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Teacher Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension Skills through the Reflective Question-Based Think-Pair-Share Method in Indonesian Language Lessons at MTs Darul Furqon Kamal, West Kairatu, West Seram Regency, Maluku

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Abstract

This study aimed to improve students' reading comprehension skills through the implementation of the Reflective Question-Based Think–Pair–Share (TPS) method in Indonesian language lessons at MTs Darul Furqon Kamal, West Kairatu, West Seram Regency, Maluku. The study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, consisting of two cycles, each including planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants were 30 eighth-grade students and one Indonesian language teacher acting as a collaborative partner. Data were collected through classroom observations, reading comprehension tests, interviews, field notes, and documentation. Qualitative data were analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while quantitative data were analyzed by calculating the class mean and the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM). The findings indicated that the implementation of the Think–Pair–Share method integrated with reflective questions successfully enhanced students' reading comprehension, classroom participation, and critical thinking skills. Students demonstrated significant improvement in identifying main ideas, making inferences, drawing conclusions, and responding to analytical questions throughout the two research cycles. Classroom interaction also became more active and collaborative as students engaged in individual thinking, peer discussion, and whole-class sharing. The study concludes that the Reflective Question-Based Think–Pair–Share method is an effective instructional strategy for improving reading comprehension and promoting active, student-centered learning in Indonesian language classrooms.

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Keywords: Think–Pair–Share, reflective questions, reading comprehension, classroom action research.

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a fundamental competency in Indonesian language education because it enables students not only to understand explicit information but also to identify main ideas, make inferences, analyze arguments, evaluate texts, and connect information with real-life experiences. These skills are essential for academic success across subjects and align with the goals of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, which emphasizes literacy, critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving abilities (Sari, 2023; Pratama, 2024).

Despite its importance, many Indonesian students continue to demonstrate low to moderate reading comprehension skills. Research indicates that while students can generally identify explicit information, they often struggle to interpret implicit meanings, analyze texts critically, and draw logical conclusions (Sari, 2023; Pratama, 2024). These limitations negatively affect learning outcomes because comprehension is required in almost every school subject.

Preliminary observations conducted in Grade VIII at MTs Darul Furqon Kamal Kairatu Barat, West Seram Regency, revealed similar challenges. Classroom instruction was primarily teacher-centered, relying on lectures and individual assignments. As a result, students were passive during lessons, participated minimally in discussions, and lacked confidence in expressing opinions. Diagnostic assessments further showed that most students scored below the school's Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM). Interviews with the Indonesian language teacher suggested that low reading interest, limited classroom participation, and the continued use of conventional teaching methods were the primary causes of poor reading comprehension.

To address these issues, Classroom Action Research (CAR) was selected because it enables teachers to improve instructional practices through iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. This approach supports continuous improvement in both teaching quality and student learning outcomes.

One promising instructional strategy is the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) cooperative learning method integrated with reflective questioning. TPS encourages students to think independently, discuss ideas with a partner, and share their conclusions with the entire class. This process promotes active participation, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking while helping students refine their understanding through peer interaction (Putri & Nugroho, 2022; Lestari, 2023).

The effectiveness of TPS can be enhanced through reflective questions that encourage students to analyze texts deeply, relate ideas to prior knowledge, evaluate

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evidence, and formulate well-supported conclusions. Such activities foster Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and improve conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and long-term learning retention (Anggraini, 2024; Fitriani, 2024).

Therefore, this Classroom Action Research aims to improve students' reading comprehension by implementing the Think-Pair-Share method supported by reflective questioning. Through several action cycles, the study is expected to increase student engagement, classroom participation, and reading comprehension achievement, while providing practical guidance for teachers in developing more effective literacy instruction (Sari, 2023; Pratama, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using a descriptive qualitative approach supported by quantitative data to evaluate improvements in students' reading comprehension. CAR was selected because it is designed to improve teaching practices through iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, enabling continuous refinement of classroom instruction (Kemmis et al., 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Mertler, 2024).

