

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter consists of: (1) the background of the research, (2) the problem of the research, (3) the limitation of the research, (4) research question, (5) research objectives, (6) the significance of the research, and (7) key term definition in the research.

1.1 Background of Study

Reading comprehension constitutes a core component of English language learning at the junior high school level. As English functions as a foreign language in many educational contexts, reading serves as the primary channel through which learners access linguistic input and academic knowledge. Reading comprehension extends beyond decoding written symbols and involves complex cognitive processes such as meaning construction, inference making, and critical interpretation of text. Consequently, students' ability to comprehend written symbols and involves complex cognitive processes such as meaning construction, inference making, and critical interpretation of text. Consequently, students' ability to comprehend written texts significantly influences their overall academic achievement and their capacity to engage with subject matter across disciplines (Nispa et al., 2023).

From a theoretical perspective, reading comprehension represents an interactive process involving the reader, the text, and the learning context. Contemporary reading theories conceptualize comprehension as an active

meaning-making process rather than a passive reception of information (Putri et al., 2017). Readers continuously integrate textual information with prior knowledge, linguistic competence, and strategic processing skills.

These problems may arise from several interrelated factors. Students who possess limited vocabulary knowledge often allocate most of their cognitive resources to decoding individual words rather than constructing the overall meaning of the text. Furthermore, reading instruction that emphasizes finding correct answers instead of teaching strategic reading processes provides few opportunities for students to develop higher-order comprehension skills, such as identifying main ideas, making inferences, and integrating information across paragraphs. As a result, students become accustomed to relying on word-by-word translation and teacher explanations rather than actively constructing meaning independently. Based on a preliminary classroom observation conducted on January 20, 2026, at SMP N 5 Singaraja involving one English teacher and 32 eighth-grade students, the researcher observed that reading instruction was predominantly teacher-centered.

The observation was conducted through direct classroom observation, classroom documentation, and an informal interview with the English teacher. During the lesson, students were asked to read a text from the textbook, after which the teacher explained unfamiliar vocabulary and assigned comprehension questions. The available digital facilities, including a smart television and an interactive panel board, were used only to display learning materials rather than to facilitate strategic reading activities. According to the English teacher, approximately 21 out of 30 students still difficulty identifying main ideas,

making inferences, and understanding unfamiliar vocabulary independently.

Classroom observation also indicated that only 8 students (25%) actively participated in text discussions, whereas the remaining students tended to wait for the teacher's explanations before answering questions. These findings suggest that students relied heavily on word-by-word translation and had limited opportunities to develop strategic reading skills such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Consequently, reading instruction had not yet optimally supported the development of students' cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies.

The preliminary findings were also reflected in students' academic performance. Based on the English teacher's record from the previous semester, the average reading comprehension score of Grade VIII students was 68.4, which was below the school's minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 75. According to the teacher, students frequently relied on translating individual words rather than applying reading strategies to construct meaning from the text. These findings indicate that students' reading difficulties involve not only limited vocabulary knowledge but also insufficient strategic reading skills.

Metacognitive theory further underscores the importance of strategic awareness in reading comprehension. Metacognition refers to individuals' knowledge about their own cognitive processes and their ability to regulate those processes effectively. In reading contexts, metacognitive readers plan their reading, monitor comprehension, and evaluate outcomes. Research has consistently indicated that proficient readers employ metacognitive strategies

more frequently than less proficient readers. Nevertheless, many junior high school students have not developed metacognitive reading skills due to insufficient instructional scaffolding.

Reciprocal Teaching emerges as a pedagogical strategy grounded in both constructivist and metacognitive theories. This approach emphasizes guided dialogue between teachers and students through four core strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. These strategies reflect essential cognitive processes involved in effective reading comprehension. By engaging students in structured discussion, Reciprocal Teaching externalizes internal reading processes and allows learners to practice strategic thinking collaboratively (Wijaya et al., 2021).

Reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery are theoretically inseparable. Reading comprehension requires readers not only to recognize written words but also to understand their meanings within textual contexts. According to Nation (2001), insufficient vocabulary knowledge limits readers' ability to interpret sentences, infer meanings, and construct coherent understanding from texts. Within Reciprocal Teaching, the clarifying strategy specifically encourages students to identify unfamiliar words, infer their meanings using contextual clues, discuss alternative interpretations with peers, and confirm understanding through teacher guidance. Meanwhile, the other three strategies also contribute to reading comprehension. Predicting activates learners' prior knowledge before reading, questioning encourages active monitoring of understanding, and summarizing enables students to synthesize important information after reading. Consequently, Reciprocal Teaching is

