



# Improving the Reading Comprehension of the Eight Graders by Developing Think-Pair-Share Strategy

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**Abstract.** This research is developing a Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy to improve the students' achievement in reading comprehension. In applying TPS, there were three sequential cooperative activities. First, the teacher gave questions related to the reading text, and the students had to think about the answer. Then in pairs, the students exchanged their responses. The pairs then shared their ideas with other pairs, teams, or the entire group or class by the representative in each group. This Classroom Action Research consists of three cycles with two meetings each. The researchers collaborated with English teachers to design the TPS strategy process and lesson plan, define the success criteria, take action, observe and reflect. Thirty students of the eight graders at an Islamic Junior High School in Kediri, East Java, Indonesia, are chosen as the subjects of this research. The data collected in this research are derived from observation sheets, field notes, quizzes, and questionnaires. The findings show that students become more engaged in class using the Think-Pair-Share method. They were motivated and excited to share their thoughts and opinions and ask and answer questions. Furthermore, students had positive feelings about the Think-Pair-Share strategy. After the Think-Pair-Share method was implemented and developed through three cycles, it was concluded that this strategy can improve or progress students' reading comprehension.

**Keywords:** Think-Pair-Share · cooperative learning · reading comprehension

## 1 Introduction

Nowadays, science and technology is developing so fast. Technology and science cannot be separated from all aspects of life, including education. In addition to having a positive impact, the rapid development of science and technology in education also has a negative impact. One of the negative impacts is the changes in students' behavior, ethics, norms, rules, or morals of life which decrease their character [1]. An example of digital technology in education is the use of online platforms. This platform causes the transfer of teacher functions and causes teachers to be excluded, or also makes the students become individual because the learning system can be done alone. It is even difficult to supervise or foster the ethics and discipline of students, so that gradually

ethics and discipline of students, will decrease drastically, and the main human nature, namely as social beings, will be eroded.

Beside the emergence of individualism in students, there are many other problems that occur in the education field. One example is in language learning, students have a low interest in reading. A survey conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2019 addresses the issue of low reading interest. According to UNESCO statistics, the Indonesian people's reading interest is extremely low, at barely 0.001%. It indicates that out of every 1,000 Indonesians, just one has a reading habit.

Reading is an important activity and a vital aspect of language learning because it is a part of language abilities [2]. We do not only read the text in reading activities; we also endeavor to grasp what we're reading. Reading also necessitates word recognition, comprehension, and fluency [3]. In order to comprehend all forms of information in a text structure, we need not just reading skills but also the ability to comprehend the content [2]. In addition, we cannot absorb or understand a large amount of information quickly, accurately, or easily if we do not have the ability to understand the text's content.

The purpose of reading in language teaching is to get students skilled in understanding a message in a text. In reality, comprehending text messages, especially in English, is a difficult task. Based on a preliminary observation to eight grade students of an Islamic Junior High School (MTsN 1) Kediri, Indonesia, the students' reading comprehension skills are extremely low. In this case, they cannot perform well in the final semester exam which consists primarily of reading texts, with language function, grammar, and vocabulary.

From the explanation above, it is known that students of MTsN 1 Kediri are still low in their ability to understand English texts. This issue is caused by a number of factors. To begin with, students' vocabulary is insufficient or remains low. The students cannot comprehend the text when they find difficult words that they do not know the meaning. Next, the teachers tend to be more concerned with results than processes. They are frequently unconcerned about the learning process and instead concentrate on the learning outcomes. Another factor is that reading instruction and learning activities are more focused on the teacher than on the students. The instruction of reading is based on what the teacher says, and students are only asked to answer questions, with no opportunity to share ideas or engage in group discussions.

Furthermore, the teacher's technique is still traditional. The students read the text silently or loudly, the teacher then translates the text for the students, and the students then give answers. The next reason is that the process of reading teaching and learning is uninteresting. Students are reluctant to participate, and they often simply listen silently to what the teacher says. It prevents them from cooperating and doing fascinating work. Students compete and work separately in this situation, which causes many to give up when the teacher assigns difficult assignments. They eventually become bored and lose interest in learning as a result of this.

Based on the above-mentioned problems, a method or approach must be implemented to solve them, particularly one that can assist students in overcoming boredom, creating a competitive and individual classroom climate, becoming more student-centered,

and improving reading comprehension. In Indonesia, the concept of teaching and learning activities, particularly a student-centered approach delivered through cooperative learning, is currently quite popular. Cooperative learning is learning that is mediated by students rather than the teacher. Cooperative learning groups of students work together to teach themselves the material under discussion. While providing cooperative learning, teachers might use a variety of learning structures. Furthermore, in student-centered approach the teacher serves as a facilitator and motivator rather than the primary source of information [4]. Cooperative learning is a type of active learning that involves students working as partners with the teacher and other classmates. As a result, students play a significant part in cooperative learning.

