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# The implementation of reciprocal teaching strategy in teaching critical reading

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**Abstract:** Low students' interest in learning and reading English text influence to their critical reading ability. Teaching strategy is one of the solutions to solve the problem. An appropriate teaching strategy can influence to students' interest in learning and reading English text. This study aims at describing the effect of reciprocal teaching strategy in teaching Critical and Evaluative Reading at second grade students of UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta in the academic year of 2022/2023. Reciprocal teaching strategy consists of four activities, namely predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. The subjects are two classes of the second-grade students of English Education Study Program that consist of 60 students. The study used descriptive qualitative approach. Data were derived from observation and semi-structure interviews to the lecturer and students. The findings showed that the sequence activities of reciprocal teaching strategy encourage them to be more active and critical during teaching learning process. The activities that were done through working in group and sharing each other ideas help them overcome their difficulty during reading and facilitate them to be independent readers.

**Keywords:** critical reading; reading; reciprocal teaching.

## A. Introduction

Reading is a kind of language skills which is the closest aspect to the understanding process. In the level of understanding a text, the goal is not merely to understand the meaning of word by word, but they must conclude the whole text to get fully understanding the massages. In reading subject, students are faced many kinds of texts which have cultural differences between their culture and the source text. Davies, et al., in (Wallace, 2006) state that two main problems that influence in learning foreign language are lacking linguistics knowledge and cultural setting. Students' failure in reading critically

is caused by their lack of context knowledge. Without the ability to read effectively, students find difficulties in comprehending the text. Students as a fluent readers have a potential to develop the ability to read critically. Critical reading is reacting with systematic evaluation to what readers have heard and read which requires a set of skills and attitudes (Browne & Keeley, 2007). However, some students often face difficulties to think critically in interpreting and concluding the text.

Critical thinking begins from the awareness and desire to improve what someone thinks. Critical thinking consists of an awareness of a set interrelated critical questions, the ability and the willingness to ask and answer them at appropriate times (Browne & Keeley, 2007). In learning process, teacher needs to encourage students' critical thinking through reading comprehension because students are required to understand both explicitly and implicitly written in the text. Critical reading involves how to interpret and to evaluate the implied meanings in the text (Budiasih & Dewi, 2019). Adopting from Bloom's taxonomy revised version (Anderson, Krathwohl, & Bloom, 2001) in (Arifiyanti, 2020) there are six hierarchies of a critical thinking, namely: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. It means that critical thinking pedagogy proposed by this theory gives students a chance to step from the lower level to the higher level.

Students need to pass through some stages to understand, analyze, and evaluate the material critically. However, many students find difficulties to build critical thinking when reading a text. The monotonous or inappropriate teaching strategy used by the teacher makes them bored and do not enjoy the learning process. Therefore, appropriate learning strategy helps students to understand a text and it also plays a major role in students' thinking skill. Teaching of reading strategies to less competent readers is worth investigating with a hypothesis that poor readers will get benefit from trainings how competent readers deal with reading task (Orbea & Villabeitia, 2010).

In order to fully understand how a student learns from texts, one cannot ignore any of the four main factors of decoding fluency, considerate texts, compatible content, and strategic activity (Palinscar & Brown, 1984). However, this study only focuses on strategic activity. One of the teaching reading strategies that will be discussed through this paper is Reciprocal Teaching. It originated from Palinscar & Brown in 1984. Reciprocal teaching consists of summarizing (self-review), questioning, clarifying, and predicting which

provide a dual function that enhance comprehension and at the same time afford an opportunity for the student to check whether it is occurring (Palinscar & Brown, 1984). Reciprocal teaching is an appropriate teaching strategy to increase student's comprehension while implementing the Common Core State Standards (Oczkus, 2013). Further, He explains that reciprocal teaching is a scaffolded discussion design that involves of: predict, question, clarify, and summarize.