The research was conducted at MTs Darul Furqon Kamal Kairatu Barat, West Seram Regency, Maluku Province, Indonesia, during May–June 2026. The participants consisted of 30 eighth-grade students and one Indonesian language teacher, who served as the research collaborator. The school was purposively selected because preliminary observations indicated that students experienced difficulties in identifying main ideas, making inferences, drawing conclusions, and answering reflective questions. Classroom instruction was predominantly teacher-centered, resulting in limited student participation and low reading comprehension achievement.

The study followed the Kemmis and McTaggart CAR model, which consists of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Two research cycles were implemented, with each cycle including two classroom meetings and one evaluation session. During the planning stage, lesson plans, reading materials, reflective questions, observation sheets, and reading comprehension tests were prepared. In the action stage, the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy integrated with reflective questions was implemented. Students first analyzed reading texts individually (Think), discussed their responses with a partner (Pair), and then shared their ideas with the class (Share). This approach encouraged active participation, collaborative learning, critical thinking, and deeper text comprehension (Slavin, 2023).

Data were collected through classroom observations, reading comprehension tests, field notes, interviews, and documentation. Qualitative data were analyzed using the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while

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quantitative data were analyzed by calculating the class mean and the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM). To ensure data trustworthiness, the study employed triangulation, persistent observation, peer debriefing with the collaborating teacher, and continuous reflection throughout the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Mertler, 2024).

The study was considered successful when at least 80% of students achieved the KKM and demonstrated improved reading comprehension, active classroom participation, and stronger responses to reflective questions across the two action cycles (Kemmis et al., 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

1. Initial Condition (Pre-Cycle)

The preliminary observation conducted in Grade VIII of MTs Darul Furqon Kamal Kairatu Barat revealed that students experienced considerable difficulties in reading comprehension. During classroom instruction, learning activities were predominantly teacher-centered, with students acting as passive recipients of information. Most students could answer factual questions but struggled to identify the main idea, infer implicit meanings, evaluate information critically, and formulate conclusions based on the reading texts.

The diagnostic test administered before the implementation of the action further confirmed these findings. Most students obtained scores below the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM), indicating that their reading comprehension skills had not yet met the expected learning standards. Classroom observations also showed limited student participation in discussions, low confidence in expressing opinions, and minimal interaction among peers. These findings indicated the need for an instructional strategy that could actively engage students in collaborative learning and critical thinking activities.

Table 4.1 Initial Reading Comprehension Achievement

Indicator	Result
Number of students	30
Students achieving KKM	11
Students below KKM	19
Mean score	67.4
Classical mastery	36.7%

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The results indicate that fewer than half of the students achieved the expected learning standard. Therefore, classroom action research was implemented using the Think–Pair–Share (TPS) method integrated with reflective questions.

2. Cycle I

The first cycle consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection. During the planning stage, lesson plans, reading materials, observation sheets, reflective questions, and assessment instruments were prepared collaboratively by the researcher and the Indonesian language teacher.

During implementation, students participated in three stages of the TPS strategy.

Think Stage

Students individually read the assigned text and answered reflective questions. At this stage, many students were able to identify explicit information; however, some still experienced difficulties in making inferences and providing analytical responses.

Pair Stage

Students worked with their partners to compare answers and discuss different interpretations. Classroom observations showed that peer discussion encouraged students to clarify misunderstandings and improve their confidence.

Share Stage

Each pair presented their conclusions to the class. Students gradually became more willing to communicate their ideas although some remained hesitant when explaining their reasoning.

Observation data indicated that classroom interaction increased considerably compared with the preliminary condition. Students demonstrated greater participation, asked more questions, and became more engaged throughout the lesson.

The reading comprehension test administered at the end of Cycle I showed noticeable improvement.

Table 4.2 Comparison of Reading Comprehension Achievement

Indicator	Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
Mean Score	67.4	76.8	86.5
Students Achieving KKM	11	22	27
Classical Mastery	36.7%	73.3%	90.0%

The findings demonstrate that TPS supported students in organizing their thoughts before discussing them with peers. Nevertheless, several weaknesses remained. Some students were still reluctant to speak during class discussions, while others required

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additional guidance in answering reflective questions that demanded higher-order thinking skills.