theoretically expected to improve vocabulary mastery through the clarifying process while simultaneously enhancing reading comprehension through the integrated application of all four strategies.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that Reciprocal Teaching contributes positively to students' reading achievement across different educational settings. Aktaş (2023), for example, reported that Reciprocal Teaching significantly improved elementary school students' reading comprehension by promoting active interaction with texts and increasing students' engagement during reading activities. Likewise, Sholihah et al. (2024) found that Reciprocal Teaching enhanced university students' communication skills and collaborative learning through structured discussion, indicating that the strategy encourages learners to construct knowledge socially. Ghavam et al. (2025) further revealed that Reciprocal Teaching significantly strengthened students' metacognitive awareness and problem-solving abilities because learners continuously monitored and evaluated their own understanding while reading.

Although previous studies consistently reported positive effects of Reciprocal Teaching, several important gaps remain. Aktaş (2023) conducted a quasi-experimental study involving elementary school students and focused exclusively on reading comprehension outcomes. Sholihah et al. (2024) investigated university students using a collaborative learning approach and examined communication skills rather than language achievement. Ghavam et al. (2025) employed an experimental design to investigate metacognitive awareness and problem-solving abilities among higher education learners. These

studies differ from the present research in terms of participants, educational level, research focus, and outcome variables. Moreover, none of these studies simultaneously examined vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension among junior high school students in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Since vocabulary knowledge serves as an essential foundation for successful reading comprehension, investigating both variables simultaneously provides a more comprehensive understanding of how Reciprocal Teaching supports language learning.

Therefore the present study addresses this gap by examining the effectiveness of Reciprocal Teaching on both vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension using a quasi-experimental design at the junior high school level. Therefore, based on the problems identified above, the researcher intends to investigate the effect of Reciprocal Teaching on students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension ability. Accordingly, the title of this study is "The Effect of Reciprocal Teaching on SMP N 5 Singaraja Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension Ability".

1.2 Identify Problem

Based on the preliminary observation and the issues discussed in the background of the study, the problems identified in this research can be classified into two categories: primary outcome problems and contributing factors. This classification is intended to distinguish the learning outcomes experienced by students from the instructional conditions that may contribute to those outcomes.

1. Primary Outcome Problems

- a. Students experience difficulty in identifying the main ideas, supporting details, and implicit meanings of English texts, resulting in limited reading comprehension.
- b. Students demonstrate limited vocabulary mastery, making it difficult for them to understand unfamiliar words and interpret the overall meaning of English texts.

2. Contributing Factors

- a. Reading instruction is predominantly teacher-centered, with greater emphasis on answering comprehension questions than on teaching strategic reading processes.
- b. Teachers rarely provide explicit instruction on reading strategies, such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing, which are essential for developing students' reading comprehension and vocabulary learning.
- c. Students tend to rely on word-by-word translation when reading English texts, making the reading process slow and preventing them from constructing meaning effectively.

Students demonstrate passive learning behavior during reading activities because they depend heavily on the teacher's explanation and have limited opportunities to construct the identified problems indicate that students' learning difficulties are multidimensional. Limited vocabulary mastery reduces students' ability to understand unfamiliar words, which subsequently affects their ability to identify main ideas, supporting details, and implicit meanings within a text.

At the same time, instructional practices that rely predominantly on teacher explanations provide limited opportunities for students to develop independent reading strategies. Consequently, students tend to become passive learners who depend on direct guidance rather than actively constructing meaning from the text. These conditions highlight the need for an instructional approach that simultaneously develops students' vocabulary knowledge and strategic reading skills.

These findings indicate that improvements in reading instruction are needed to support students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension more effectively. In response to these identified problems, Reciprocal Teaching is proposed as a potential instructional strategy whose effectiveness will be empirically examined in this study rather than assumed in advance meaning independently.

1.3 Scope and Delimitation of Study

This study is limited to investigating the implementation of Reciprocal Teaching as an instructional strategy for improving two dependent variables, namely students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension ability. The research was conducted at SMP N 5 Singaraja and involved eighth-grade students during the 2026/2027 academic year. The study employed a quasi-experimental design using an experimental group and a control group in a conventional face-to-face classroom setting.

The instructional materials used in this study were limited to English reading texts included in the Grade VIII curriculum, particularly narrative texts. The

treatment was implemented over 8 instructional meetings, excluding the administration of the pre-test and post-test. Vocabulary mastery was measured through students' ability to identify word meanings, recognize synonyms and antonyms, and understand vocabulary in context. Reading comprehension was assessed through students' ability to identify main ideas, supporting details, vocabulary in context, references, and implicit meanings within the reading texts.

