# IMPROVING GRADE VIII STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN READING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH RECIPROCAL TEACING

**Yovi Tri Asni Alam**

**Siti Aisah Ginting**

English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts

State University of Medan

## ABSTRACT

This research attempts to improve students' achievement in reading descriptive text through reciprocal teaching. The instruments for collecting data were multiple choice test as the quantitative data and diary notes, questionnaire sheet, and observation sheet as the qualitative data. In the orientation test the mean scores was 49.17, in the first competence test the mean score was 63.29, and in the second competence test the mean score was 83.69. The improvement also can be seen from the percentage of students' reading comprehension; in the orientation test 0% (0 students) got 75 points. In the first competence test 21.62% (eight students) got 75 points. It means there was an improvement about 21.62%. In the second competence test 78.37% (twenty nine students) got 75 points. The improvement was 56.75 %. It can be concluded that Reciprocal Teaching could improve students' reading descriptive text.

**Keywords:** Achievement, Reading, Descriptive Text, Reciprocal Teaching

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Reading is about understanding written text. Reading is also the window of knowledge. By reading, we will get much information by understanding the content of the text and will know everything in this world.

Most of the schools in Indonesia use Education Unit Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Satuan Tingkat Pendidikan: KTSP) as their educational orientation. Based on KTSP for Junior High School (Sekolah Menengah Pertama: SMP) about standard competence in reading states that students are expected to be able to comprehend the meaning of both interpersonal and transactional written text formally as well as informally in the form of Descriptive, Recount, Narrative, Procedure, and Report in the context of daily life.

Students are expected to be able to get some knowledge and information from the text. But many students face many difficulties when they read a text.

There are two factors make the students difficult to understand the reading text, they are from the students themselves and so are the teachers. The students are unfamiliar with the words that are used in the text or lacking of vocabularies. The students do not have motivation to read because the text is not interesting and the text is also very long. Beside that, they do not know about the grammar which is used in the text. While the factors from the teachers are; first, the teachers often ask the students to read the reading text then translate it into Indonesian. After that the students discuss the content and finally the students also are asked to answer some questions based on the text. They cannot get the main idea and answer question based on the text and even they get bored. Second, the teachers seldom guide their students to understand the text in process learning. In this case, the teachers are supposed to be a professional person in the class.

The conditions above become the reason for the writer to conduct a research by applying Reciprocal Teaching to overcome the problems. Furthermore, the Reciprocal Teaching will develop students' active thinking process in order that students will not be lazy to think.

Reciprocal Teaching is a dialogue between the teacher and students who work together to comprehend the text. This strategy consists of four steps: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing.

This strategy will improve the students in reading comprehension. It can motivate and help the students to comprehend and to understand the text. Besides that, the students are able to focus on reading comprehension easily, and they will become active to express their idea or opinion. Therefore, Reciprocal Teaching can give good solution for teacher to improve students' achievement in reading comprehension.

Even many researchers have conducted this strategy in reading comprehension. One of the researcher is Elvida (2011) applied Reciprocal Teaching in reading narrative text. The mean of the result in the first cycle is 64,24, and in the second cycle there is improvement. The result of mean is 81,00. Although it has shown there is improvement in reading narrative text through Reciprocal Teaching, but the application this strategy was not provided by any kinds of media. So, in order to get the better result, the research would be conducted by using picture as what Harmer (2003) said that using

picture in teaching process helped the students to understood the text easily. Then He (2003:135) asserted that pictures were useful for getting students to predict what they were reading.

Based on the explanation above, the research will be conducted by applying Reciprocal Teaching provided by picture to solve the students' problem in reading comprehension.

## Research Question

### *The Problem of the Study*

Based on the background of the study, the problem of this study is formulated as the following "Does Reciprocal Teaching significantly improve the students' achievement on reading comprehension descriptive text?"

### *The Objective of the Study*

The objective of the study is to find out whether Reciprocal Teaching significantly improves the students' achievement on reading comprehension descriptive text.

### *The Scope of the Study*

There are five genres that is taught in SMP, namely narrative, procedure, descriptive, recount and report text. This study is limited on descriptive text. And they are many kinds of media, namely flashcard, picture, movie, tape records, maps, realia, and wall charts. This study is limited on picture because in explaining the descriptive text the use of picture is more suitable.

### *The Significance of the Study*

This research would be conducted by applying Reciprocal Teaching strategy which enables the students to improve their reading comprehension. The findings of the study are expected to be useful for teachers, students, and readers. The expectation is that it would provide the alternative strategy to the English teachers to be creative in teaching reading comprehension, develop the knowledge of the students to read and to comprehend the text, and to give information for the readers who have interest to related research, to enlarge their knowledge and understanding about teaching reading.