During the reflection stage, the researcher and collaborating teacher concluded that several improvements were required before implementing Cycle II. These included providing clearer instructions, increasing teacher guidance during discussions, and designing more structured reflective questions.

3. Cycle II

Cycle II was implemented by revising the instructional procedures based on the reflection from Cycle I.

Students showed significant improvement in all stages of TPS.

During the Think stage, students independently analyzed the reading texts and demonstrated greater confidence in identifying key ideas.

During the Pair stage, discussions became more interactive, with nearly all students exchanging opinions and providing evidence to support their answers.

During the Share stage, classroom presentations became more organized, and students showed increased confidence in presenting arguments and responding to classmates' questions.

Observation results also revealed remarkable improvement in classroom participation. Students actively collaborated, respected different viewpoints, and demonstrated stronger critical thinking skills when responding to reflective questions.

The post-test administered at the end of Cycle II indicated that the majority of students successfully achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion. Reading comprehension improved substantially, particularly in identifying main ideas, drawing conclusions, interpreting implicit meanings, and evaluating textual information.

Overall, the implementation of Think–Pair–Share integrated with reflective questioning successfully enhanced both students' learning engagement and academic achievement.

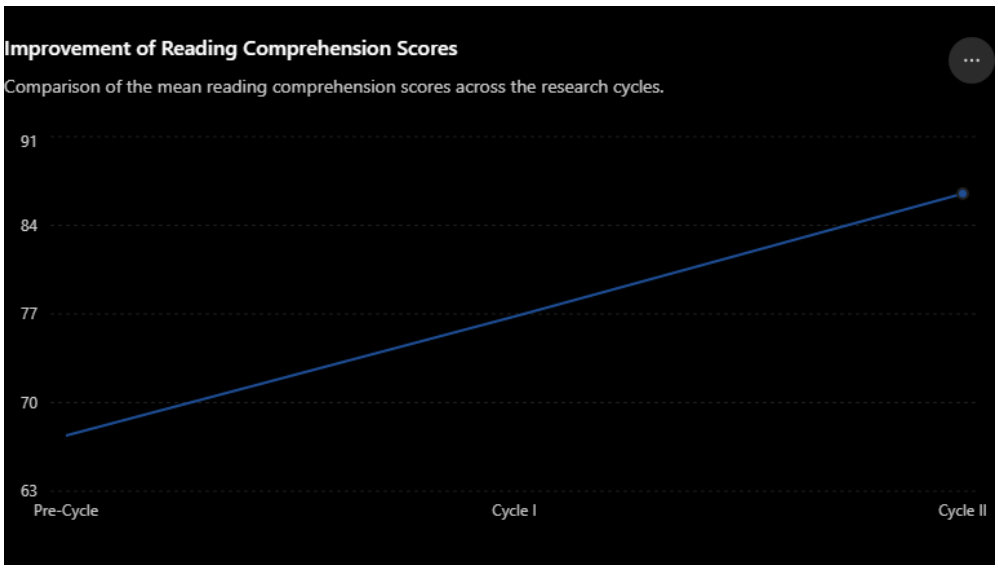
4. Comparison of Students' Reading Comprehension

The comparison between the three research stages clearly demonstrates continuous improvement.

