

THE ANALYSIS OF RECIPROCAL TEACHING LEARNING MODEL IN IMPROVING CRITICAL READING SKILLS AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Rita Safira¹, Masrupi², Welliam Hamer³

^{1,2,3}Department of English Education Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa

[¹safirarita2@gmail.com](mailto:safirarita2@gmail.com) , [²masrupi@untirta.ac.id](mailto:masrupi@untirta.ac.id) , [³welliamhamer@untirta.ac.id](mailto:welliamhamer@untirta.ac.id)

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Reciprocal Teaching Model in improving students' critical reading skills at SMPN 7 Kota Serang. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected through classroom observation, critical reading tests, and semi-structured interviews with both the English teacher and Grade VIII students. The data were then analyzed using descriptive analysis to examine patterns of teacher implementation, student engagement, and reading achievement. The findings reveal that the Reciprocal Teaching Model was implemented at a Good level (mean score 3.4 for teacher performance) and produced an average critical reading achievement of 58.75%. Students performed best in identifying main ideas (70%) but struggled with evaluating texts critically (55%) and expressing opinions (50%). This study concludes that the Reciprocal Teaching Model is an effective strategy for developing students' critical reading skills, though sustained scaffolding for higher-order tasks remains essential for optimal outcomes.

Keywords: *Reciprocal Teaching, critical reading, qualitative, SMPN 7 Kota Serang*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan Reciprocal Teaching Model dalam meningkatkan kemampuan membaca kritis siswa di SMPN 7 Kota Serang. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, tes membaca kritis, dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan guru bahasa Inggris serta siswa kelas VIII. Data kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif untuk mengkaji pola implementasi guru, keterlibatan siswa, dan capaian membaca. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Reciprocal Teaching Model diterapkan pada kategori Baik (skor rata-rata 3,4 untuk kinerja guru) dan menghasilkan capaian membaca kritis rata-rata sebesar 58,75%. Siswa menunjukkan capaian terbaik dalam mengidentifikasi ide pokok (70%), namun masih mengalami kesulitan dalam mengevaluasi teks secara kritis (55%) dan mengungkapkan pendapat (50%). Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Reciprocal Teaching Model merupakan strategi yang efektif untuk mengembangkan kemampuan membaca kritis siswa, meskipun scaffolding berkelanjutan untuk tugas tingkat tinggi tetap diperlukan demi hasil yang optimal.

Kata Kunci: Reciprocal Teaching, membaca kritis, kualitatif, SMPN 7 Kota Serang

A. Introduction

English is widely recognized, as Galloway and Rose (2020) note, as a global language and is used in various domains such as education, communication, and international collaboration. In Indonesia, as Alek (2023) observes, English is taught as the primary foreign language from elementary school to university level. Among the four core language skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – reading comprehension, as Grabe and Stoller (2019) emphasize, plays a vital role in students' academic achievement by enabling learners to understand, analyze, and extract relevant information from various types of texts.

A number of recent studies have explored the impact of reciprocal teaching on junior high school students, particularly in enhancing their reading comprehension and critical thinking. One study by Yuliana and Aminatun (2021) investigated the use of reciprocal teaching among eighth-grade students in Lampung, demonstrating significant improvements in students' ability to analyze texts, infer meanings, and summarize information effectively. Another relevant study was conducted

by Sari and Damayanti (2022), focusing on the application of reciprocal teaching to improve reading skills among eighth grade junior high school students in Bandung. Their findings revealed that students not only became more active and collaborative in the learning process but also developed deeper textual understanding through the four core stages: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Furthermore, Lase et al. (2025) and Putri et al. (2026) confirmed that Reciprocal Teaching significantly enhances student engagement and comprehension structure in junior secondary levels. Additionally, Spörer and Schünemann (2017) explored secondary students engaged in Reciprocal Teaching, finding that students reported increased confidence in evaluating arguments and detecting bias. While these prior studies confirm the general benefits of Reciprocal Teaching, most focused predominantly on general reading comprehension at the secondary level. The present study addresses this gap by providing an in-depth analysis specifically on critical reading skills across four distinct indicators (identifying main ideas, drawing

conclusions, evaluating texts critically, and expressing opinions) among Grade VIII junior high school students at SMPN 7 Kota Serang.