Reciprocal teaching encourages learners to be more active monitored by teacher. Training the four activities of self-directed summarizing (review), questioning, clarifying, and predicting, embedding them in the context of a dialogue between student and teacher that took place during the actual task of reading with the clear goal of deriving meaning from the text (Palinscar & Brown, 1984). They continued that summarizing is modeled as an activity of self-review; it is engaged in to state to the teacher or the group what had just happened in the text and as a self-test that the content had been understood. Questioning is not practiced as an isolated activity, but as a continuing goal of the whole enterprise – what main idea question would a teacher or test ask about that section of the text. Clarifying occurred only if there are confusions either in the text or in the students' interpretation of the text. Predicting is attempted if the students or teachers recognize any cues that serve to herald forthcoming material. In short, all activities were undertaken in the context of actual reading with the goal of understanding and remembering the text.

Reciprocal teaching is done in group learning model controlled by the teacher. During reciprocal teaching discussions students run through the strategies with partners or group members, sometimes specifically taking on the roles of the strategies themselves as the predictor, classifier, questioner, and summarizer (Oczkus, 2013). It means by taking role for each activity motivate students to get deeper comprehension about the discussion. Reciprocal teaching strategy develops students' reading motivation, supports foreign teaching learning, and increases the ability to work cooperatively in a small group discussion (Ismail et al., 2012).

Further, teacher's rule as a model of each activity gives positive impact for students. They do not only take material from teacher, but they also take a role for each step of reciprocal teaching strategies. Students follow their instructors in many teaching activities, and take their instructors' reading comprehension strategies as models

(Lysynchuk et al., 1990). The dialogue session urges them to share what they get to their friends. They are encouraged to ask questions that they do not understand to their teacher.

Some researches on reciprocal teaching show that the strategy is effective to enhance reading comprehension. (Arifiyanti, 2020) studied that the reciprocal strategy encourage students' to think critically by answering some of high order thinking skills questions. (Syaiful & Ahmad, 2017) based on quasi-experimental study through test and questionnaire concluded that reciprocal teaching strategy implemented on experiment class was more effective students' reading ability. Further, (Nurbaidah, 2016) based on her research concluded that Reciprocal teaching gave significant and positive effect on students' reading motivation and affected on their reading comprehension. Meanwhile (Oczkus, 2013) states that second language students benefited from the consistent use of the reciprocal teaching as well as struggling readers.

Teaching reading subject in a higher education is more complex than the previous education level. Students are expected be a good reader and to be critical in reading a text. Thus, they are challenged to be able to read affectively to comprehend the texts. Based on the researcher's observation and interview to the lecturer of Critical and Evaluative Reading at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, the researcher found some phenomena during teaching learning process. Some students got difficulties in comprehending texts because when they found unfamiliar words during the reading process, they lost their focus and difficult to understand the passage. Other factor was influenced by the differences contextual setting with the source text. Rodli & Prastyo (2017) state that most students get problem on discovering the meaning of words in context and in appropriate class activities.

Responding to the problems of students' difficulty in think critically, the lecturer implements reciprocal teaching strategy. Therefore, the study focuses on discussing about the implementation of four activities of reciprocal teaching strategy implemented to the second-grade students of UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta as an alternative technique to promote students' critical thinking in teaching Critical and Evaluative Reading.

#### B. Methods

This study is descriptive qualitative research which aims at explaining and investigating the implementation of reciprocal teaching strategy on students' reading motivation. The data are obtained from observation for six meetings and interview to the teacher and students through in-depth interview. The subjects of the research are two classes of the second-grade students of English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta in the academic year of 2022/2023 that consist of 27 students. Data are analyzed using interactive method of analysis of Miles and Huberman that includes reduction data, display data, and conclusion (Sutopo, 2002). The techniques that is used by the researcher in checking the validity of the data is method triangulation. Method triangulation includes examining the degree of trustworthiness of the research finding using several data collection techniques and examining levels of trustworthiness of multiple data sources using the same method (Moleong, 2013).