**Students' Achievement**

Fulcher (2003:18) states that achievement is defined in terms of the observable behaviors that are of interest in particular learning. Meanwhile, Bloom (in Suprijono, 2009) states that achievement cover cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills.

**Reading and Reading Comprehension**

*Reading*

Grabe and Stoller (2002:9) say that reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately. In line with, according to Linse and Nunan (2006) as quoted by Surjosuseno (2011) reading is a set of skill that involves making sense and deriving meaning from the printed text. Meanwhile, Siahaan (2007: 96) writes quite different from them. According to him reading is one of the four language skills. It is categorized into the area of a receptive skill. This category is a skill to comprehend a piece of information in the written language.

Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that reading is one of the important receptive skill which someone must be able to built words and also comprehend what he or she reads.

*Reading Comprehension*

According to Summer (1999:15), reading comprehension means understanding and remembering the ideas you find as you read. In line with, As defined by *Partnership for Reading* (2005), reading comprehension is understanding a text that is read, or the process of "constructing meaning" from a text (http://www.nilf.gov/partnershipforreading).

Meanwhile Grabe and Stoller (2002:29) write quite different from them. According to them, reading comprehension is an extraordinary feat of balancing and coordinating many abilities in a very complex and rapid set of routines that makes comprehension a seemingly effortless and enjoyable activity for fluent reader.

In conclusion, reading comprehension is the ability to construct meaning from a given written text.

**Descriptive text**

According to Gerot and Wignell (1994:192) desriptive is a text which describes a particular, place or thing. Its purpose to tell about the subject by describing its features

without including personal opinions. It is a type of writing in which the ideas are arranged in terms of spatial relationship.

Generic structure of descriptive text as follow:

a. Identification: identifies the phenomenon to be described

b. Description: describes parts, qualities, characteristics

The descriptive text has dominant language features, namely: (1) Using Simple Present Tense, (2) Using action verbs, (3) Using adverb, (4) Using general and abstract noun, and (5) Using conjunction of time and cause-effect.

## Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching is conducted in cooperative groups. Seymour and Osana (2003:325) state Reciprocal Teaching is a researcher-developed instructional technique designed by Palincsar and Brown (1984) to promote reading comprehension abilities in students.

Ozkuz (2003) states this indirect form of summarizing instruction involves four comprehension strategies: summarizing, asking important questions, clarifying unclear segments (monitoring comprehension), and predicting. This approach has proven very successful in improving text comprehension, especially for struggling comprehender.

## The Steps in Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching (Palincsar, 1984) in is a cooperative grouping strategy that calls on students to become "the teacher" and work as a group to bring meaning to text.

Reciprocal teaching is one of the teaching strategies that can be used to improve the students' difficulties to comprehend the text. This strategy consists of four steps: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing.

1) Predicting

International Reading Association (2003) states predicting is a strategy that assists students in setting a purpose for reading and in monitoring their reading comprehension. Predicting involves previewing the text to anticipate what may happen next.

In this step, the teacher divides the class into some groups that consist of four to six students. The teacher asks the students to predict what the text about based on the title and picture before reading the text.

2) Questioning

Questioning is an important strategy for good readers. In reciprocal teaching strategy, students learn to generate questions to describe the something. The language of questioning that students may use includes the question words who, what, where, when, why, and how.  In teaching, the teacher asks the students to read the text silently.

3) Clarifying

After making the questions, the teacher clarifies the text, directing the students to find unclear parts. The teacher guides the students to find the unfamiliar words.

In International Reading Association (2003:17) states that the language of clarifying, they are: (1) I read on to look for clues, (2) I look for word parts that I know, (3) I think about what I know, (4) I talk to a friend, (5) I think of another word that looks like this word, and (7) I try another word that makes sense.

4) Summarizing

Summarizing is the last steps of Reciprocal Teaching. The teacher is asked the students to make the summarizing based on the information that has collected by the students.

## Picture

A picture is a photo, drawing, painting or other image captured of a person, thing or scene (http://www.yourdictionary.com/picture). A picture often is used by teachers in teaching learning. According to Harmer (2004:135), Picture are used to describe and predict someone and something.