As the world becomes increasingly driven by information, the ability to read is no longer sufficient if it stops at surface level understanding. Students are expected to develop critical reading skills, which involve evaluating, interpreting, and drawing conclusions from texts. Paul (1993) emphasizes that critical reading requires reflective and rational thinking about what is read. In this sense, reading critically means more than just recognizing words; it involves linking textual content with prior knowledge and filtering information logically. In recent educational contexts, as Li and Liu (2023) observe, this foundational concept remains highly relevant, with scholars such as Al-degether (2020) emphasizing that advanced text comprehension is deeply dependent on a student's conscious management of their cognitive and analytical standards during reading.

According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018, Indonesian students scored an average of 359 in reading

literacy, far below the OECD average of 487, placing Indonesia in the bottom tier of participating countries (OECD, 2019). In more localized studies, Sari (2023) found that 47% of senior high school students frequently experience difficulties in comprehending English texts, especially in identifying main ideas, understanding vocabulary, and making inferences. Similarly, Iskandar and Fitriyani (2022) reported that many junior high school students tend to rely on word-for-word translation, which results in shallow comprehension and limited critical engagement with texts. These findings highlight an urgent need for more interactive and strategy-based reading instruction that can effectively improve comprehension and critical reading skills among Indonesian students.

These challenges are also evident at SMPN 7 Kota Serang. Based on pre-observations and interviews with English teachers, many students find it difficult to understand texts thoroughly. They struggle to identify main ideas, construct meaning from passages, and demonstrate analytical reading. Their limited vocabulary knowledge further hinders comprehension. Additionally, students show low

engagement when interacting with English texts and often fail to draw implicit conclusions or recognize topic sentences.

One teaching approach that has shown promise in addressing such difficulties is the Reciprocal Teaching model. Reciprocal teaching is a scaffolded discussion technique that incorporates four main strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. In this model, the teacher and students take turns leading dialogues about a specific portion of text, allowing the teacher to model the strategies before gradually shifting responsibility to the students (Okkinga et al., 2016). This research aims to analyze the implementation of the Reciprocal Teaching Model in improving students' critical reading skills at SMPN 7 Kota Serang.

B. Method

This research employed a qualitative descriptive method. The study was conducted at SMPN 7 Kota Serang, a public junior high school in Serang, Banten Province, Indonesia. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, consisting of one English teacher and four Grade VIII classes (8G, 8H, 8I, and 8J). Data

were collected through four validated instruments: (1) Teacher Observation Checklist, (2) Student Observation Checklist, (3) Critical Reading Test, and (4) Semi-Structured Interview Guide. Data were analyzed using the interactive data analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Sald  a (2014), comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Research Findings

Data collection was carried out in two phases: Phase I (Preliminary Observation, Nov 26–28, 2025) and Phase II (Implementation & Testing, Jan 19–22, 2026). Attendance remained consistently high across all classes throughout the study.

Table 1. Student Attendance Data Grade VIII Classes

N o.	Cla ss	Total Students	Present	Absent	Attendance (%)
1	8G	39	37	2	95%
2	8H	39	39	0	100%
3	8I	39	38	1	97%
4	8J	38	38	0	100%

Source: Research attendance records, 2025-2026

Observation of teacher activities yielded an overall mean score of 3.4

(Good category) across ten observed aspects, demonstrating strong command of learning procedures and lesson closure.

Table 2. Teacher Observation Results during Implementation

No.	Observed Aspect	Score (1-4)	Category
1	Communicating learning objectives & prior knowledge	4	Excellent
2	Explaining Reciprocal Teaching procedures	4	Excellent
3	Guiding students through Predicting stage	3	Good
4	Guiding students through Questioning stage	3	Good
5	Guiding students through Clarifying stage	3	Good
6	Guiding students through Summarizing stage	4	Excellent
7	Providing feedback and reinforcement	3	Good
8	Encouraging active student participation	3	Good
9	Managing instructional time effectively	3	Good
10	Conducting reflection and closing lesson	4	Excellent
	Overall Mean Score	3.4	Good

Source: Research observation data, 2025-2026

Student observation results yielded a mean score of 2.7 (Fairly Good category), while the critical reading test yielded an average score of 58.75% across four core indicators.