Improvement of Reading Comprehension Scores

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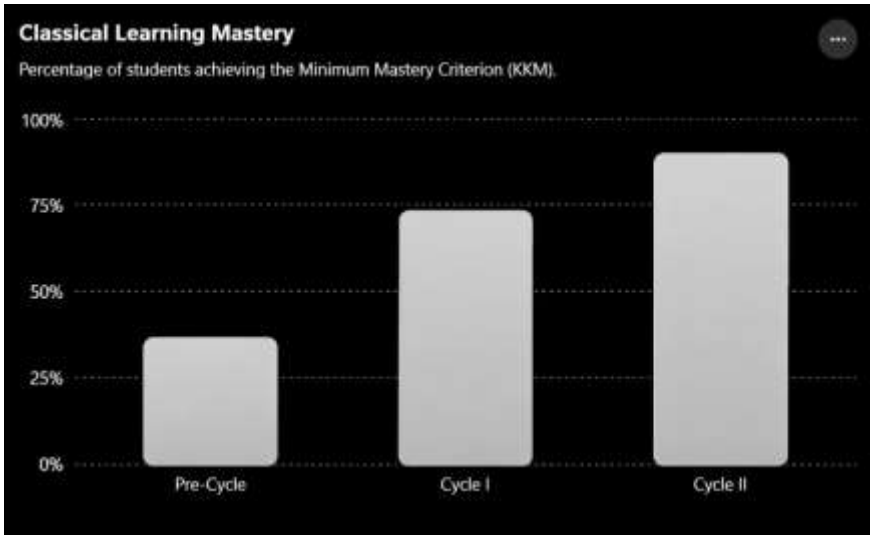


The figure shows a consistent increase in students' reading comprehension scores throughout the implementation of the classroom action research. The largest improvement occurred after Cycle II, indicating that revisions made following the reflection stage effectively enhanced the learning process.

5. Improvement of Classical Mastery

The percentage of students meeting the Minimum Mastery Criterion also increased during the study.

Classical Learning Mastery



The results indicate that the percentage of students achieving mastery increased steadily from the preliminary stage to Cycle II. By the end of the research, 90% of students

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successfully met the expected learning outcomes, exceeding the success indicator established for the study.

6. Summary of Findings

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of the Think–Pair–Share learning method integrated with reflective questions positively influenced students' reading comprehension. Improvements were observed in four major aspects:

1. Academic achievement, as reflected by the increase in mean reading comprehension scores.
2. Learning participation, with students becoming more active during classroom discussions.
3. Critical thinking, demonstrated through improved responses to reflective questions.
4. Collaborative learning, evidenced by stronger peer interaction during Pair and Share activities.

These findings indicate that Think–Pair–Share supported by reflective questions effectively created a more active, student-centered learning environment and significantly improved reading comprehension among eighth-grade students.

DISCUSSION

1. The Effect of Think–Pair–Share Integrated with Reflective Questions on Students' Reading Comprehension

The findings of this Classroom Action Research demonstrated that the implementation of the Think–Pair–Share (TPS) learning method integrated with reflective questions significantly improved students' reading comprehension. The improvement was evident from the gradual increase in students' average scores and the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) from the pre-cycle to Cycle II. These results suggest that cooperative learning provides students with greater opportunities to process information actively rather than merely receiving knowledge from the teacher. During the Think stage, students independently analyzed the reading texts, allowing them to construct their initial understanding before discussing their ideas with peers.

The Pair stage further strengthened students' comprehension by encouraging collaborative discussion and peer feedback. Through interaction with classmates, students compared interpretations, corrected misconceptions, and developed more accurate responses. This collaborative process enabled students to construct deeper meaning from the reading texts and increased their confidence in expressing opinions. The Share stage then allowed students to communicate their findings publicly, reinforcing

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comprehension through explanation and classroom discussion. Such learning activities transformed the classroom into a more student-centered environment where knowledge was developed collaboratively instead of being transmitted directly by the teacher.

These findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that Think–Pair–Share enhances reading comprehension, learning engagement, and communication skills. Maharani et al. (2023) found that TPS positively affects students' reading comprehension across different educational settings. Similarly, Rosalia and Candraloka (2023) reported that TPS significantly improves students' reading achievement through collaborative interaction, while Paranggai et al. (2023) concluded that TPS effectively develops comprehension skills because students actively construct meaning during discussion. These studies support the present findings that TPS provides meaningful learning experiences that enhance students' understanding of reading texts.

2. The Contribution of Reflective Questions to Critical Thinking and Active Learning

Besides cooperative learning, the integration of reflective questions played an essential role in improving students' higher-order thinking skills throughout the learning process. Unlike factual questions that require simple recall, reflective questions encouraged students to analyze ideas, evaluate textual information, connect reading materials with prior knowledge, and formulate logical conclusions. As students repeatedly responded to reflective questions during both research cycles, they gradually demonstrated greater confidence in interpreting implicit meanings and defending their opinions using evidence from the texts.

