TEACHING EFL READING SKILL USING RECIPROCAL TEACHING STRATEGY: A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH

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Abstract

The present study's objective is to explore whether reciprocal teaching strategy can improve students' reading skill in Indonesian EFL classroom. Reciprocal teaching consists of four steps, i.e., predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. The researcher employs a classroom action research design using two cycles. Research sample of this study consists of 24 students. According to this research findings, the employment of reciprocal teaching strategy can increase students' learning activities and reading skills. Therefore, since it is demonstrated as being effective for teaching reading skill, reciprocal teaching strategy can be recommended to be implemented for teaching EFL reading skill.

Keywords: EFL classroom, EMI, learning English.

INTRODUCTION

As one of the language skills, reading skill is very important in the world of education. To read successfully, students require a lot of training and practice. In addition, students can get information and expand their knowledge from reading. According to Hamra & Syatriana (2010), and Ajeng & Maximilian (2023), because English is considered as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia, most pupils at all educational levels find it challenging to read EFL text.

According to Herlisya et al. (2022: 361), reading is an action in which we attempt to comprehend and ingest information obtained from the text sources. It indicates reading as the ability to understand and interpret, means reading is about how the reader reacts to written text as a communication tool, and in line with this the reader tries to interpret the written text to get the message conveyed by the researcher so that communication between the reader and the researcher goes well. However, in reality, understanding the main ideas of texts or paragraphs is the most challenging part for students. Many students feel that reading is uninteresting and tends to be boring.

Another factor that contributed to the students' inferior reading proficiency is that

many of them dislike reading texts written in English. Since they did not think reading was a fun pastime. Without a reading assignment from the teacher, the students would not practice reading (Maximilian, 2020). Additionally, the teacher presided over the majority of the reading activity, making the students passive and dependent on the teacher for comprehension. In this case, a teacher must be aware of the students' learning requirements when it comes to their reading issues. Teachers can help students learn to read by teaching them vocabulary words and reading strategies, among other things. Students can get benefit if the strategy is simple and effective for them to absorb texts.

In order to provide children with the best chance of learning to read well, teachers must be able to design effective learning environments, including dynamic classes. So, in order to teach reading in the classroom, teachers need to have a plan. Reciprocal teaching strategy could be used for teaching to read and to enhance students' reading skill. Students who use this strategy will become better readers.

Reciprocal teaching can be considered as the teaching strategy for improving reading comprehension skills through interactive group discussions. This strategy is centred around the idea that students can become better readers by actively engaging with the text and discussing it with their peers. Reciprocal teaching strategy typically involves four main components, i.e., predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing.

For predicting stage, students engage by speculating about what may occur next in text. This helps activate students' prior knowledge and encourages them for anticipating content. After predicting, students are instructed to do questioning. The students generate questions about the text. These questions can be about the content, vocabulary, or any unclear aspects. Questioning promotes critical thinking and encourages students to seek deeper understanding.

Then, the students need to have the clarifying stage. In this stage, the students identify parts of the text that are unclear or confusing to them. They discuss these points with their peers and attempt to clarify their understanding. This step involves self-monitoring and self-correction of comprehension. The last stage is summarizing process. The students summarize the main ideas and key details of the text. This

encourages them to distil the information into their own words and helps reinforce their understanding of the material.

Reciprocal teaching is typically implemented in small groups, with each student taking turns leading the discussion using one of the four strategies. The teacher initially models and guides the process, helping students understand how to effectively apply each strategy. Over time, students become more independent in their discussions.

The nature of reciprocal teaching is collaborative and student-centred. It fosters active engagement, critical thinking, and metacognition (thinking about one's own thinking) as students interact with the text and with each other. Through these discussions, students can deepen their understanding the content of text, share insights, as well as develop a broader knowledge on different perspectives. It encourages students for becoming active participants so it can help them become more skilled and confident readers. It supported by (Oczkus, 2013), "Reciprocal teaching is an ideal strategy to use to strengthen comprehension". Students may have the chance to study independently, creatively, and more actively through reciprocal teaching. When given the chance to learn the topic, students first study it before explaining it to other students. The role of teacher is as facilitator as well as guide during learning process, which includes organizing or explaining any content that cannot be learned on one's own.

When the researcher did preliminary at SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung, it is found that the students had difficulties in reading a text. First, because of their limited vocabulary, students have trouble deciphering the meaning of English terms from a text. The second problem is that students have trouble identifying a text's main idea. Third, when reading a text, students have trouble identifying the content. The fourth problem is students' lack of enthusiasm for studying English (Maximilian, 2016; Maximilian & Ajeng, 2023; Sutiyono et al., 2023; Zulianti et al., 2016), particularly reading, as they become disinterested when given lengthy materials to read.

Based on some evidences explained above, the topic on improving students' reading skills by using a reciprocal teaching strategy to teach reading is taken. The problems that the researcher identified are 1) can reciprocal teaching strategy improve students' learning activities? 2) can reciprocal teaching strategy improve students' reading skill?