# C. Result and Discussion

Reciprocal teaching is started by teacher's role in modeling every activity of its strategy. Teacher's role in exemplifying those activities determines the successful implementation of reciprocal teaching. The four activities of reciprocal teaching are done through team work by discussing each student's ideas. Each step of reciprocal teaching is used in response to a concrete problem of the text and has its own function. Reciprocal teaching involves interaction between teacher-students and students-students. In the beginning of this strategy, teacher models each activity of reciprocal teaching to students as below:

- Teacher reads a text.
- 2. Teacher exemplifies how to draw background knowledge to pay attention on the main idea of each paragraph of the text.
- 3. Teacher explains and exemplifies how to ask appropriate questions that should involve about 'what', 'how', and 'why'.
- 4. Teacher exemplifies how to make critical evaluation.
- 5. Teacher explains how to draw conclusion.

- 6. Teacher divides the students into several groups that consist of 4-6 students.
- 7. Teacher diminishes her role and
- 8. on the other hand, students' roles are encouraged to be more active.
- 9. Students take their role as a leader for each group and the others are the participants.
- 10. Students implement every stage of reciprocal teaching

The four strategies of reciprocal teaching, namely: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing are used in response to promote students' critical thinking which have their own function.

# 1. Predicting

Predicting is started by student's explanation about their knowledge. Students are divided into several groups which consist of 5 students. Teacher stimulates them by giving some texts which have similar topic, showing pictures and videos or others that correlates with the text. further, students discuss with their group while teacher monitors each group and makes sure that every student participates during the discussion. Here are the examples:

#### Text 1

"Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900, and its revolutionary impact is still being felt today".

Text 1 consisted of fact sentence and the students were required to read and to predict the lesson topic. By discussing it with their peer, they shared their opinion to others.

**Table 1:** Text of Fact and Opinion

|   | Fact   | Opinion                     |  |
|---|--|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | The sun is red.                                | The red sun is beautiful.   |  |
| 2 | Most human cells contain forty-six chromosomes | It is a wonderful decision. |  |
|   | arranged in twenty-three matching pairs.       |                             |  |

Teacher gave the similar topic, Table 1, to be discussed in a group. Table 1 was simpler than text 1. It was meant to make them easier in understanding the same topic as text 1. It was supposed to encourage students to predict the topic lesson. They were led to correlate their background knowledge to the topic being discussed. After reading and discussing the texts, they correlated the concept of the existence of the sun and concluded

that the existence of the sun is a fact. By correlating their background knowledge from Table 1 and text 1, students predicted the upcoming topic, as below:

**Table 2:** Students' response to text 1

| Text          | Participant | Responses  |
|---------------|-------------|--|
| (Student A)   | Student B   | I guess text 2 leads us to the discussion of fact and opinion.       |
| "What do you  | Student C   | I think I will learn about fact and opinion because the              |
| guess we will |             | paragraphs of text 1 consist of fact and opinion. Besides that, text |
| learn about?" |             | 2 consists of a fact and an opinion.                                 |
|               | Student D   | I do agree, it's about a fact.                                       |
|               | Student E   | Text 2 consists of fact and opinion, maybe we will discuss about     |
|               |             | them.  |

The texts stimulated them to predict the upcoming sentences. Students were encouraged to think what would happen next. As the leader of the group, student A asked their friends to predict the upcoming sentences by saying "What do you guess we will learn about." Students A, B, C, and D shared their opinion based on the text correlated to their background knowledge. As presented in the Table 1, student B and E could guess the material based on text 2 which indeed that was the easier text functioned to retract their knowledge of fact. However, student C showed more complete arguments than others did. He guessed the upcoming material based on his understanding of both the two texts. He correlated his understanding of text 2 to text 1, so he recognized that both the two texts discussed the same topic of fact.

Predicting is aimed at stimulating students' logical thinking. Based on (Ismail et al., 2012), predicting evaluates readers' prediction while reading the passage to prove or reject their expectation. Indeed, it can be done by making prediction what may happen through the text based on the main and supporting ideas that are correlated to their previous knowledge and experience.

Teacher can also present a picture or a heading that correlates to the topic and ask them to give opinion. The concept of visualization helps students respond and understand the text. Readers correlate their background to the topic, comprehend it, and become able to asses it by skimming the given photos and headings (Ismail et al., 2012). This step activates and stimulates their logic in understanding text. Students' background knowledge becomes a clue that introduces them to the topic.