Table 3. Summary of Students' Critical Reading Test Results

N o.	Critical Reading Indicator	No. of Students	Percentage (%)	Category
1	Identifying Main Idea	21	70%	Good
2	Drawing Conclusion	18	60%	Fairly Good
3	Evaluating Text Critically	17	55%	Fair
4	Expressing Opinion	15	50%	Fair
	Average Achievement	-	58.75%	Fairly Good

Source: Primary research data, January 2026

2. Theoretical Underpinnings

The implementation of the Reciprocal Teaching Model in this study rests on a convergent body of theoretical foundations. First and most directly, the model is grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning, which emphasizes that higher mental functions emerge through socially mediated activity. Reciprocal Teaching operationalizes this principle through structured peer discussion, collaborative questioning, and teacher scaffolding, supporting learners in accessing comprehension strategies within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Mercer & Littleton, 2019; Karpov & Haywood, 2019). Teachers and peers act as More Knowledgeable Others (MKOs)

to provide essential scaffolding (Kauffman et al., 2021). Furthermore, Flavell's (1979) theory of metacognition provides an explanatory framework for why Reciprocal Teaching is effective; it explicitly trains students to monitor and regulate reading comprehension through questioning and clarifying stages using cognitive and cultural tools (Kuo et al., 2022; Khan, 2025). Additionally, schema theory (Aisiyah et al., 2024; Kendeou et al., 2020) explains how predicting acts as cognitive priming, while Freire's critical pedagogy (Nursamsu et al., 2024; Kalir & Garcia, 2020) underpins the evaluative and opinion-expression dimensions of critical literacy.

3. Discussion and Research Novelty

The findings confirm that Reciprocal Teaching is an effective framework to transition students from passive readers to strategic thinkers. Higher achievement in identifying main ideas (70%) highlights the efficacy of predicting and questioning in schema activation (Aisiyah et al., 2024). Conversely, evaluating texts critically (55%) and expressing opinions (50%) proved more challenging due to linguistic

constraints (limited vocabulary), cognitive demands of higher-level Bloom taxonomy levels, and affective barriers like anxiety and fear of making mistakes in English (Alabbaichy et al., 2024; Cárdenas et al., 2026).

The novelty of this research lies in three key contributions. First, it provides empirical data on the application of Reciprocal Teaching specifically within the context of critical reading at the junior high school level (SMP)—an area that prior SMP-level studies (e.g., Yuliana & Aminatun, 2021; Sari & Damayanti, 2022; Lase et al., 2025) have not yet comprehensively addressed, as they focused predominantly on general reading comprehension. Second, by involving four classes simultaneously (8G, 8H, 8I, and 8J), this study generates a broader and more representative dataset than the single-class designs typically employed in comparable research. Third, it offers a comparative lens revealing a distinct competency gradient between junior high school (SMP) and senior high school (SMA) critical reading capabilities, establishing that while SMP learners successfully master foundational comprehension through Reciprocal Teaching, higher-order

evaluative tasks demand more deliberate, long-term affective and vocabulary scaffolding.

D. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Reciprocal Teaching Model is a relevant and effective strategy for enhancing critical reading skills among junior high school students at SMPN 7 Kota Serang. The model demonstrates significant success in developing foundational comprehension skills (identifying main ideas, 70%), supported by consistent teacher implementation (mean score 3.4). However, students continue to encounter difficulties with higher order evaluation and opinion expression due to limited vocabulary, traditional learning habits, and affective barriers.

Based on these conclusions, several recommendations are proposed:

1. For English Teachers:

Teachers are recommended to adopt the Reciprocal Teaching Model as a practical strategy for reading instruction, but should incorporate deliberate, sustained scaffolding specifically for higher-order tasks such as evaluating arguments and

expressing opinions. Teachers should also foster a supportive, low-anxiety classroom environment where students feel safe taking cognitive risks.

2. For Schools and Educational Authorities:

Schools are encouraged to support the implementation of interactive, student-centered learning models by providing targeted professional development and teacher training workshops on Reciprocal Teaching facilitation and critical literacy strategies.

3. For Future Researchers:

Future researchers are recommended to conduct longitudinal or experimental studies with extended intervention periods to further examine the long-term impacts of Reciprocal Teaching on students' evaluative reading competencies across different educational levels.

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