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher employed classroom action research (CAR) for conducting this study. It was chosen since it can be used to find solution of the challenges that people face on a daily basis (Stringer, 2007: 1), in this case, the challenges related to the enhancement of students' reading skill. It follows the steps offered by Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) who state that CAR typically consists of four major phases in a cycle, i.e., planning, action, observation, and reflection. In this research, it was repeated up to two cycles, since the researcher have reached a satisfying conclusion at the second cycle. The subjects of this research were the 24 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung in the academic year 2022/2023. There were three meetings per cycle. The students learned the materials related to the recount text with different topic in every meeting. The reading assessment took place at the final cycle meeting.

The research data was collected from the test instrument and non-test instrument, i.e., reading test and observation sheets. The research data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The researcher computed the mean scores of students' reading tests and observation sheets in the first and second cycles, then the results from each cycle were compared. The data resulted from quantitative, i.e., reading test, data analysis was employed to prove whether reciprocal teaching strategy can improve students' reading skill. On another hand, the data resulted from qualitative, i.e., observation sheet, data analysis was employed to observe the improvement of teaching and learning activities from each cycle. Making use of a learning activity observation sheet, the teacher wrote the note and filled the score ranging from 0-100. The indicators of students' learning activities are the activity in answering teacher's question, activity in asking the question about material given, activity in doing the assignment (individual), activity in doing the assignment (group), and activity in finding learning resources. The following table was used to classify the students' learning activity.

Table 1. Result Criteria for Student Learning Activity

No	Range of Score	Category
1	>8.00	Very Active
2	7.50 – 7.99	Active
3	7.00 – 7.49	Quite Active
4	.00 – 6.99	Less Active

Adapted from (Aqib et al., 2011)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Findings from the observation sheet

It concerned with the process of teaching and learning through observation done by teacher and researcher. By filling out the observation sheet, the researcher documented the learning processes of the students, which produced the following outcomes.

Table 2. The Students' Observation Sheet Score

Aspect	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Observation sheet score	6.74	7.64
Category	Less Active	Active

In cycle 1, according to the outcomes of the observation sheet, the student's learning activity had a mean score of 6.74. It can be categorized that the student's learning activities were less active. Meanwhile, in cycle 2, according to the outcomes of the observation sheet, the student's learning activity had a mean score of 7.64. It means that the student's learning activities were categorized as active.

The average score of the student learning processes increased from cycle 1 to cycle 2. The average student learning activity score for the first cycle was 6.74 that could be categorized as less active. In contrast, the second cycle's average score was 7.64 that could be categorized as active. It can be inferred that reciprocal teaching strategy can improve students' learning activities in the eight-grade English class at SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung in 2022/2023.

Findings from the reading test

According to the proceeds of the students' reading test scores obtained in each cycle, the researcher calculated the mean scores of students' reading tests and the percentage of students who successfully passed the minimum completeness criteria (MCC) in each cycle.

Table 3. The Mean Score of Students Reading Test

Aspects	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Improvement
Total score	1650	1820	170
Mean score	68.75	75.83	7.08

From the data in the table 2, it is found that the mean score of students' reading test in cycle 1 was 68.75, meanwhile, in cycle 2, it was improved to be 75.83. It means that there was an improvement of 7.08 points. Since there was an improvement in the students' average score of the reading test, it can be implied that the students' reading skill has improved.

Table 4. The Result of MCC in Cycle 1

No	MCC	Number of Students	Completeness (%)	Category
1	≥72	12	50%	Complete
2	≤72	12	50%	Incomplete

The table above indicates that there were still students who received scores that were below the minimum completeness criterion (72). Students with scored 72 or higher did not reach 70% of the class, a total of 12 students achieved a score of 72, or 50%. Students who received a score of 72 were approximately 12 students with a percentage of 50%. Following the completion of the reading test in cycle I, numerous students achieved and missed the class's MCC.

Table 5. The Result of MCC in Cycle 2

No	MCC	Number of Students	Completeness (%)	Category
1	≥72	18	75%	Complete
2	≤72	6	25%	Incomplete

The results from the second cycle of reading assessments for students shown in the table above. It is shown on the table that 18 students passed the minimal completeness criteria (72). The percentage of the students' score is 75%. On another hand, there were 6 students did not pass the minimal completeness criteria, with the percentage of 25%. Since the result of MCC in cycle 2 (75%) is increased compared with the cycle 1 (50%), it can be inferred that there was an improvement in students' learning completeness. It means that the implementation of reciprocal teaching strategy can be beneficial in students' learning process for improving their reading skill.

Discussion

The Implementation of reciprocal teaching strategy to improve students' EFL learning activities

This study was conducted into two cycles using recount text as the material. In each cycle, the researcher completed four phases, i.e., planning phase, acting phase, observing phase, and reflecting phase. The pattern of phases was adopted from Kemmis & McTaggart (1988). Because most of the students were passive or less active, the process of teaching and learning in the first cycle was not successful. They still found it challenging to understand the text and following the teaching and learning process. The first cycle's observation sheet results showed that the student's learning activities had a mean score of 6.74. The learning activities of the students can be classified as less active.

