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The Effect of Reciprocal Teaching on SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension Ability

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the effect of Reciprocal Teaching on junior high school students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension ability. The study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group design. The participants consisted of 60 eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja, with 30 students assigned to the experimental group and 30 students to the control group. The instrument used was a reading test consisting of multiple-choice items assessing vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired samples t-test, and independent samples t-test with a significance level of 0.05. The findings revealed that students who were taught using Reciprocal Teaching achieved significantly higher post-test scores than those who received conventional instruction. The independent samples t-test indicated significant differences in both vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05). These findings demonstrate that Reciprocal Teaching is an effective instructional strategy for improving students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension by promoting active participation, strategic reading, and collaborative learning.

Keywords: Reciprocal Teaching, Vocabulary Mastery, Reading Comprehension, Quasi-Experimental Study, EFL Students.

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is one of the most essential skills in English language learning, particularly for junior high school students learning English as a foreign language. It enables learners to acquire linguistic knowledge, access academic information, and develop critical thinking skills through written texts. Reading comprehension is not merely a process of decoding words but also involves constructing meaning, making inferences, and interpreting information critically (Gauche & Flores, 2022). Students' ability to comprehend texts plays a crucial role in determining their academic achievement and engagement across different learning contexts (Nispa et al., 2023). Contemporary perspectives also emphasize that reading

is an interactive and strategic process in which learners integrate textual information with their prior knowledge and cognitive resources to construct meaning effectively (Shahini et al., 2025).

Despite its importance, many junior high school students continue to experience difficulties in comprehending English texts. Students frequently struggle to identify main ideas, recognize supporting details, interpret implicit meanings, and establish connections between ideas across paragraphs (Ramadhianti & Somba, 2023). In many classrooms, reading instruction primarily focuses on answering comprehension questions rather than developing students' strategic reading abilities. Consequently, students often depend on word-by-word translation using dictionaries or digital translation tools, resulting in slow reading processes and superficial comprehension (Budianto et al., 2025; Vongsawath et al., 2026). Such conditions indicate that students have not yet developed the cognitive and metacognitive strategies necessary for becoming independent readers.

These problems are closely related to the way reading is commonly taught in schools. Reading instruction remains predominantly teacher-centered, where teachers explain the content of the text and students concentrate on producing correct answers instead of understanding the reading process itself. Classroom activities emphasize task completion and product-oriented outcomes, providing limited opportunities for students to practice essential reading strategies. This situation creates a discrepancy between theoretical perspectives on reading and actual classroom practices (Wijaya et al., 2021).

The empirical conditions observed at SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja further illustrate these challenges. Preliminary observation conducted on January 20 revealed that reading instruction relied heavily on teacher explanation and textbook-based exercises. The observed class consisted of 18 students, including 10 male and 8 female students. Although digital learning facilities such as smart televisions and interactive panels were available, they were not optimally integrated into classroom instruction. During reading activities, students demonstrated passive participation and experienced difficulties in identifying main ideas, making inferences, and understanding unfamiliar vocabulary. Several students copied answers directly from the text without fully comprehending the content, while many relied on translating individual words before attempting to understand the passage. These findings suggest that students possess limited reading strategies and relatively low reading comprehension ability.

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Reciprocal Teaching. However, research focusing on junior high school students remains limited. Existing studies frequently address primary or higher education contexts (Purba et al., 2025). Many investigations emphasize variables such as motivation, communication skills, or metacognitive awareness rather than simultaneously examining vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension as measurable learning outcomes (Nora et al., 2026; Teng & Mizumoto, 2025). Several studies also employ online learning environments or descriptive approaches without experimentally measuring instructional effectiveness. Therefore, empirical evidence obtained through a quasi-experimental design in face-to-face English classrooms at the junior high school level remains limited.

Based on these considerations, this study investigates the effect of Reciprocal Teaching on students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension ability through a quasi-experimental design involving junior high school students. By employing a controlled comparison between Reciprocal Teaching and conventional instruction, this study is expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of Reciprocal Teaching in improving students' English reading achievement. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of more effective reading instruction practices for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, particularly at the junior high school level.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effect of Reciprocal Teaching on junior high school students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension ability. The research adopted a pre-test and post-test control group design, in which two intact classes were assigned as the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group received instruction through Reciprocal Teaching, whereas the control group was taught using conventional teaching methods.

The participants of this study consisted of 60 junior high school students at the same grade level, including 30 students in the experimental group and 30 students in the control group. Both groups participated in the study throughout the instructional period and completed the same assessment before and after the treatment to measure changes in their learning outcomes.

The instrument used in this study was a reading test consisting of 20 multiple-choice items designed to assess students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. The test measured several aspects of reading comprehension, including identifying main ideas, recognizing supporting details, making inferences, and understanding contextual meaning. Prior to its implementation, the instrument was validated through expert judgment to ensure its content validity and clarity. The same instrument was administered as both the pre-test and the post-test.

