

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to explore the challenges and solutions faced by students in applying the reciprocal teaching strategy in EFL reading activities. A descriptive case study design was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon at a private Islamic school in Tasikmalaya, where reciprocal teaching has been consistently implemented for three years. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with participants representing different reading abilities. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key patterns and themes in the data, offering a detailed examination of the student's experiences.

A. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive case study design. Yin (2018) defined a descriptive case study as a type of case study that aims to describe a phenomenon in its real-world context. This design was chosen based on the identification of a phenomenon in EFL reading instruction, where the reciprocal teaching strategy was consistently implemented for three years in private Islamic schools in Tasikmalaya, starting from the participants' seventh-grade year. Therefore, this research aimed to explore the challenges students encountered in applying reciprocal teaching strategies in reading activities and the solutions they developed to overcome these challenges. Yin (2018) also stated that case studies proved to be particularly valuable when there was a need to gain a comprehensive understanding of a problem or situation. Thus, the use of a descriptive case study enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges students encountered in implementing the reciprocal teaching strategy in reading activities, as well as the solutions they developed over three years in private Islamic schools in Tasikmalaya.

B. Research Setting and Participant

In this study, a private Islamic school in Tasikmalaya was chosen as the research setting. The school was selected due to its consistent implementation of

the Reciprocal Teaching (RT) method in English language learning over the past three years. The method was applied across all grade levels, specifically in the context of reading activities, enabling the researcher to explore how students engaged with the RT approach in real classroom settings. Therefore, the chosen school not only served as the physical setting of the study but also provided a valuable environment that offered rich data to inform the research findings.

The participants in this study consisted of three 9th-grade students recruited based on recommendations from their English teacher. The teacher evaluated the students' reading abilities rather than their overall English proficiency and recommended three participants representing different reading proficiency levels: low, medium, and high. This focus on reading skills aligned with the study's aim to explore students' experiences using the reciprocal teaching method during reading activities. The participants, aged between 14 and 15 years, consisted of two females and one male. The recruitment aimed to capture diverse perspectives on how reciprocal teaching influenced their learning.

This particular class was chosen for several reasons. First, 9th-grade students were generally at a more advanced stage in their English language learning, having been exposed to the RT strategy since the 7th grade. This made them well-positioned to provide meaningful feedback on the method's effectiveness. Second, they were preparing for their final middle school examinations, which placed a strong emphasis on reading comprehension. Their experiences with RT at this crucial academic stage provided valuable insights into how the method supported their preparation for academic success. Lastly, 9th-grade students were expected to possess a higher level of maturity, allowing them to offer more reflective and thoughtful responses regarding their perceptions of the RT method. This combination of prolonged exposure to RT, academic pressure, and student maturity made this class an ideal subject group for the research.

C. Data Collection

Before initiating the data collection process, the researcher prepared a consent form that provided a comprehensive description of the study and its procedures, ensuring participants had a clear understanding of the research. Once

participants confirmed their willingness to participate, the researcher proceeded with the data collection. According to Yin (2018), case study evidence can be gathered through interviews. In this study, the researcher chose interviews as the primary method of data collection. A semi-structured approach was selected due to its flexibility, allowing the researcher to develop and adjust questions based on participants' responses, thereby enabling the collection of in-depth and comprehensive data. Prior to the interview, interview questions adapted from the theory (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) were compiled to form the questions in this section and distributed to the participants, allowing them sufficient time to prepare their answers and thoroughly understand the questions. During the interviews, the researcher used Indonesian, the participant's first language, to prevent confusion and miscommunication. After the data were transcribed, the participants were asked to review and verify whether the researcher had accurately captured their ideas in the interview transcripts. The researcher also clarified any ambiguous or unclear parts of the participants' responses to ensure the validity of the data. The interviews for this study were conducted in two rounds. The first round aimed to gather the primary data from the three participants, while the second round was conducted to explore any unclear issues further or to request additional explanations on specific points from Participant 1 that had not been fully addressed in the first interview.

D. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006), is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. It offers flexibility in terms of theoretical framework, allowing researchers to approach data either inductively or deductively. In this study, the interview questions were developed deductively based on the theoretical framework of Reciprocal Teaching (RT), which includes four stages: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. This deductive approach guided the data collection process by focusing on these specific aspects of the RT method. However, the data analysis was conducted inductively, meaning that the themes were generated from the content of the data itself rather than being limited by pre-existing

theoretical categories. This combination of deductive and inductive approaches in thematic analysis is supported by Proudfoot (2022) and Kumar (2024), who emphasize that such a hybrid method is valuable for capturing both theory-driven and data-driven insights. Therefore, this analytical strategy was considered appropriate for the present study, as it aligns with the aim to explore students' lived experiences with the use of Reciprocal Teaching in reading activities.

1. Familiarizing with the data

During this phase, the researcher engaged in activities to familiarize self with the data. First, the interview data was transcribed. Then, the researcher read through the data multiple times to gain a thorough understanding of its content. While reading, the researcher also noted initial ideas about patterns and interesting points within the data.

2. Generating Initial Code

At this stage, the researcher creates initial codes to identify relevant sections of data. Each code is given a different color, and relevant data is highlighted accordingly. This method enables researchers to organize data using the same code easily. Table 3.1 below presents an example of how researchers create initial codes.

Table 3. 1 Generating Initial Codes

Utterances	Initial Code
Sometimes, my guesses are correct, but other times, I am confused when I see an image that seems complicated or a title that I have just read from the text, which makes it hard for me to predict. I often get confused when looking at an image, as I cannot predict it right away, so the image does not help me explain it, haha.	Confusing visuals or unfamiliar topics
Well, when I have difficulty, I usually feel unsure or lack confidence in my answers because others seem to give better responses hehe. Sometimes, I also don't understand certain parts, but I feel embarrassed to ask the teacher about it.	Lack of confidence
So, I usually just read the first sentence	Using context clues

Utterances	Initial Code
to gain some knowledge from the text, or sometimes I go on to the second sentence as well...	
So, I usually wait to hear my friend's guess first hehe. It gives me an idea once I hear them. Maybe it's because of Miss Wulan's explanation and the answers from my friends as well, that's how I come to understand. I personally feel like I understand more when I discuss things with my friends because we exchange information, so what I don't understand becomes clearer. What makes me understand better is probably listening to others, which helps me get it. I also understand better when Miss gives examples. It's like, after the explanation, the examples make it clearer and more visual for me.	Relying on others for support
I just mix it with my own understanding... Mostly, I try to combine what I know, like what I've read before, from looking at the title and the images in the text. Then, I like to create questions based on what I already know, like making questions from previous ones, because sometimes there are similarities, or I just create my own understanding.	Connecting prior knowledge
I sometimes have trouble deciding which one to choose to make questions from... ... But I get confused when deciding which questions are really important. I also get confused about determining the specific questions.	Difficulty in prioritizing questions
... I usually read it again and try to understand it better. So, I read the difficult parts of the text again so I could figure out which questions to choose. What I do is I read it again to make the	Re-reading for a better understanding

Utterances	Initial Code
points, then ask the teacher to help me with my understanding.	
... I feel like I kind of understand, but not really, you know... sometimes, there are words I just read that make it hard to understand.	
Sometimes, even when the text is short, I don't understand all the vocabulary... I still feel confused if the text is complex, so I need the teacher's explanation more.	Unfamiliar vocabulary
And sometimes, there are texts that are really complex and have a lot of new vocabulary, so it makes it harder for me to fully understand.	
Well, usually, I try to find the point directly, but sometimes it's hard to find the main point in each paragraph...	Struggle to identify key points.
When the text is complicated and long, I sometimes struggle to summarize the main point.	
I also get confused about which information is really important.	
Well, I write down the main idea in small notes before moving to the summarizing stage...	
What I usually do is try to summarize the text from the important points I've written down...	Using notes to assist summarization
I always write the main idea of each paragraph so I can understand what the point of that paragraph is and make it clearer.	

The interview data uncovered several aspects of information regarding students' experience towards the use of reciprocal teaching methods in reading activities. In total, the researcher identified 36 initial codes representing each aspect, which are listed below, along with their frequencies.

