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The Effectiveness of the Reciprocal Learning Method in Improving Students Reading Comprehension Skills in Procedural Texts

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the low reading comprehension skills of procedural texts among grade V students at SDN 01 Bilah Barat. This condition is caused by the use of conventional learning methods that tend to be monotonous and teacher-centered, resulting in students being passive and having difficulty grasping meaning, identifying main ideas, and summarizing the text's content. This low level of understanding is indicated by the students' learning outcomes that have not yet reached the Learning Objective Completion Criteria (KKTP), which is 75. This study uses a qualitative approach with the Classroom Action Research (CAR) type which is implemented in three cycles with reference to the Kemmis and McTaggart model. The research subjects were 23 fifth-grade students of SDN 01 Bilah Barat. The success indicator is determined if the average class score reaches at least 75 and the percentage of classical learning completion reaches at least 75%. The Reciprocal Teaching method is applied by focusing on four main strategies: Summarizing, Questioning, Clarifying, and Predicting. The results of the study show a significant increase in learning outcomes from each cycle, which proves that the action hypothesis is accepted. In Cycle I, the average class score was at 65.5 with a classical completion rate of only 39.13%. After improvements and an emphasis on active student participation, in Cycle II, the average class score increased to 74.8, with a classical completion rate of 69.57%. The most significant improvement occurred in Cycle III, where the average class score reached 85.2, with a classical completion rate of 86.96%. This increase was a 19.7-point increase in the average score and a 47.83% increase in classical completion from Cycle I to Cycle III. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Reciprocal Teaching Method is effective in improving the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade students at SDN 01 Bilah Barat.

Keywords: reciprocal teaching, reading comprehension skills, procedural text, classroom action research (CPT)

I. INTRODUCTION

The quality of learning in elementary schools is heavily influenced by the interaction between teachers and students and the extent to which instruction supports children's holistic development. In the Indonesian context, teachers are expected to act not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as facilitators, motivators, and mentors who create conditions for optimal growth in cognitive, affective, and social domains. However, classroom realities often reveal that instruction remains dominated by traditional, teacher centred approaches, where learners are positioned as passive recipients rather than active constructors of meaning (Villagran & Price, 2025).

Bahasa Indonesia as a subject plays a strategic role in this ecosystem because it underpins students' ability to access information, communicate ideas, and participate effectively in other areas of learning. The curriculum emphasizes mastery of four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—with reading viewed as a foundational competence for academic success. Reading comprehension, in particular, is crucial because it enables learners to understand, interpret, and evaluate textual information, and thereby supports independent learning and critical thinking. When students struggle with comprehension, their performance across multiple subjects tends to decline, as they are unable to fully benefit from written learning materials (Bandalaria, 2025).

Field observations conducted by the researcher at SDN 01 Bilah Barat, Labuhanbatu Regency, indicated that many fifth-grade students exhibit serious difficulties in comprehending texts used in Bahasa Indonesia lessons. During routine instruction, learners often appeared bored and disengaged, treating learning as a playful activity without sustained cognitive effort. In reading comprehension tasks, they were frequently unable to explain the content of texts, answer questions that required interpretation, or formulate questions about what they had read. Such weaknesses were particularly evident in procedural texts, where students struggled to identify the overall goal, distinguish necessary materials, and follow the logical sequence of steps described (Sitanggang, 2026).

Diagnostic assessments further revealed that a substantial proportion of students failed to reach the school's Kriteria Ketuntasan Tujuan Pembelajaran (KKTP) of 75 in reading comprehension of procedural texts. Many learners could

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only answer literal questions whose answers were directly stated in the text, but were unable to summarize, infer, or determine main ideas. These findings suggest that existing instructional practices do not adequately support the development of higher-order reading skills required by the curriculum. Contributing factors include limited variation in teaching methods, heavy reliance on lecturing and memorization, and insufficient emphasis on interactive, strategy-based reading activities (Win & Jeffrey Dawala Wilang, 2025).

From the teacher's perspective, the persistence of these problems reflects challenges in adopting innovative methods and guiding students to become active readers. Many teachers remain within the comfort zone of conventional practices, repeating the same patterns over time, which can inadvertently discourage student initiative and creativity. Furthermore, explicit instruction in metacognitive reading strategies—such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing—is rarely integrated into daily lessons, leaving students without tools to monitor and regulate their comprehension. Given the increasingly complex demands of contemporary curricula, this gap between expectations and classroom practice risks widening learning inequalities (Omonjonovna, 2025).

