

The Use of Read, Cover, Remember, Retell (RCRR) Strategy in Improving Students' Reading Achievement

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Abstract

Reading is one of the four important skills that must be taught in English. Reading can help students to understand information better, develop critical skills, and increase vocabulary and understand the content of text. However, the majority of EFL student's experience difficulty reading widely. This study aimed to determine the impact of the RCRR strategy on the reading achievement of the tenth-grade students at SMA Karya Ibu Palembang. The research used a quasi-experimental design with pretest and posttest non-equivalent groups. The sample consisted of 60 students, with 30 in the experimental group (X.A) and 30 in the control group (X.B). Data were collected through pretests and posttests and analyzed using paired and independent sample t-tests. The paired sample t-test results showed a p-value of 0.000 and a t-value of -55.166, indicating significant improvement in students' reading achievement. The independent sample t-test showed a p-value of 0.000 and a t-value of 3.952, surpassing the t-table value (2.045), proving a significant difference between the groups. The findings confirm that the RCRR strategy positively affects students' reading achievement in descriptive texts, suggesting it is an effective strategy for improving EFL students' reading skills.

Keywords: reading achievement, RCRR strategy, descriptive text

A. Introduction

English is the most widely used international language for communication among people from different linguistic backgrounds. As a global lingua franca, English plays a crucial role in various domains, including education, business, and diplomacy. Mastering English is essential for individuals who seek to engage in international interactions and access a vast array of academic and professional opportunities. Language, in general, serves as a

medium to convey thoughts, ideas, and emotions (Liando & Tatipang, 2023). According to Hampp (2019), language allows individuals to express their opinions and thoughts effectively. This underscores the importance of English proficiency, as it enables individuals to communicate across cultural boundaries and enhance their understanding of different perspectives.

Reading is a fundamental skill in English learning and is critical for academic success and knowledge acquisition. Among the four main language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—reading plays a vital role in developing comprehension and critical thinking abilities (Kumayas & Lengkoan, 2023). Effective reading skills help learners absorb new information, understand textual materials, and improve their language proficiency. According to Gilakjani and Saboni (2016), reading is an interactive process that involves constructing meaning from written texts. Reading comprehension, therefore, is more than just recognizing words; it involves understanding ideas, identifying key information, and making inferences. Given its importance, students must enhance their reading skills to achieve better academic performance and broaden their knowledge base.

However, students often encounter difficulties in reading comprehension, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Many EFL students struggle with vocabulary limitations, lack of motivation, and difficulties in understanding textual structures. According to data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Indonesia ranks low in reading proficiency, highlighting the need for effective reading strategies (Saepudin, 2014). In addition, research suggests that students find reading to be monotonous and challenging, leading to disengagement in the learning process (Jannah, 2017). These issues indicate that traditional teaching methods may not be sufficient to enhance students' reading skills. Therefore, innovative strategies are needed to improve students' engagement and comprehension in reading activities.

Several studies have investigated the effectiveness of various reading strategies to enhance students' comprehension. One such strategy is the Read, Cover, Remember, Retell (RCRR) strategy, which has been found to improve students' reading ability (Hoyt, 2002). Research by Maryansyah and Ramadhani (2022) demonstrated that the RCRR strategy significantly enhances students' comprehension; however, the study had a limited sample size. Similarly, Resmi (2021) found that students who were taught using the RCRR strategy outperformed those who were not, but the study's sampling technique was not ideal. Another study by Septiana and Suyadi (2020) indicated that the strategy positively impacts reading comprehension, though it lacked a detailed explanation of the sampling method. These studies suggest that while the RCRR strategy is effective, further research is needed to validate its applicability in different educational settings.

This study has two research questions designed to investigate the effectiveness of using the RCRR strategy in improving students' reading achievement in descriptive text. The study aims to answer the following questions: 1. Is there a significant improvement in reading achievement in the tenth-grade students of SMA Karya Ibu Palembang before and after being taught using the RCRR strategy? 2. Is there a significant difference in reading achievement between the students who are taught using the RCRR strategy and who are not?.

B. Research Methodology

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design, specifically a pretest-posttest non-equivalent group design. A quasi-experimental approach was selected because it allowed for the comparison of an experimental and a control group without the necessity of random assignment (Creswell, 2017). The pretest and posttest were administered to both groups to measure changes in students' reading achievement, with the experimental group receiving treatment in the form of the RCRR strategy, while the control group did not

(Creswell, 2015). This design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to examine the potential causal relationship between the RCRR strategy and students' reading achievement while considering practical constraints related to class assignments.