## 2. Questioning

Questioning is meant to maximize discussion activity. At this stage, students are expected to be active to generate some questions about any difficulties or problems that they found while they read a text. A student may not understand well the material of the lesson, other students who comprehend the text can share their knowledge to others. Therefore, work in a group is essential in this step. Every student may have different ideas. By sharing each other idea, they get more knowledge and more understand about the passage. Students are required to explain the main idea of each paragraph. The clarification of main idea is crucial, since the accuracy of main idea establishes other sentences as the supporting statements. To know student's comprehension level, teacher give some critical questions about who, what, when, where, why, or how related to the content of the text.

Questioning requires students to comprehend the detail information. Students do not only determine the main idea or the topic paragraph, but they should examine the specific items of the passage. It can be done by peer discussion. This method makes them easy to understand the content of the text through sharing each other ideas.

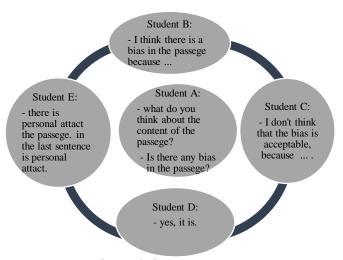


Figure 1. Group Discussion

As showed in the picture, students discussed the passage of 'Bias using personal attacks' given by the teacher. By giving the question, student A took his responsibility as the leader role who managed the stage of questioning of the reciprocal strategy. Student B, C, D and E as the participants of the group gave their opinions based on their understanding. The stage of questioning showed us that reciprocal teaching helped

students to understand easier due to the peer support. Student who understood the whole passage would try to share to the others. Based on the Figure 1, student D might learn more detail information from students B, C and E.

Questioning is not only supposed to make students understand the main idea or topic of the text. However, it encourages them to be more curious about the specific ideas for each paragraph. In the activity of creating and answering question, students are required to think critically and hard. It leads them to comprehend the whole text. (Rodli, 2018) argues that when creating and answering the question, students will develop critical thinking ability to engage them to the content of the passage and to deepen comprehending that leads them to succeed in reading process. Students are engaged in multiple processes when they generate questions, require deeper interaction with the text, and build knowledge structure from the text through the concept level of questions (Taboada & Guthrie, 2006).

# 3. Clarifying

Clarifying is done to know students' problem in understanding the relevant content of the text. This step emphasizes to reinforce their comprehension of the whole text. If it is needed, students may reread the text. They can use dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words or idiom. The leader of the group emphasizes on discussing the matter that is still debatable. On the other hands, the teacher checks and looks for ideas or problems that might confuse them. He asks students for the main idea to know their general understanding. If there is any misconception during the discussion, he directly clarifies it. Figuring out the content of the text involves the use of words in context. (Oczkus, 2013) stated that students know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skill in decoding words in text. They also use context to confirm or self-correct, and they reread when necessary. Therefore, students do not get wrong interpretation during the process of discussion. These monitoring and clarifying efforts make them focus on mastering the topic.

Clarifying is emphasized on problem solving. It is started by monitoring students' understanding on the main idea or topic being discussed through the text. After understanding the topic, students can identify the problem. Reading a text does not always mean that students comprehend the text. A student may find difficulties in comprehending

main idea of the passage. Therefore, clarifying is needed to be conducted. In this stage, students may re-read the text to comprehend unknown words. (Ismail et al., 2012) say that clarifying is a strategy where the students may re-read the text in order to recognize and understand the unfamiliar information. Further, Hamdani (2020) states that clarifying covers identification and clarification difficult or unfamiliar points of the passage.

## 4. Summarizing

Summarizing encourages students to conclude what they have learned to classify the topic appropriately. Students' ability in summarizing text relates closely to their capability to interpret the text.