To address these issues, it is necessary to introduce and evaluate alternative instructional models that can both enliven classroom interaction and systematically build students' comprehension skills. Reciprocal teaching offers one such model, as it is specifically designed to help students interact with texts through structured dialogue and shared responsibility for meaning-making. In this approach, teachers and students engage in the cyclical application of four strategies—summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting—while reading a text together. Over time, students are encouraged to lead discussions in small groups, taking turns acting as "teachers" who guide peers through the strategies. This process is expected to foster not only comprehension but also confidence, collaboration, and critical thinking (Agi Ahmad Gifari et al., 2025).

The theoretical and empirical literature supports the potential of reciprocal teaching to improve reading comprehension, particularly for students who initially have low achievement. Studies report gains in understanding text structure, monitoring comprehension, and willingness to participate orally in class discussions. Nonetheless, successful implementation depends on careful planning, explicit modeling, and iterative refinement based on classroom observation. Classroom action research (Penelitian Tindakan Kelas, PTK) provides an appropriate framework for such iterative improvement, enabling teachers to systematically diagnose problems, design interventions, observe processes, and reflect on outcomes (Wijaya et al., 2025).

Against this backdrop, the present study was designed to examine the effectiveness of the Reciprocal Teaching method in improving fifth-grade students' reading comprehension of procedural texts at SDN 01 Bilah Barat. The research was guided by the following main question: "Is the Reciprocal Teaching method effective in improving the reading comprehension skills for procedural texts among grade V students at SDN 01 Bilah Barat, Labuhanbatu Regency?" The primary objective was to determine whether implementing Reciprocal Teaching in Bahasa Indonesia lessons could raise students' comprehension scores to meet or exceed the KKTP threshold and increase the proportion of learners achieving mastery (Mohammad & Mohammed, 2026).

Beyond this core objective, the study also sought to describe the process of implementing Reciprocal Teaching in an authentic classroom setting, document changes in student participation and motivation, and identify facilitating and inhibiting factors encountered during the intervention. The research therefore contributes both practically, by offering a tested strategy for improving reading comprehension in a specific school context, and theoretically, by enriching the local literature on student centred approaches to Bahasa Indonesia instruction.

II. METHODS

A. *Research Design*

This study employed a qualitative classroom action research (CAR) design, grounded in the Kemmis and McTaggart spiral model of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate because the focus was not only on numerical test scores but also on the dynamics of teaching and learning processes, including student behavior, engagement, and interaction patterns during the implementation of Reciprocal Teaching. The CAR design allowed the researcher, collaborating with the classroom teacher, to iteratively refine instructional strategies based on systematic observation and reflection across three cycles.

B. *Setting and Participants*

The research was conducted in grade V at SDN 01 Bilah Barat, a public elementary school in Labuhanbatu Regency, during the 2025–2026 academic year. The class comprised 23 students, including 9 boys and 14 girls, who all participated as research subjects. Initial observations and assessments indicated that this group had relatively low reading comprehension performance, with many students failing to reach the KKTP value of 75 for procedural-text tasks. One Bahasa Indonesia teacher acted as the classroom collaborator, while the researcher took the lead role in designing and delivering instructional interventions.

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C. *Research Design and Cycles*

The CAR was organized into three cycles (Cycle I, Cycle II, and Cycle III). Each cycle consisted of four stages: (1) planning, (2) acting (implementation of the lesson), (3) observing, and (4) reflecting. In general, each cycle involved two meetings: one for instructional activities using Reciprocal Teaching and one for administering the comprehension test and conducting reflection. The cycles were scheduled in October 2025, with Cycle I on 7 October, Cycle II on 8 October, and Cycle III on 16 October.

D. *Planning*

In the planning stage of each cycle, the researcher analyzed the relevant curriculum documents, including Capaian Pembelajaran (CP), Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP), and specific learning objectives for procedural texts in grade V Bahasa Indonesia. Based on this analysis, a detailed lesson plan (Modul Ajar) was prepared that integrated the four Reciprocal Teaching strategies into reading activities. The researcher also selected appropriate procedural texts aligned with students' daily lives, such as texts about making simple foods or performing hygiene routines, to ensure relevance and accessibility.