The researchers identified Think-Pair-Share as the best cooperative learning strategy out of a variety of options. The primary premise of this technique is to encourage students to participate in class discussions. Furthermore, the teaching-learning process will be more interesting and enjoyable [5]. The implementation of this technique will have a good impact on students' ability to comprehend the teacher's material. The Think-Pair-Share technique, has five steps: pairing students, providing themes or questions, allowing students' time to think, asking students to discuss and share their ideas with their partners, and asking several students to share their ideas with the rest of the class [5].

There have been several studies researching the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy in teaching reading. The implementation of this strategy to seventh-grade students of SMP Islam Aqidah in West Java revealed that students' scores of reading comprehension increased. In addition, their motivation and learning excitement also improve [6]. In line with this finding, there are several other studies that discuss TPS strategies in reading. Among them is Sumekto, whose research finding showed that students' mean reading performance was 63,85 in the first cycle and increased to 66,00 in the second cycle. These outputs fulfil the minimal criteria for success [7], and Ugwu, who investigated the effect of the cooperative learning strategy of TPS on the achievement of high school students in reading comprehension. The findings support the existing evidence on the efficacy of cooperative learning of TPS over traditional teaching methods [8]. While Varadina et al. discussed the TPS strategy in reading descriptive text. Their research showed a statistically significant difference in students' reading comprehension achievement with a significance level of 0.05. [9] In addition, Zuhri showed that the use of TPS can increase eight grade students' reading comprehension seen in the improvement in the average value of the reading test in the first cycle (25%) and the second cycle (79%). Improvements to the classroom situation include the more active participation and communicative interaction during the teaching and learning process. Besides, students began to be more enthusiastic in reading class [10]. Also, Yulianingsih, in an EFL class of seventh-grade students with her pre-experimental research, showed that the TPS technique in teaching descriptive reading effectively improved students' reading comprehension [11].

TPS (Think-Pair-Share) technique can help students enhance their reading comprehension. This is evident from the students' pre-test results, which showed that the majority of the students had weak reading skills [12]. After implementing the TPS technique, there were differences in students' reading comprehension scores as well as their

motivation to master reading comprehension skills. It is evident that students in reading class respond favorably to the TPS technique, and that its practice is recommended. In line with the research of Marnina and Nawaharin [12], another study that raised the theme of TPS strategy to improve students' abilities and motivation was also carried out by Arifin et al. [13], Agussatriana [14], Yani [15], Nikmah [16], and Hudri and Irwandi [17] who generally examine the implementation of TPS at the level of Islamic High School or Madrasah Aliyah.

In narrative text learning, the students have to be able to describe and identify accurately the message in the text. The target is to comprehend a story that takes place in the past and is usually imaginative or fictional with the goal to make the reader entertained. Furthermore, there are other messages conveyed indirectly in its passage. Yet, the current condition of the eighth graders' at MTsN 1 Kediri is still far from the ideal condition mentioned above. It shows that only 49% of students received the minimum passing grade in narrative reading. With these conditions the current research developed a Think-Pair-Share strategy to improve students' reading comprehension achievement.

The researchers believe that the Think-Pair-Share technique is appropriate for teaching English to eighth-grade students at MTsN 1 Kediri, particularly in reading comprehension. This technique can assist students in resolving problems with narrative text reading. Furthermore, the researchers think that by TPS, the teaching and learning process would be more engaging, students' enthusiasm in learning grows, and students can rapidly increase their knowledge.

## 2 Method

This Classroom Action Research involved eight grade students of MTsN 1 Kediri. This study took four months to complete. The subjects of this study were thirty students comprising seventeen females and thirteen males. The researchers chose this class for several reasons: first, the preliminary study revealed that the students' reading comprehension in this subject was poor. Second, based on the preliminary observation, the students thought that the reading class applied boring teaching technique so that they have difficulty in learning reading comprehension in the class.

The action research design consisted of four cycles: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. This research began by identifying the problem the students have in reading comprehension. At the planning stage, the researchers prepared a lesson plan and a learning scenario. At the implementation stage, the teacher organized the learning programs according to the schedule. The teacher carried out the reading comprehension learning process by using the Think-Pair-Share Strategy. After that, she gave the students worksheets and explained the activities in groups. Each group member read the text given, and afterward they read it. They shared with their friends what is in the text, then the group representative retold what they got to the whole class. The lesson ended with the teacher giving an opinion about the group presentation. Furthermore, at the observation stage, the researchers observed and evaluated the learning process, and these results can be used to plan the next cycle. At the reflection stage, the researchers concluded and reflected the results of observations on the reading test cycle I.