Table 3. 2 List of Initial Codes and Their Frequency

No	Initial Code	Frequency
1.	Confusing visuals or unfamiliar topics	5
2.	Lack of confidence	1
3.	Using text clues	1
4.	Relying on others for support	12
5.	Connecting prior knowledge	3
6.	Difficulty in prioritizing questions	4
7.	Re-reading for a better understanding	3
8.	Unfamiliar vocabulary	3
9.	Struggle to identify key points	3
10.	Using notes to assist summarization	1

3. Searching for Themes.

The next step is searching for themes. The goal here is to identify patterns within the data. During this stage, the researcher analyzed the codes and grouped them into broader themes

Table 3. 3 Searching for Themes

Initial codes	Potential theme
Confusing visuals or unfamiliar topics Unfamiliar vocabulary	Challenges in understanding unfamiliar topics and vocabulary
Difficulty in prioritizing questions Struggle to identify key points.	Challenges in prioritizing and identifying relevant information
Lack of confidence	Challenges in emotional engagement
Using text clues Connecting prior knowledge	Using clues and prior knowledge for better understanding
Using notes to assist summarization Re-reading for a better understanding	Using notes and re-reading to connect and understand ideas better
Relying on others for support	Using social interaction to seek understanding

4. Reviewing Themes

The next step was reviewing the potential themes. The researcher ensured that they accurately reflected the data and did not overlap with other themes. Some adjustments were made, including combining and separating themes, until the coherent thematic map was achieved.

Table 3. 4 Reviewing Themes

Theme	Sub-theme
Students' challenges in applying reciprocal teaching strategies to English reading activities	Challenges in understanding unfamiliar topics and vocabulary
	Challenges in prioritizing and identifying relevant information
	Challenges in emotional engagement
Students' solutions to overcome challenges while engaging in reciprocal teaching strategies for reading activities in an English classroom	Using clues and prior knowledge for better understanding
	Using notes and re-reading to connect and understand ideas better
	Using social interaction to seek understanding

5. Defining and Naming Themes

At this point, the researcher analyzed the data within each theme to understand its essence further and determine what aspect of the data each theme captures and represents. Finally, the themes were defined and named in a way that captured their essence and distinguished them from other themes.

Table 3. 5 Reviewing Themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Description
Students' challenges in applying reciprocal teaching strategies to English reading activities	Challenges in understanding unfamiliar topics and vocabulary	Students' challenges in understanding and interpreting text due to unfamiliar topics, vocabulary, and visual elements impact their reading comprehension.
	Challenges in prioritizing and identifying relevant information	Students' challenges in prioritizing and identifying relevant information affect their ability to comprehend,

Theme	Sub-theme	Description
Students' solutions to overcome challenges while engaging in reciprocal teaching strategies for reading activities in an English classroom		summarize, and retain important details from a text.
	Challenges in emotional engagement	Students face challenges in emotional engagement due to a lack of self-confidence, which hinders their active participation in learning and affects their overall learning experience.
	Using clues and prior knowledge for better understanding	Students' use of textual clues and prior knowledge to aid comprehension, helping them interpret and understand the text more effectively.
	Using notes and re-reading to connect and understand ideas better	Students' ability to connect ideas in a text to improve their understanding by using note-taking to organize important points and re-reading to reinforce understanding.
	Using social interaction to seek understanding	Students rely on their peers for assistance in understanding texts by discussing ideas, clarifying difficult concepts, and exchanging interpretations to enhance comprehension.

6. Producing the report

In this final stage, the researcher compiled the result of the analysis and selected participants' excerpts that vividly illustrate the themes. The relationship between the analysis and the research question, as well as existing literature, was also presented.

E. Research Schedule

This research was conducted in one of the private Islamic schools in Tasikmalaya from November to February, as described in the setting and participants section. The research time can be seen in the table below.

Table 3. 6 Research Schedule

Description	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	May 2025	June 2025
Research Proposal Writing	✓	✓					
Research Proposal Examination			✓				
Data Collection				✓			
Data Analysis				✓	✓		
Report Writing					✓		
Thesis Result Seminar						✓	
Thesis Examination							✓