The improvement in students' critical thinking was also reflected in classroom observations. During Cycle I, many students relied heavily on literal information and required teacher guidance when answering analytical questions. However, after revisions implemented in Cycle II, students became more independent in explaining their reasoning and supporting their conclusions. This indicates that reflective questioning does not merely improve reading comprehension but also promotes metacognitive awareness by encouraging students to monitor and evaluate their own thinking processes.

These findings are in line with previous research indicating that reflective questioning strengthens conceptual understanding and critical thinking. Ristanto (2024) reported that reflective learning activities integrated with cooperative strategies improve students' literacy and analytical thinking. Likewise, Fiqhiyah et al. (2025) found that combining TPS with reflective learning creates a more engaging classroom environment and supports deeper comprehension. OECD (2023) also emphasizes that reading literacy in modern education requires students not only to retrieve information but also to interpret, evaluate, and reflect critically on written texts. Therefore, the integration of

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reflective questions within TPS successfully addressed these competencies and contributed to meaningful learning.

3. The Effectiveness of Classroom Action Research in Improving Teaching Practice

The results also demonstrate that Classroom Action Research (CAR) provided an effective framework for improving instructional quality through continuous reflection. The cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection enabled the researcher and collaborating teacher to identify weaknesses after Cycle I and make appropriate improvements before implementing Cycle II. These revisions included providing clearer instructions, increasing teacher facilitation during discussions, and designing more structured reflective questions. Consequently, student participation and learning achievement increased considerably during the second cycle.

Another important finding is that collaboration between the researcher and the classroom teacher strengthened the implementation of the learning strategy. Continuous observation and joint reflection helped ensure that instructional decisions were based on actual classroom conditions rather than assumptions. This collaborative approach also encouraged teachers to become reflective practitioners capable of evaluating and improving their own teaching practices systematically.

The present findings support the theoretical principles of Classroom Action Research proposed by Kemmis et al. (2022), who argue that educational improvement occurs through repeated cycles of action and reflection. Similarly, Creswell and Creswell (2023) emphasize that integrating qualitative classroom observations with quantitative learning outcomes provides comprehensive evidence of instructional effectiveness. Furthermore, Mertler (2024) explains that reflective practice within CAR enables teachers to develop sustainable improvements based on authentic classroom experiences. Therefore, the success of this study confirms that Classroom Action Research, combined with the Think–Pair–Share method and reflective questions, offers an effective approach for improving students' reading comprehension while simultaneously enhancing the quality of classroom instruction.

CONCLUSION

This Classroom Action Research demonstrated that the implementation of the Think–Pair–Share (TPS) learning method integrated with reflective questions effectively improved the reading comprehension skills of eighth-grade students at MTs Darul Furqon Kamal Kairatu Barat. The findings showed consistent improvements in students' academic achievement, classroom participation, and critical thinking throughout the two research cycles. The structured learning process, which involved individual thinking,

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collaborative discussion, and classroom sharing, enabled students to understand reading texts more deeply, identify main ideas, draw logical conclusions, and respond to reflective questions with greater confidence. Furthermore, the integration of reflective questions encouraged students to move beyond literal comprehension by developing analytical and evaluative thinking skills, resulting in a more active and student-centered learning environment.

The cyclical process of Classroom Action Research also proved effective in improving instructional practices through continuous planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Collaboration between the researcher and the classroom teacher contributed significantly to the refinement of instructional strategies and the successful implementation of the learning model. Based on these findings, the Think–Pair–Share method supported by reflective questions can be recommended as an effective instructional strategy for improving reading comprehension and promoting higher-order thinking skills in Indonesian language classrooms. Future studies are encouraged to examine the effectiveness of this approach in different educational contexts, grade levels, and language learning settings to provide broader evidence of its impact on students' literacy development.

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