The uses of pictures are more efficient and practices than words, they are easier to recall and to remember than words, furthermore they expose real life situation although it happened a long time ago. Students of all age can use visual aids. Picture is used to help presenting information to the class. Therefore, in this study the writer will add the picture as media.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This research was conducted by applying classroom action research. Stringer (2007:1) defines that action research as the systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solution to problem they confront in their everyday lives. Then Tomal asserts that action research is one of the most practical and efficient

methods of conducting research by educators. In line with, Sonora in Burns (2010:5) says that action research is research carried out in the classroom by the teacher of the course mainly with the purpose of solving a problem or improving the teaching/learning process.

According to Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988) in Burns (2010:7) action research typically involves four broad phase in a cycle of research, the first cycle may become a continuing or iterative, spiral of cycles which recur until the action researcher has achieved a satisfactory outcome and feels it is time to stop.

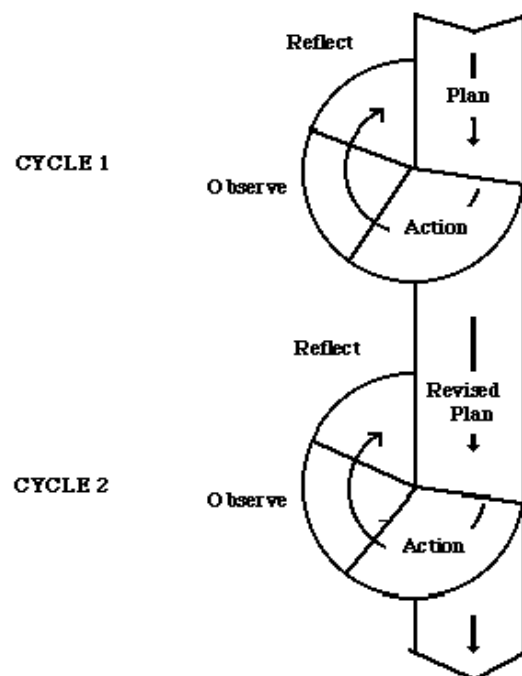Figure 3.1 presents four broad phases in a cycle of research.



Figure 3.1 Cyclical action research model based on Kemmis and Mc.Taggart in Burns

*Planning*

Planning is arrangement for doing something. In this phases there would be many activities organized that would be done in action phases related to identified problem.

*Action*

According to Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988) in Burns (2010:8), the plan was a carefully considered one which involves some deliberate interventions into your teaching situation that you put into action over an agreed period of time. The interventions were 'critically informed' as you question your assumptions about the

current situation and plan new and alternative ways of doing things. In simple word action was the implementation of planning.

*Observation*

This phase involved you in observing systematically the effects of the action and documenting the context, actions and opinions of those involved.

*Reflection*

At this point, you evaluated and described the effects of the action in order to make sense of what had happened and to understand the issue you had explored more clearly. You might decided to do further cycles of AR to improve the situation even more, or to share the 'story' of your research with others as part of your on going professional development (Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988) in Burns (2009:8)).

**Subject**

The subject in this research was the students of $8^{th}$ grade in SMP Negeri 29 Tembung. It consists of 30 students.

**Data Collection**

The data of this research were quantitative and qualitative data. To collect quantitative data, the multiple choice tests would be used. Students would be given the multiple choice tests. The qualitative data would be collected by using observation sheet, questionnaire sheet, and diary notes. They would be used to identify all the condition during the teaching and learning process.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The improvement of the students' score in reading comprehension by using Reciprocal Teaching could be seen from the mean of the students' score during the research, the following formula was applied.

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where:     X     = The mean of the students

$\sum$x     = The total score

N     = The number of the students

The students' scores increased from the first test to the last test. It can be seen in the following table.