The data obtained were both qualitative and quantitative. The technique used was a reading test and the instrument was a reading assessment rubric shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Rubric of reading test assessment

Answer	Score
Complete or correct answer	2
Half complete or correct answer	1
Wrong answer	0

To determine whether this research was successful, the researchers analyzed the data in two ways: a qualitative and a quantitative analysis. In qualitative analysis, the researchers made an observation sheet on student activities to see their developments such as the activity, participation, and motivation in the learning process. In quantitative analysis, the researchers obtained the data on student scores in each cycle from the reading comprehension test results to see the increase in their scores. The criteria that this research was considered successful if at least 75% of students get a score of at minimum 60. Suppose the result was less than 75%, it would be continued with re-implementation, re-observation, and re-analysis in cycle 2 or 3 until the students could achieve the expected success criteria.

### 3 Findings and Discussion

It is clear from the students' test results that their reading comprehension improves over time. It indicates that the Think-Pair-Share technique has a beneficial influence on students' ability to answer questions about reading materials. The majority of them gradually improved their grades at the end of each cycle, with Cycle 3 being the most significant. On the reading comprehension test, just one student (3.33%) out of thirty achieved a score of 60. On the first quiz, four students (13.33%) scored 60 or higher, sixteen students (53.33%) scored 60 or higher on the second quiz, and twenty-six students (86.67%) scored 60 or higher on the third quiz. Figure 1 illustrates an increase in the number of students who scored 60 or higher on the reading comprehension test from the first to the third test. Figure 2 displays the number of students who share ideas, ask and answer questions during cycle I, cycle II, and cycle III of the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, according to the survey results, (1) students prefer to learn reading comprehension using the Think-Pair-Share strategy (90%), (2) TPS helps students improve their reading comprehension (83%), (3) TPS helps students share ideas with others (73%), (4) TPS helps students improve their ability to answer questions (90%), (5) TPS helps students improve their questioning skills (83%), and (6) TPS helps students improve their questioning skills (80%).

Based on the data analysis above, several interesting facts are the weaknesses arise during TPS implementation and how to overcome them, as well as the variables contribute to the success of TPS model implementation. The students are initially confused since they are unfamiliar with the TPS technique. The researchers explained the steps and information about the activities they would perform several times, but some of them

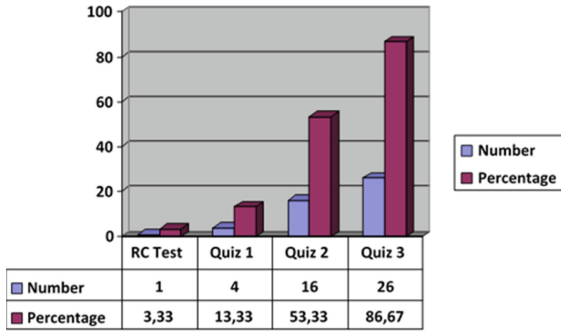


Fig. 1. The score of reading comprehension test

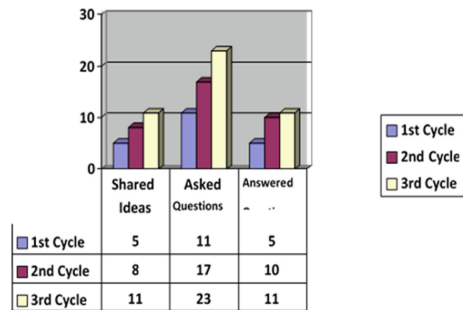


Fig. 2. Students' participation in reading class

were still having trouble understanding it. As a result, they failed to finish their assignments, particularly when it comes to answering questions from reading materials and discussing it in groups. The researchers and the teacher, on the other hand, do their best to help students in solving this difficulty by demonstrating what they will do in each session. It is quite beneficial to them, and the discussion proceeds smoothly in the end.

Another obstacle that students face is their inability to communicate their thoughts and feelings. This situation occurs because students are fearful of making errors when communicating their ideas. As a result, only a few students simply end up dominating the discussion. The researchers helped the students in solving their difficulties by engaging them in group discussions, offering stimulus, and developing their ideas.

Despite several issues, however, this study is regarded as a success. The growth in student scores and the number of students passing the minimum passing grade from one cycle to the next demonstrated this. The complexity of TPS is one of the key reasons for its success in increasing student achievement. Students in this technique collaborate as a group. They read the narrative text in the first step. After that, they analyzed the text and attempted to answer the questions on the worksheet. The next phase is for them to create small groups with other friends and share their views in order to come up with the best solutions to the questions that were previously given to them. They can explore their knowledge by following these steps, and later can answer any questions about the

topic. As a result, their reading skills significantly improved. The TPS model, according to Kagan, has several advantages. It includes: students are actively involved in thinking; thinking becomes more focused when discussing with a partner; and it trains students to think critically. Besides, students find it easier or more comfortable to discuss with other classmates than with larger groups [5].