The teaching materials included copies of the chosen text for each student, group worksheets to guide the application of the four strategies, and individual practice items. Observation sheets were designed to capture teacher and student behaviors, such as the frequency and quality of questions, participation in group discussions, and use of summarizing and clarifying strategies. In addition, comprehension tests were prepared for each cycle, consisting of items that assessed students' ability to identify text goals, extract key steps, understand sequence and coherence, and summarize the text in their own words.

E. *Acting (Implementation)*

During the acting stage, the lesson was implemented according to the prepared Modul Ajar. The teacher began each lesson with greetings, motivation, and a brief orientation to the objectives of the session. The students were then introduced or reminded of the four Reciprocal Teaching strategies: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. The teacher modeled these strategies using a short text, demonstrating how to identify main points, pose deep questions, resolve confusions, and anticipate upcoming information.

After modeling, students were divided into small groups, each containing mixed ability members. Within each group, roles were assigned so that students could take turns acting as discussion leaders or "student teachers," guiding their peers through the four strategies while reading the procedural text. Group members collaboratively read the text, paused to summarize sections, generated questions about content and vocabulary, clarified unclear elements, and made predictions about subsequent steps or outcomes. The teacher circulated among groups, providing scaffolding, monitoring participation, and addressing misconceptions.

At the end of each lesson, selected groups or individuals presented their summaries and key discussion points to the whole class. The teacher facilitated whole class clarification and emphasized good examples of strategic reading. This was followed by individual practice tasks in which students applied the strategies to answer comprehension questions or write brief summaries on their own.

F. *Observing*

Observation was conducted concurrently with the implementation. The collaborator teacher used the observation sheets to record the extent to which planned steps were executed, the nature of student engagement, and any issues affecting the flow of Reciprocal Teaching activities. The observed indicators included students' willingness to read aloud or silently, frequency of student generated questions, quality of summaries, attention to text structure, and degree of collaboration within groups. The observer also noted classroom management challenges such as noise, off task behavior, and unequal participation. After each cycle's lesson, comprehension test scores were collected and summarized to quantify learning outcomes.

G. *Reflecting*

In the reflection stage, the researcher and collaborator reviewed observation records and test results to evaluate both process and product indicators. They discussed strengths and weaknesses of the implementation, including whether students understood the strategies, whether group work was effective, and how well the teacher's modeling supported independent application. Reflection focused on reasons for students' success or difficulty, identifying aspects that required modification in subsequent cycles, such as clearer instructions, more explicit modeling, or adjustments to group composition. Decisions were then made about specific improvements to be implemented in the next cycle to enhance both engagement and comprehension outcomes.

H. *Data Collection and Analysis*

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Three main data collection techniques were used: observation, tests, and documentation. Observation provided qualitative data about classroom processes, including student attitudes, participation rates, and fidelity of implementation of Reciprocal Teaching steps. Tests yielded quantitative data in the form of student scores on procedural-text comprehension tasks at the end of each cycle. Documentation included lesson plans, students' written work, and photographs or videos illustrating classroom interactions, which supported triangulation of findings.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In data condensation, observation notes and documentary evidence were organized, summarized, and coded according to themes related to strategy use, participation, and comprehension. Test scores were calculated as mean values and percentages of students achieving the mastery criterion (≥75). In data display, results were presented in tables and narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were drawn iteratively, with verification occurring across cycles to ensure that observed improvements were consistent and attributable to the intervention rather than random variation. The indicators of success were defined as (1) at least 76% of students attaining scores ≥75 in comprehension tests (classical mastery) and (2) process indicators—such as implementation of Reciprocal Teaching steps—being rated as "good" in observation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Overall Progress Across Cycles*

Implementation of the reciprocal teaching method over three cycles produced gradual yet substantial improvements in students' reading comprehension of procedural texts as well as in their participation during lessons. Quantitatively, mean scores increased from the mid-60s in Cycle I to the mid-70s in Cycle II and mid-80s in Cycle III, while the percentage of students achieving the mastery criterion rose from below 40% to nearly 87%. Qualitatively, observation data indicated that students became more active in asking questions, summarizing text segments, and discussing meanings with peers.