| No. | INITIAL | TEST I | TEST II | TEST III |
|-----|---------|--------|---------|----------|
| 1. | AI | 46,7 | 66,7 | 73,3 |
| 2. | AR | 56 | 80 | 86,7 |
| 3. | ASS | 53,3 | 60 | 80 |
| 4. | AML | 66,7 | 80 | 86,7 |
| 5. | CP | 33,3 | 46,7 | 73,3 |
| 6. | DAR | 66,7 | 80 | 93,3 |
| 7. | DWS | 40 | 66,7 | 73,3 |
| 8. | ESH | 56 | 60 | 80 |
| 9. | EPH | 33,3 | 46,7 | 73,3 |
| 10. | EVV | 20 | 40 | 70 |
| 11. | FF | 46,7 | 70 | 86,7 |
| 12. | FR | 46,7 | 66,7 | 77 |
| 13. | HIS | 56 | 66,7 | 80 |
| 14. | IH | 56 | 46,7 | 80 |
| 15. | IAH | 56 | 80 | 83,3 |
| 16. | II | 46,7 | 66 | 77 |
| 17. | MAI | 33,3 | 58 | 80 |
| 18. | MRA | 33,3 | 53,3 | 70 |
| 19. | MRS | 26,7 | 70 | 77 |
| 20. | MAS | 40 | 53,3 | 80 |
| 21. | NLLH | 46,7 | 53,3 | 70 |
| 22. | NEN | 66,7 | 70 | 80 |
| 23. | NP | 33,3 | 58 | 80 |
| 24. | NDA | 66,7 | 80 | 93,3 |
| 25. | OI | 53,3 | 66,7 | 73,3 |
| 26. | RSD | 66,7 | 80 | 93,3 |
| 27. | RS | 66,7 | 70 | 80 |
| 28. | RT | 60 | 60 | 90 |
| 29. | RA | 46,6 | 53,3 | 80 |
| 30. | RTY | 33,3 | 66 | 73,3 |
| 31. | RAF | 66,7 | 63 | 80 |
| 32. | SAP | 53,3 | 70 | 93,3 |
| 33. | S | 60 | 66,7 | 93,3 |
| 34. | SAEP | 33,3 | 80 | 80 |
| 35. | WOM | 53,3 | 80 | 93,3 |
| 35. | WOM | 53,3 | 80 | 93,3 |
| 36. | WNF | 53,3 | 60 | 80 |
| 37. | WBRM | 60 | 66,7 | 80 |
| | **Total** | $\sum x=1819,3$ | $\sum x=2341,9$ | $\sum x=3096.6$ |
| | **Mean** | $\bar{X}=49,17$ | $\bar{X}=63,29$ | $\bar{X}=83,69$ |

The improvement of the students' reading comprehension was also shown in the percentage of the students who got point up to 75. This percentage was calculated by applying the formula below:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

$$P1 = \frac{0}{37} \times 100\%$$

$$= 0\%.$$

$$P2 = \frac{8}{37} \times 100\%$$

$$= 21{,}62\%.$$

$$P3 = \frac{29}{37} \times 100\%$$

$$= 78{,}37\%$$

Where: P = the percentage of the students who got point 75

R = the number of the students who got point 75 to up

T = the total number of the students

P1 = the percentage of the students who got point 75 in the pre-test

P2 = the percentage of the students who got point 75 in cycle I

P3 = the percentage of the students who got point 75 in cycle II

In the test I, there was 0% ( 0 students) who got points up to 75. In the test II, there was 21.62% ( 8 students) who got points up to 75 whereas In the test III, there was 78.37% ( 29 students) who got points up to 75. From test I to test II, there was significant improvement of students' reading competence (0%-78.37%). Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of Reciprocal Teaching strategy could improved the students' achievement in reading descriptive text.

The writer also analyzed the qualitative data to support this research finding. The qualitative data were taken from observation sheets, questionnaire sheets, and diary notes to know how Reciprocal Teaching could improve the students' achievement in reading descriptive text.

The data of the observation sheet taken from three focus, namely the writer (as the teacher), the students and Context. Based on the data of the observation sheet from the first meeting until the sixth meeting, the value of the score of the writer (as teacher)

focus was 4. It means that the writer as the teacher was Very Good in applying the strategy and motivates the students to improve their reading comprehension. The value of the students focus was 3. It means that the students had Good interest in learning reading comprehension using Reciprocal Teaching Strategy. While the values of the score of context focus were 4. It means that, the classroom was comfortable for the teaching learning process.

Questionnaire sheet was used to know students' opinions, perceptions and responds about the application of Reciprocal Teaching strategy in teaching learning descriptive text in reading. The questionnaire sheets showed that most of the students' understanding about descriptive text became improved by using Reciprocal Teaching Strategy.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, the conclusions are drawn as follows:

1. There is an improvement of students' achievement in reading descriptive text if it is taught by using Reciprocal Teaching. It is showed from the mean of the students' scores in three tests: test I (43.17), test II (63.29) and test III (83.69).

2. The students felt more enjoyable and interested in learning reading descriptive text by applying Reciprocal Teaching. It is showed by their enthusiasm in reading descriptive text in two cycles in their respond while they were asked about the material.

### Suggestions

Based on the result of this study, the use of the Reciprocal Teaching could improve the students' achievement in reading descriptive text text. The following suggestions are offered:

1. to the students, to use Reciprocal Teaching strategy while reading so they can comprehend the text easily;

2. to the teachers, to apply Reciprocal Teaching strategy so that they can improve their students' achievement in reading comprehension; and

3. to all the readers, may this research bring them into good understanding how to improve the students' reading comprehension through Reciprocal Teaching strategy.

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