Another benefit of using the Think-Pair-Share technique in research is that students' communication skills can improve greatly. The increase in students involved in discussions before and after the TPS is used demonstrates this. Students appear less active and even passive before the TPS model is applied. They actively discuss with their groups when this method is introduced. Students' communication abilities are very likely to develop through group discussions. They can develop their communication skills while discussing comments and exchanging viewpoints with others by working in groups [18]. Furthermore, the learning results reveal that students' active involvement is significantly increased. Students are also sharing, asking, and answering questions in greater numbers. This situation occurs because this strategy encourages students to work in pairs to discuss ideas, ask and answer questions. Thus, the simultaneous interaction between pairs and between classes is clearly visible.

It has been discovered that teaching reading utilizing the TPS (Think-Pair-Share) technique helps enhance students' enthusiasm. That is, using the TPS (Think-Pair-Share) technique in teaching reading can help students learn more effectively and provide them with numerous opportunities to improve their understanding of the target language. It is indicated by the results of the questionnaire filled out by students. The application of the TPS strategy is not only beneficial for students, but also for teachers. When students participate in TPS activities, they spend more time doing tasks and listening to one another. It makes the teacher's job easier. Because here she only acts as a facilitator and motivator, she does not explain all the material to the students. Moreover, even though the class is quite large, the teacher still can handle it. In this case, the teacher's task is not only to deliver information to students, but also to be a facilitator. Teacher's task is to facilitate learning to all students so that they can learn in an atmosphere that is fun, happy, exciting, relax, and free to express opinions [19]. Those are the basic things for students to grow and develop into human beings who are ready to adapt, face various possibilities, and enter the era of globalization which is full of challenges. In addition to the teacher's role as a facilitator, the teacher must also act as a motivator in encouraging students. Learning outcomes will be optimal if there is the right motivation. The teacher's ultimate task is how to encourage students to grow in their inner motivation [20].

According to the findings of this research and earlier studies, it can be said that the Think-Pair-Share technique can improve reading comprehension abilities and raise students' enthusiasm and interest in learning. One of the previous studies is a study conducted to seventh grader students [6]. The result shows that the implementation of the TPS strategy into the learning process helps students enhance their reading comprehension. Besides, this strategy supports their enthusiasm in learning English, particularly in reading comprehension.

The effectiveness of Think-Pair-Share technique has been proven by several studies, not only to eight graders as found in this study but also to students in advanced level. Sumekto has investigated the influence of the think-pair-share strategy on the learning

achievement of ninth graders [7]. It increases students' participation and performance in reading. In group learning, students improved their functional communication, discussion, decision-making, and problem solving. The findings also suggest that students' average reading ability improves and that they can satisfy the minimum passing grade. According to the findings, using TPS as an alternate learning strategy can help students improve their collaborative skills.

Another similar finding to this research is the benefit of TPS as found by Ugwu [8]. The influence of two cooperative learning strategies, Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) and Think-Pair-Share (TPS), is apparent in the context of English reading comprehension class in Nigeria. STAD and Think-Pair-Share have a considerable effect on students' reading comprehension success. Therefore, it can be concluded that not only in Nigeria, but also in Indonesian school, TPS as part of cooperative learning is more successful than traditional teaching approaches.

There are several limitations in this research. First, although the Think-Pair-Share method is proven to be effective in improving the achievement of reading skills of eighth graders, this method is not necessarily effective for ninth graders. This is because they are concentrating on various kinds of exams to graduate from junior high school. Furthermore, the success of TPS cannot be separated from the time of implementation, which is carried out in the morning. Morning time is the most effective time to study compared to other times [21]. It also can boost reading habit [22]. The application of this method in the afternoon or evening does not guarantee the success of this method. It is because the physical and mental conditions of students have decreased, thus causing the understanding of the material cannot be maximized. Furthermore, this method is effective because it is carried out offline, where teachers and students can interact directly as part of the feature of cooperative learning [23]. If it is done online, the results may be different, as teachers and students cannot interact as effectively as in the classroom. This ineffectiveness can be caused by many things, for example, there are several technical problems such as unsupportive online connection, limited student data packages, student participation that is difficult to monitor, and other technical problems.

## 4 Conclusion

The Think-Pair-Share technique increased the reading comprehension of eight grade students at MTsN 1 Kediri after three implementation and development cycles. By applying the TPS strategy, the student's achievements in reading increased in each cycle. In the first cycle, the students who increased their achievement or met the criteria of success were about 10%, 40% in the second cycle and the third cycle were about 33%. It means that the student's reading achievement increased 83% after applying the TPS strategy in three cycles. Furthermore, when students use the TPS technique, they become more engaged in class, exchanging ideas and asking and answering questions. Most of the students had positive feelings about the TPS implementation. Based on these findings, it is suggested that teachers use this technique as an alternative to other methods of teaching English, particularly in reading comprehension. It can also be used as a reference for future research.



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