**Table 3.** text of summarizing

|             | 8                                       |
|-------------|---|
|             | Explain the main idea of each paragraph |
|             | Paraphrase the content of the text      |
| Summarizing | First, second, third paragraph is about |
|             | This part is about                      |
|             | The text tells about                    |

Students have already had basic knowledge for understanding and classifying text through questioning and clarifying. Through this step, they are asked to explain main ideas and main points based on their understanding in predicting, questioning, and clarifying. They are required to explain the content of the text by their own words. Therefore, students have to comprehend the most important idea of each paragraph, correlate, and conclude them.

Summarizing needs high students' critical thinking ability because it demands them to conclude the topic, main idea, and content of the text. They must retell the text based on their understanding by their own language. Students conduct a passage by the same content but different language construction which is called by paraphrasing. It may enrich their vocabularies and develops their ability in concluding and conducting a passage. Paraphrasing is not easy as presenting the passage that they read. A capability to summarize a text is a crucial study skill in which a student seldom receives explicit training (Hellystia, 2017).

The implementation of reciprocal teaching is conducted through group working. It gives positive impact to students especially for students who have low reading motivation. Students can ask to their peers for something that they do not understand well. Group

work also motivates students to be more active and critical in understanding text. Reciprocal teaching strategy enhanced students' reading motivation and their ability of both the proficient and less proficient students (Ismail et al., 2012). (Pilten, 2016) explains that in the steps of reciprocal teaching strategy, not only do students monitor their own comprehension; they also become active participants in their learning and learn from others in the process.

Based on the students' opinion, they stated positive statements related to the implementation of reciprocal teaching strategy. Some students believe that the strategy is effective and easy to be applied due to peer-support. They believe that reciprocal teaching strategy make them easier in understanding a passage. Some students also stated that comparing to individual learning which they should read the passage more than two times; reciprocal teaching strategy which consists of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing encourage them to get better understanding. They added that after reading the passage, they might not understand it, but their friends tried to help her understand the passage through discussion. Therefore, they did not need to repeat reading the passage. Further, students felt that learning critical reading using reciprocal teaching was fun. According to them, reading activity could be boring, but by discussion activity, they were encouraged to be active for each activity during the teaching learning process. In line with this research, Khan & Ch. (2021) reveals that students who were taught with reciprocal teaching were more enjoyed reading passage than students who were instructed with traditional teaching strategy.

Based on the students' ideas about the efficiency of reciprocal teaching strategy on their reading comprehension, most of them consider that the strategy promotes their critical thinking. They believe that due to group work and extra time make them easier in comprehending a text. (Rodli, 2018) argues that by working in pair or in group, students do each activity cooperatively, discuss the text, and to argue with each other. (Fevre et al., 2003) states that students enjoyed working with other whom they perceived to more intelligent students when they had an experience of being in a group with other friends with reading difficulties or working alone.

Based on finding related to teacher's opinion, she argued that the use of reciprocal strategy in discussion was more organized through the activities on it. Comparing to her

previous strategy which was also discussion, reciprocal teaching was more beneficial. The stages of activities in reciprocal teaching distinguished it from her older teaching strategy. Each activity of reciprocal teaching had certain benefits for students. The number of participants in a discussion affected to students' reading motivation Discussion in small group that consisted of 4-6 students was more effective than discussion in large group which consisted of 33-35 students. Moreover, working in small group made teacher easier to control and to monitor students' understanding. However, working in large group made her difficult in checking students' understanding, since she focused on controlling and making her students understand the point of the passage.

Another finding related to teacher's statements on the successful implementation of reciprocal teaching are in line with students' ideas. According to her, the strategy is more effective than another strategy that she used in teaching critical reading. Beside the strategy makes students easier in understanding a text, based on teacher's experience, teaching in small group makes her easy in controlling students' understanding. Working in small groups: student- student/ teacher- student interaction and teacher's role as the model positively affect to the students' comprehension (Pilten, 2016).

## D. Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that reciprocal teaching strategy implemented in Critical and Evaluative Reading class gives positive effect toward students' reading skill. The activities of reciprocal teaching which included of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing are to encourage them to be more active and critical during teaching learning process. Further, the activities that were done through working in group and sharing each other ideas make them enjoy reading the text. The activities of reciprocal teaching help students overcome their difficulty during reading and facilitate them to be independent readers.

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