The comparison condition in this study consisted of conventional teacher-centered reading instruction, in which students received teacher explanations, vocabulary clarification, and comprehension exercises without the systematic application of Reciprocal Teaching strategies. This study does not examine other English language skills such as speaking, listening, or writing, nor does it investigate the implementation of Reciprocal Teaching in online or blended learning environments. Therefore, the findings of this study are limited to the specified participants, instructional context, treatment, and outcome variables.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the identified problem and research limitations, the research addresses the following questions:

1. Is there a significant difference in post-intervention vocabulary mastery between the experimental group and the control group after controlling for their pretest vocabulary scores?
2. Is there a significant difference in post-intervention reading

comprehension ability between the experimental group and the control group after controlling for their pretest reading comprehension scores?

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are formulated as follows:

1. To determine whether there is a significant difference in post-intervention vocabulary mastery between the experimental group and the control group after controlling for their pretest vocabulary scores.
2. To determine whether there is a significant difference in post-intervention reading comprehension ability between the experimental group and the control group after controlling for their pretest reading comprehension scores.

1.6 Research Significance

The result of this study is expected to be useful theoretically and practically as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of knowledge related to reading comprehension instruction, particularly in the context of English as a foreign language. The study strengthens empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of Reciprocal Teaching as a metacognitive and constructivist-based instructional strategy. It also extends existing literature by focusing on junior high school students, an educational level that has received limited attention in prior reciprocal teaching research. This study also contributes

to the growing body of literature concerning strategy-based reading instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Unlike previous studies that mainly investigated Reciprocal teaching at elementary or university levels, the present study provides empirical evidence from junior high school learners, particularly regarding its simultaneous influence on vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Therefore, the findings are expected to enrich pedagogical theories related to metacognitive reading instruction and provide additional evidence for Reciprocal Teaching implementation in Indonesian EFL classrooms.

2. Practical Significance

a. The teacher

Practically, this study provides English teachers with an alternative instructional strategy for teaching reading comprehension. Reciprocal Teaching offers a structured yet flexible approach that encourages student engagement, strategic thinking, and collaborative learning. Teachers may use the findings of this study as a reference to design more effective, student-centered reading instruction.

b. The student

For students, the implementation of Reciprocal Teaching supports the development of independent reading skills and strategic awareness. Students gain opportunities to actively engage with texts, monitor their understanding, and improve overall reading comprehension. This approach also fosters confidence and motivation in reading English texts, thereby supporting long-

term language learning development.

1.7 Definition of Key Study

1. Conceptual Definition

a. Reciprocal teaching

Reciprocal Teaching is an instructional strategy developed by Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar and Ann L. Brown (1984) to improve students' reading comprehension through structured dialogue between teachers and students. The strategy engages learners in four cognitive activities, predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing, which encourage students to monitor their understanding and construct meaning actively while reading. Recent studies have also confirmed that Reciprocal Teaching remains effective in improving students' reading comprehension and engagement in English language learning (Purnama et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2025).

b. Vocabulary mastery

Vocabulary mastery refers to learners' knowledge of word meanings, forms, pronunciation, and appropriate use in different contexts. According to Norbert Schmitt (2000), vocabulary mastery involves not only knowing the meaning of words but also understanding how words are used in various linguistic contexts. Furthermore, vocabulary knowledge enables learners to recognize, interpret, and apply words effectively in communication and reading activities (Kargiotidis et al., 2025).

c. Reading Comprehension ability

Reading comprehension ability is the process of constructing meaning from written texts by integrating prior knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and cognitive strategies. According to Catherine Snow (2002), reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction with written language. This ability includes identifying main ideas, understanding supporting details, making inferences, interpreting implicit meanings, and connecting information within and across texts (Kargiotidis et al., 2025).

2. Operational Definition

a. Reciprocal teaching

In this study, reciprocal teaching refers to an instructional strategy implemented in the classroom through guided reading activities where students work collaboratively in small groups and apply four strategies: predicting the content of the text, generating questions about the text, clarifying difficult vocabulary or ideas, and summarizing the main points of the reading passage under the teacher's guidance (Liu et al., 2025).

b. Vocabulary mastery

Vocabulary mastery in this study refers to students' ability to understand and use English vocabulary, which is measured through a vocabulary test that assesses word meaning, synonym and antonym recognition, and the use of vocabulary in context. The results are indicated by the students' scores obtained from the vocabulary test administered during the research (Kargiotidis et al.,

2025).

c. Reading Comprehension ability

Reading comprehension ability in this study refers to students' capability to understand written English texts. It is measured through a reading comprehension test that evaluates students' ability to identify the main idea, recognize supporting details, interpret vocabulary in context, make inferences, and understand the overall meaning of the text (Şimşek et al., 2025).