The population of this study consisted of 91 tenth-grade students at SMA Karya Ibu Palembang in the academic year 2024/2025. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, selecting 60 students from two classes, X.A and X.B, based on specific criteria: similar reading abilities, instruction by the same teacher, and comparable class sizes. Class X.A was assigned as the experimental group, while Class X.B served as the control group. Purposive sampling was chosen to ensure homogeneity between the two groups, thereby reducing potential confounding variables (Frankel & Wallen, 2012). However, a limitation of this method is its reduced generalizability compared to random sampling.

The data collection process involved administering a reading comprehension test, consisting of 70 multiple-choice questions focused on descriptive texts. The test was divided into a pretest, given before the treatment, and a posttest, administered after the treatment to measure improvements in students' reading skills. Prior to implementation, the test underwent a validation process to ensure its reliability and appropriateness. Content validity was established through alignment with the curriculum, while construct validity was confirmed through expert evaluation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2012). The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS 26, with a threshold value of 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability (Ghozali, 2016).

The treatment consisted of eight sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, during which the researcher introduced and applied the RCRR strategy. This strategy involved students analyzing text elements such as titles, headings, introductions, and key vocabulary before engaging in deeper comprehension exercises. The experimental group participated in guided reading sessions using RCRR, while the control group followed conventional reading

instruction. The selection of this treatment method was based on its effectiveness in improving students' ability to extract relevant information and enhance their reading comprehension skills (Sugiyono, 2016).

Data analysis was conducted using statistical methods to determine the effectiveness of the RCRR strategy. The pretest and posttest scores were analyzed using paired sample t-tests and independent sample t-tests in SPSS 26. The normality test, conducted via the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, ensured the data met parametric assumptions, while the Levene test was used to check for homogeneity. A paired sample t-test was employed to compare pretest and posttest scores within each group, while an independent sample t-test was used to assess differences between the experimental and control groups. The statistical significance threshold was set at $p < 0.05$ (Creswell, 2012).

The methodological choices in this study were scientifically justified to ensure reliability and validity. The quasi-experimental design provided a structured framework for evaluating causal relationships despite the lack of randomization. The purposive sampling technique allowed for the selection of comparable groups while acknowledging the trade-off in generalizability. The use of multiple validation methods enhanced the credibility of the research instrument, and the application of appropriate statistical analyses ensured that the findings were robust and interpretable. By following these methodological steps, the study aimed to provide meaningful insights into the impact of the RCRR strategy on students' reading achievement.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

This study investigated the effectiveness of the RCRR strategy in improving students' reading achievement. The findings highlight three key aspects: (1) data description, (2) prerequisite analysis, and (3) hypothesis testing results. The data description presents the distribution and descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest scores from both the control and experimental groups. The prerequisite analysis confirms the normality and homogeneity of the data, ensuring the validity of further statistical tests. Finally, hypothesis testing results provide insights into the significant differences and improvements in reading achievement between the groups.

The descriptive statistics indicate that students in the experimental group had lower pretest scores compared to the control group, with a mean of 39.47 in contrast to 47.73. However, after implementing the RCRR strategy, the experimental group's posttest mean score rose significantly to 75.53, whereas the control group's posttest mean reached only 64.90. This suggests that the RCRR strategy contributed to a greater improvement in reading achievement. Additionally, a notable shift was observed in score distribution, with a larger percentage of students in the experimental group moving from the low-achievement category to higher categories. This finding supports previous research on RCRR but also reveals a greater impact than some earlier studies, indicating its potential effectiveness in different contexts.

The prerequisite analysis, conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, confirmed that the pretest and posttest scores in both groups were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$). Additionally, Levene's test for homogeneity verified that the variance between the groups was not significantly different ($p > 0.05$), allowing for valid parametric tests. These results

strengthen the reliability of subsequent statistical tests and ensure that any observed differences were due to the instructional intervention rather than external variability.

The paired sample t-test for the experimental group revealed a statistically significant improvement in reading achievement ($t = -55.166, p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. This confirms that students who were taught using the RCRR strategy significantly improved their reading performance from pretest to posttest.

Table 1. The Result of Paired Sample T-test

By Using	Paired Sample T-test			H0	H α
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
RCRR	-55.166	29	0.000	Rejected	Accepted

Furthermore, the independent sample t-test comparing posttest scores between the control and experimental groups showed a significant difference ($t = 3.952, p < 0.001$), affirming that the RCRR strategy had a meaningful impact on student outcomes.

Table 2. The Result of Independent Sample T-test

Group	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	H0	H α
Experimental	75.53					
Control	64.90	3.952	58	0.000	Rejected	Accepted

One unexpected finding was the extent of improvement observed in the experimental group. While previous studies have shown that RCRR enhances reading comprehension, the degree of change in this study was more pronounced than anticipated. This may be attributed to contextual factors such as the specific instructional methods used, student

engagement levels, or additional support provided. Future research could explore these elements further. These findings provide strong evidence for integrating the RCRR strategy into reading instruction, especially for students struggling with comprehension skills.

2. Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the RCRR strategy in improving the reading comprehension skills of tenth-grade students at SMA Karya Ibu Palembang. Through observations and interviews, it was found that students faced significant difficulties in reading comprehension, which prompted the researcher to explore the RCRR strategy as a potential solution. The research was conducted by comparing the pretest and posttest scores of an experimental group, which was taught using the RCRR strategy, and a control group, which followed conventional teaching methods. The findings revealed that the students in the experimental group showed a more substantial improvement in their reading skills compared to the control group, demonstrating the positive impact of the RCRR strategy.

The results of the statistical analysis further confirmed the effectiveness of the RCRR strategy. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated that both pretest and posttest scores in the experimental and control groups were normally distributed. The Levene test results showed that the pretest and posttest scores of both groups had homogeneous variances, suggesting that students' initial abilities were similar. Additionally, the paired sample t-test demonstrated a significant increase in the posttest scores of the experimental group, with an average improvement of 40 points from the pretest scores. This improvement highlighted the role of the RCRR strategy in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills.

In comparison with previous studies, the findings of this study align with research conducted by Relawati et al. (2020) and Hariyanti et al. (2024), which also reported

significant improvements in students' reading comprehension after using the RCRR strategy. Similarly, the results of the independent sample t-test indicated a significant difference in posttest scores between the experimental group and the control group, reinforcing the effectiveness of the strategy. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Resmi (2021) and Septiana and Suyadi (2020), who also found that students taught with the RCRR strategy outperformed those taught with conventional methods. However, this study contrasts with the findings of Maryansyah and Ramadhani (2022), who reported that the t-value in their study was lower than the t-table, suggesting no significant improvement.

Several factors may explain the effectiveness of the RCRR strategy in improving students' reading comprehension. The strategy encourages students to actively engage with the text, discuss their understanding with peers, and reinforce their learning through repeated reading and retelling. These elements likely contributed to the higher posttest scores observed in the experimental group. Additionally, the interactive nature of the RCRR strategy aligns with the principles of collaborative learning, which has been shown to enhance students' critical thinking and comprehension skills. The significant improvement in the experimental group suggests that this strategy can be a valuable addition to reading instruction in the classroom.

In conclusion, the study provides strong evidence supporting the use of the RCRR strategy in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. The findings indicate that the strategy not only improves students' ability to understand texts but also fosters active participation and collaboration in the learning process. Given these positive outcomes, teachers should consider incorporating the RCRR strategy into their teaching practices to enhance students' reading skills. Future research could explore its application in different

educational contexts and examine its long-term impact on students' overall language proficiency.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

Based on the findings and interpretation presented in the previous chapter, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, there was a significant improvement in the reading achievement of the tenth-grade students at SMA Karya Ibu Palembang between the pretest and posttest results after the implementation of RCRR strategy in reading instruction. The scores of pretest and posttest in the experimental group obtained the p-value was 0.000, which was lower than the significant level of 0.05 and the t-output was 55.166, which was greater than the t-table 2.045. It can be concluded that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. Thus, these findings indicated that there was a significant improvement in students' post-test results regarding their reading achievement.

Secondly, there is a significant difference in reading ability between the tenth-grade students at SMA Karya Ibu Palembang who were taught with RCRR strategy and those who were not. The scores posttest in the experimental and control groups obtained the p-value was 0.000, which was lower than the significant level of 0.05 and the t-output was 3.952, which was greater than the t-table 2.045. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. Thus, indicating a significant difference between the two groups. Although the results of both groups improved, the experimental group showed greater results than the control group.

In conclusion, the positive impacts of the use of the RCRR strategy on students' reading ability were that they could understand the reading well and could draw conclusions,

enabling them to comprehend the content of the reading. Additionally, they were able to present the results of their reading comprehension in front of their friends and could easily answer the questions related to the reading.

Suggestion

Based on the findings and interpretations, the researcher offers several suggestions for implementing the RCRR strategy in the EFL classroom. Suggestions are addressed to English teachers, students, and other researchers.

For English teachers, especially teachers who teach at SMA Karya Ibu Palembang, the researcher suggests considering the use of the RCRR strategy in teaching reading. The use of the RCRR strategy can have a positive impact on improving students' reading achievement in learning English in class and make it easier for teachers to provide comprehension of reading content to students.

For students, especially those in the tenth-grade at SMA Karya Ibu Palembang, they are encouraged to enrich their English vocabulary and improve their reading habit in order to be more familiar with understanding the content of reading. By applying the RCRR strategy, they are advised to practice reading more often, not only on descriptive texts but also on various other types of texts.

For other researchers, it is recommended to consider the findings of this study and make the findings as one of the references to make research on the same topic in the future. They can further study the use of RCRR strategy by considering different variables and conditions.

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