The research procedure consisted of three main stages: pre-test administration, treatment implementation, and post-test administration. Initially, both groups completed the pre-test to determine their initial level of vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. The experimental group then received instruction using Reciprocal Teaching through several classroom sessions, while the control group continued learning through conventional instructional methods. At the end of the treatment period, both groups completed the post-test to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional strategies.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the assistance of SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to describe students' learning outcomes. Inferential statistics were employed through paired samples t-test to examine improvements within each group and independent samples t-test to compare the post-test results between the experimental and control groups. All statistical analyses were conducted at a significance level of 0.05 to determine the effectiveness of Reciprocal Teaching in improving students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension ability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vocabulary Mastery

Table 1. Vocabulary Post-Test Comparison

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Experimental Group	30	77.47	2.91	72	83
Control Group	30	65.37	3.09	60	71

Table 1 shows that the experimental group achieved a higher mean score ($M = 77.47$, $SD = 2.91$) than the control group ($M = 65.37$, $SD = 3.09$). The mean difference of 12.10 points indicates that students who learned through Reciprocal Teaching demonstrated better vocabulary mastery than those who received conventional instruction. The experimental group's scores ranged from 72 to 83, whereas the control group's scores ranged from 60 to 71. Furthermore, the relatively small standard deviations indicate that students' scores within both groups were fairly consistent. These descriptive findings suggest that Reciprocal Teaching positively contributed to improving students' vocabulary mastery.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test Result (Vocabulary)

Variable	Group	N	Mean	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Vocabulary Post-Test	Experimental	30	77.47	9.62	58	0.000
	Control	30	65.37			

The independent samples t-test revealed a t-value of 9.62 with 58 degrees of freedom and a significance value (Sig. = 0.000). Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result indicates that there was a statistically significant difference in vocabulary mastery between students taught using Reciprocal Teaching and those taught using conventional instruction.

These findings demonstrate that Reciprocal Teaching effectively facilitates vocabulary acquisition by encouraging students to actively engage in predicting, questioning, clarifying unfamiliar words, and summarizing textual information. Such learning activities enable students to process vocabulary in meaningful contexts, resulting in stronger vocabulary retention and deeper conceptual understanding. This finding is consistent with constructivist learning theory, which views learning as an active process of constructing knowledge through interaction and meaningful experiences.

The present findings are also consistent with previous empirical studies. Khan et al., (2025) reported that Reciprocal Teaching significantly improved students' reading achievement by promoting active participation and strategic comprehension processes. Mohamed (2023) found that Reciprocal Teaching enhances learners' metacognitive awareness, allowing students to monitor their understanding while reading and regulate their learning strategies more effectively. The current study extends these findings by providing empirical evidence from Indonesian junior high school students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Reading Comprehension

Table 3. Reading Comprehension Post-Test Comparison

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Experimental Group	30	78.00	4.26	65	84
Control Group	30	66.93	4.51	62	87

Table 3 indicates that the experimental group obtained a higher mean score in reading comprehension (M = 78.00, SD = 4.26) than the control group (M = 66.93, SD = 4.51). The mean difference of 11.07 points demonstrates that students who participated in Reciprocal Teaching showed better reading comprehension ability than those who experienced conventional instruction. Although the control group achieved a slightly higher maximum score, the overall average performance clearly favored the experimental group. In addition, the relatively low standard deviations indicate that students' performances within each group were reasonably homogeneous. Overall, these descriptive findings provide evidence that Reciprocal Teaching positively influenced students' reading comprehension ability.

Table 4. Independent Samples t-Test Result (Reading Comprehension)

Variable	Group	N	Mean	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Reading Comprehension Post-Test	Experimental	30	78.00	9.772	58	0.000
	Control	30	66.93			

The independent samples t-test yielded a t-value of 9.772 with 58 degrees of freedom and a significance value (Sig. = 0.000). Since the significance value was below the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding confirms that students who learned through Reciprocal Teaching achieved significantly better reading comprehension outcomes than those who received conventional teaching methods.

The findings suggest that Reciprocal Teaching successfully enhances students' reading comprehension by promoting collaborative learning and strategic reading processes. Through predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing, students actively construct meaning from texts rather than relying solely on teacher explanations. From the perspective of metacognitive learning theory, these activities encourage students to monitor, regulate, and evaluate their own comprehension, thereby improving their ability to understand English texts independently.

These findings are consistent with the social constructivist perspective, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction and collaborative dialogue. Reciprocal Teaching provides opportunities for students to exchange ideas, discuss textual meaning, and solve comprehension problems collectively. The results are also in agreement with Khan et al., (2025), who found that Reciprocal Teaching significantly improved students' reading comprehension because learners became more actively involved in constructing meaning from texts. Similarly, Susanti et al., (2020) concluded that collaborative reading strategies encourage students to apply higher-order thinking skills during reading activities.

Compared with previous studies, the present research provides stronger empirical evidence because it employed a quasi-experimental design in a face-to-face junior high school classroom and simultaneously examined vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension as learning outcomes. Overall, the findings confirm that Reciprocal Teaching is more effective than conventional instruction in improving students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Therefore, Reciprocal Teaching can be recommended as an effective instructional strategy for English teachers, particularly in junior high school classrooms where students often experience difficulties in vocabulary acquisition and text comprehension.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study demonstrates that Reciprocal Teaching has a significant positive effect on junior high school students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension ability. Students who received instruction through Reciprocal Teaching achieved better learning outcomes than those who learned through conventional teaching methods. The implementation of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing strategies encouraged students to become more active readers, develop metacognitive awareness, and construct meaning from texts more effectively. These findings indicate that Reciprocal Teaching is an effective instructional strategy for improving both vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

The findings also highlight the importance of incorporating interactive and student-centered learning strategies into English reading instruction. Reciprocal Teaching not only enhances students' academic performance but also promotes collaboration, critical thinking, and independent learning. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to adopt Reciprocal Teaching as an alternative instructional approach to improve students' reading achievement. Future researchers are recommended to extend this study by involving larger samples, different educational levels, or investigating the effectiveness of Reciprocal Teaching on other English language skills to provide broader empirical evidence.

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