A summary of key test results is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Reading Comprehension Results by Cycle

Cycle	Mean Score	Students ≥75 (%)	Mastery Status
I	64.3	39.13	Not yet satisfactory
II	74.5	69.57	Approaching mastery
III	85.1	86.96	Mastery achieved

B. *Cycle I: Initial Implementation and Challenges*

In Cycle I, the Reciprocal Teaching model was introduced and applied for the first time. The teacher explained the four strategies and demonstrated their use with a sample procedural text, after which the students worked in groups to apply the strategies. Observation revealed that while group formation proceeded smoothly, many students remained unsure about how to generate questions or how to summarize effectively, often repeating sentences from the text rather than paraphrasing main ideas. Some group leaders did not fully assume the "teacher" role, and discussions tended to be dominated by a few more able students.

The process indicators reflected these challenges. As reported in the thesis, the observed quality of student activities in Cycle I was categorized as "less" with an implementation rate of approximately 53.7%. Students were passive during whole class questioning, hesitant to volunteer answers, and rarely initiated clarification of difficult sections. Classroom noise and uneven participation further limited the effectiveness of group work.

The comprehension test at the end of Cycle I yielded a mean score of 64.3, with only nine out of 23 students (39.13%) reaching or surpassing the mastery threshold of 75. Analysis of test responses showed that many students failed to identify the main purpose of the text, misordered steps, and provided incomplete or literal summaries. These results indicated that the initial implementation had not yet produced satisfactory learning outcomes and that more intensive scaffolding was needed.

C. *Cycle II: Refinement and Improved Engagement*

Based on reflection on Cycle I, several modifications were implemented in Cycle II. First, the teacher devoted more time to explicit modeling of each strategy, including think-aloud demonstrations of how to choose key points for summarizing and how to formulate "why" and "how" questions about procedural steps. Second, clearer guidelines were given for group roles, ensuring that each student would have opportunities to lead discussion and not only listen. Third, group composition was slightly adjusted to balance abilities and encourage peer support.

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Observational data for Cycle II indicated noticeable increases in student participation. More learners were willing to read aloud, propose questions, and contribute to group summaries. The quality of questions improved, moving from simple recall to questions about reasons for specific steps or alternative ways to perform tasks described in the text. Students began to use clarifying strategies more actively, rereading problematic sentences and consulting peers when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary.

These process improvements were accompanied by better test performance. The mean comprehension score rose to 74.5, and the proportion of students achieving mastery increased to 69.57% (16 of 23 students). Students were more successful in identifying text goals and listing procedural steps in the correct order, although some still struggled to write concise summaries and infer implicit information. The results suggested that Reciprocal Teaching was starting to take root as students became more familiar with the strategies and more comfortable with collaborative reading.

D. *Cycle III: Consolidation and Mastery*

Reflection after Cycle II highlighted remaining weaknesses, such as inconsistent use of predicting and occasional superficial summarizing. In Cycle III, the teacher intensified scaffolding around prediction, asking students to anticipate what would happen next based on text cues and to justify their predictions. More emphasis was also placed on synthesizing information from the entire text rather than from isolated sentences, encouraging students to see the procedural text as a coherent whole with a clear goal, inputs, and processes.

By Cycle III, it was observed that Reciprocal Teaching routines were well established. Students were able to cycle through the four strategies more independently, with minimal prompting from the teacher. Group discussions were livelier yet more focused, with most students contributing ideas, raising questions, and offering clarifications. Summaries became more accurate and concise, capturing essential steps and main ideas in students' own words.

The comprehension test results reflected these qualitative changes. The mean score increased further to 85.1, and 20 out of 23 students (86.96%) reached or exceeded the mastery criterion of 75. Only three students remained below the threshold, but their scores also showed improvement compared with earlier cycles. The overall gain from Cycle I to Cycle III was approximately 20 points in mean score, accompanied by a rise of nearly 48 percentage points in classical mastery. These gains met and surpassed the predefined indicators of success for both process and product.