Additionally, the class's environment during the last meeting of the first cycle prevented them from finishing their reading test. Even after asking their friends for help, several students' scores continued to fall short of the MCC or minimal completion criteria. Only 50% of the class's total students passed the MCC. While, for the required minimum level of completion, it should receive at least a 70% of total students who passed the MCC. In order to add to the treatment, the students completed the second cycle utilizing the reciprocal teaching strategy, improve and provide solutions to the deficiencies and constraints that occur in cycle 1. According to Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) and Burns (2010), the initial cycle may develop into an ongoing, or iterative, spiral of cycles that repeat until the action researcher believes they have reached a satisfying conclusion and it is time to cease.

In the second cycle, learning activities of students mean score improved from 6.74 to 7.64. It means that the students were categorized into active. The findings of this study support a theory stated by Oczkus (2013) who explains that reciprocal teaching is an ideal strategy to be use for strengthening students' skill and comprehension. Moreover, it also supports the theory of Maximilian and Ajeng (2023) who states that for creating positive learning atmosphere and learning culture, the appropriate teaching strategy used by EFL teacher is needed. In this case, the appropriate teaching strategy is reciprocal teaching strategy. Students may have the chance to study independently, creatively, and more actively through reciprocal teaching. From this finding, it can be inferred that there was an increasement in learning activities when students learned EFL. Students become more active after taught using reciprocal teaching strategies.

The Implementation of reciprocal teaching strategy to improve students' EFL reading skill

A reciprocal teaching strategy is proven to improve EFL reading skill, according to the results of the student's reading skill test. According to an analysis of the student's reading test scores in the cycle 1, number of students' percentage who achieve the minimal completeness criteria (MCC) was 50%, or 12 out of the 24 students. When it was compared to cycle II, there were 18 out of 24 students who achieved the minimum completion criteria, or 75% of students passed. The findings of this study support a theory of Klingner et al. (2007) who states that a good lesson plan that employs good teaching strategy can be created to assist students to acquire the language skills. In tis study, the reciprocal teaching strategy was used to assist students for acquiring the reading skill.

Cycle II was finished since the learning outcome success requirements were achieved. Students' average score of reading test was 75.83, which was characterized as a high and complete criterion, of the students tested, 18 students, or 75%, met the minimal completeness criteria, while 6 students or 25% fell short of it. The MCC passing rate is higher than 70%. It is clear that the student's learning progress was successful. According to Ormrod (2003), reciprocal teaching is an effective strategy for improving students' reading skill in which students pick up useful reading-to-learn activities by seeing and copying what their teacher and other students do.

The effectiveness of reciprocal teaching strategy was also proven by several researchers at various school level, and of all the result was good. One of the studies that had similar result with this research was conducted by Masita in 2021 entitled "The Use of Reciprocal Teaching Technique to Improve Reading Comprehension". The result of research showed that by applying reciprocal teaching strategy, the students became more active and creative.

In other words, students' reading skill and learning activity can be enhanced by the implementation of a reciprocal teaching strategy. This strategy is coming from a cooperative learning method that teachers can use in teaching to improve reading skill. Not only useful for acquiring reading skill, according to Allen (2003), through the processes that improve reading comprehension, self-control, collaboration skill, and

monitoring skills, reciprocal teaching aims to raise students' language learning motivation in general.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the researcher suggests the implementation of reciprocal teaching strategy. Students may have the chance to study independently, creatively, and more actively through reciprocal teaching. This strategy can be used by the teacher who wants to conduct the research or wants to teach the students with the simple strategy. Therefore, the researcher would like to make a stress that that this strategy is useful, easy to teach, and helps the students to activate their prior knowledge to the text given.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research's findings, the eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung have successfully improved their reading skills as a result of receiving instruction using a reciprocal teaching strategy. It is seen from the students' reading test results. 50% of students passed the minimum completeness criteria, according to the outcomes of their first cycle scores. The results of the second round of student scores revealed that 75% of students passed the minimal completeness criteria. It showed how using reciprocal teaching strategies in teaching and learning activities significantly improved the students' scores.

In addition, there was shown improved student learning activity. It is shown by the findings of the cycle I and cycle II observation sheets. The first cycle's average score was 68.75, and the average score for learning activities was 6.74. The second cycle's average score for students' learning activities was 7.64 while the average for students score was 75.83. It can be seen that students' learning activity and reading skill have increased. The EFL students become more active after being taught using reciprocal teaching strategy.

Based on the findings of this research, it is important to recommend reciprocal teaching strategy to be used in English class. It is also proven that reciprocal teaching strategy consists of good learning activities for improving the students' reading skill. Therefore, this research suggests the use of reciprocal teaching strategy in EFL classroom for improving students' reading skill.

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