressed both research questions. For the first research question, which asked whether Reciprocal Teaching could enhance students' reading comprehension, the answer is yes. The method proved effective, as shown by the improvement in students' post-test scores from an average of 55.6 in the pre-test, to 66.5 in Cycle I, and reaching 72.16 in Cycle II. This increase not only demonstrates students' progress but also indicates that Reciprocal Teaching Method helped many of them reach the minimum score criterion set by the school.

Regarding the second research question. The implementation of the Reciprocal Teaching Method at SMP Muhammadiyah At-Tanwir Metro has proven to be effective in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills, particularly for eighth-grade students. Based on the findings from the student questionnaire, the method was well-received and had a positive impact in several key areas such as classroom engagement, vocabulary recognition, group collaboration, and teacher support. Students felt more motivated and involved in the learning process, with many of them acknowledging that reading became more enjoyable and meaningful. From the ten indicators measured, seven of them met or exceeded the 70% classical completeness criterion, which shows that the method successfully supported most learners in reaching the expected comprehension goals. In addition to improving test scores, the method also encouraged students to be more confident in discussions, helped them understand difficult words more easily, and improved their ability to find the main idea in a text. These outcomes confirm that Reciprocal Teaching is not only a practical strategy but also a student-centered approach that can be adapted to foster deeper learning and participation in the classroom.

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