E. *Discussion*

The results across the three cycles support the conclusion that the Reciprocal Teaching method is effective in improving fifth grade students' reading comprehension of procedural texts in the studied context (Tamara et al., 2026). The progressive increase in mean scores and proportion of students achieving mastery indicates that sustained implementation of the four strategies—summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting—helped learners develop more robust comprehension skills. Specifically, students learned to extract main ideas, understand the structure and sequence of procedural texts, and articulate coherent summaries, which are key components of reading comprehension (Az Zahra et al., 2025).

From a process perspective, the gradual shift from teacher dominance to shared responsibility in leading discussions illustrates the power of Reciprocal Teaching to foster student autonomy and metacognitive awareness. Initially, students were reluctant to lead and often depended heavily on the teacher; however, through repeated practice and modeling, they became more confident in guiding peers and monitoring their own understanding (Agartsupa et al., 2025). This pattern is consistent with the scaffolding principle underlying Reciprocal Teaching, where teacher support is incrementally reduced as students internalize strategies (Agnihotri & Chhabra, 2026).

The findings also underscore the importance of careful instructional design and ongoing reflection in classroom action research. The improvements observed from cycle to cycle were not automatic; they required deliberate adjustments—such as clearer modeling, refined group structures, and targeted emphasis on weaker strategies like predicting—to address emerging challenges. Without such responsive changes, the method might not have produced the observed gains (Andini Noviyanti Fitriani et al., 2026).

In relation to the broader literature, the study's outcomes echo previous reports that Reciprocal Teaching can enhance comprehension and participation, particularly among learners who initially have low achievement. The local adaptation to Bahasa Indonesia procedural texts demonstrates that the model is flexible and can be integrated into diverse curricular contexts, provided that texts are carefully chosen and strategies explicitly taught. Moreover, the significant improvement in both scores and observational indicators suggests that Reciprocal Teaching is not only beneficial for cognitive outcomes but also for affective and social dimensions, such as motivation, confidence, and collaboration (Samsudin, 2024).

Nonetheless, the study acknowledges its limitations. The study involved a single class in one school; therefore, generalization to other settings should be cautious. The absence of a control group limits the ability to compare Reciprocal Teaching directly with other methods in this context. Additionally, the intervention focused specifically on procedural texts; future work could explore whether similar gains occur with narrative, expository, or argumentative

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texts. Despite these limitations, the evidence strongly suggests that Reciprocal Teaching is a promising approach for improving reading comprehension in upper primary Bahasa Indonesia classes (Pratama et al., 2026).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This classroom action research demonstrated that the Reciprocal Teaching method is effective in improving the reading comprehension of procedural texts among fifth grade students at SDN 01 Bilah Barat, Labuhanbatu Regency. Across three cycles, students showed marked progress in both process indicators—such as active participation, strategy use, and quality of group discussions—and product indicators, including mean test scores and the proportion of learners reaching the mastery threshold of 75. By the final cycle, most students were able to identify text goals, sequence procedural steps correctly, and produce coherent summaries, reflecting a meaningful enhancement in comprehension skills. The study highlights that Reciprocal Teaching, when carefully planned and iteratively refined, can transform a previously teachercentred reading lesson into a collaborative, student centred learning environment that promotes metacognitive awareness and deeper engagement with text. Teachers are encouraged to adopt and adapt this model within their Bahasa Indonesia classes, integrating the four core strategies—summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting—into routine reading activities. At the same time, further research in different schools and text genres is recommended to strengthen the evidence base and explore the broader applicability of Reciprocal Teaching in Indonesian primary education.

AI Usage Statement

The author declares that no generative AI was used in the preparation, analysis, interpretation of data, or writing of this article.

Author Contribution Statement

For research articles with several authors, a short paragraph specifying their individual contributions must be provided. The following statements should be used “Conceptualization, I.W. and S.; methodology, I.W.; software, I.W.; validation, I.W., S. and R.K.; formal analysis, I.W.; investigation, I.W.; resources, I.W.; data curation, I.W.; writing—original draft preparation, I.W.; writing—review and editing, I.W.; visualization, I.W.; supervision, I.W.; project administration, I.W.; funding acquisition, S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.” Authorship must be limited to those who have contributed substantially to the work reported

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Ethical Compliance

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Data Access Statement

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Conflict of Interest Declaration

The authors declare that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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