

## USING THINK-PAIR-SHARE-STRATEGY TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY AND READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENTS OF EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS

**Kiki Rizki Amelia**

*Ogan Komering Ilir Islamic University*

**Abstract:** This study was aimed to find out whether or not think-pair-share strategy: (a) improved eighth graders' vocabulary achievement, (b) improved eighth graders' reading comprehension achievement, (c) made a difference in the vocabulary and reading comprehension achievements between the experimental group students (those who were taught by using think-pair-share strategy) and those of the control group students (who were not). In conducting the study, think-pair-share strategy was applied in the experimental group, but the control group did not get any treatment. Seventy students were assigned in two groups, with 35 students in the experimental group and the other 35 students in the control group. To collect the data, vocabulary and reading comprehension tests were used. The collected data were analyzed by using paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test. The findings of the study showed that there were (a) an improvement in eighth graders' vocabulary achievement, (b) an improvement in eighth graders' reading comprehension achievement, and (c) a significant difference in vocabulary and reading comprehension achievements between the students who were taught by using think-pair-share strategy and those who were not. Therefore, think-pair-share strategy seems effective for the teaching reading as well as vocabulary.

**Key words:** *think-pair-share strategy, vocabulary and reading comprehension achievements, eight graders*

English is widely spoken that It has often been referred to as a "world language". Most people in the world use English as a Second Language or Foreign Language. In Indonesia, English is very important because knowledge of English gives prestige as well as a means of personal advancement in the professional and academic fields (Swan & Smith, 2001, p. 279). It seems that English is an important thing for supporting the quality of Indonesians' human resources.

In Indonesia, English is considered as the first foreign language to be taught from junior high school level to university level. As stated in the standard of content, English is studied at junior high schools (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional, No 22, 2006). It is needed to be taught to junior high school students because it is the basic element for the higher level in further education. In other words, English is regarded as one of the important subjects that should be mastered by Indonesian students.

In teaching and learning a language, mastering vocabulary is really important. Without a large number of vocabularies, the learners cannot communicate to others clearly. Sometimes it is difficult to understand the written texts. This is in line with what Read (2000, p. 1) said that vocabulary can be seen as a priority area in language teaching.

Furthermore, reading is a very important skill. The students can get knowledge by doing a lot of reading. However, reading is still a challenge for Indonesian students, even reading in Bahasa Indonesia. The results of PISA in 2009 (2010) showed that Indonesian students' reading proficiency as whole in the 57th rank from 65 countries. The students were below proficiency level 2 in reading. In English reading, according to PIRLS (2012), Indonesia is in the 42nd rank out of 45 countries that joined this program. In addition, based on the study done by Diem and Ihsan (2013, p. 9), it was found that the students' mean score of English reading and listening were 9.75 and 31.25 in the post tests. Meanwhile, in speaking, it was found that the mean score 54.10 and 58.40 in writing. It can be concluded that students' productive literacy skills (writing and speaking) were better than those of their receptive skills (listening and reading). It means that reading comprehension is still difficult for the students. Therefore, the students need a strategy that can help them to comprehend the written text well. One of the current strategies is think-pair-share strategy. According to Edit Cowan University (2012, p. 1), the Think-Pair-Share is useful for all levels and class sizes and is particularly useful in making teaching and learning process interactive. Think-pair-share is a cooperative learning strategy that 1) promotes student participation; 2) gives

a format change in a lecture and adds variety; 3) helps students to feel comfortable and get to know their peers; 4) is useful for all levels and all class sizes; 5) is especially useful in lectures; 6) can be used in the very first lecture or tutorial; 7) is easy to teach, so later students quickly start the activity without wasting time; 8) only takes a short time to prepare and start and do; 9) engages the whole class.

However, it is important for the teachers to select the materials that given to the students. To get the students' attention in learning process young adult literature can be a choice. According to Wu (2008, p. 1), young adult literature is a promising candidate to be used in the ESL classroom. It is because young adult literature has many advantages. This is in line with what Collie and Slater (1990) say that there are four reasons for using literature in the classroom, such as valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement. This is in line with what Thanajaro found (2000, p. 92), he says that implementing authentic materials in class also helped increase students' self-confidence to listen to the target language spoken by native speakers of the language. As authentic materials, literature can be found easily by the students. They can find it from television, radio, newspaper, magazine, and internet. Literature is also used in bibliotherapy strategy to help the reader develop empathy and an understanding of diversity (Gavigan & Kurttis, 2012, p. 11).

Based on the result of interview between the writer and one of the English teachers at SMPN I Indralaya Selatan, the writer found that the students' score was still low in English subject. Based on the teacher's

information, they faced difficulties in learning English especially in reading comprehension. They could not comprehend the text well because they lack of vocabulary. It means that the students need help to improve their reading comprehension, make them understand the text, and make them feel happy in learning English as well. Think-pair-share strategy could be the alternative. Based on the explanation above, the writer was interested in conducting the study entitled “Using think-pair-share strategy to improve vocabulary and reading comprehension achievements of the eighth graders of SMPN I Indralaya Selatan”.

There were three objectives in this study. The objectives of this study were to find out whether or not think-pair-share strategy: (a) improves eighth graders' vocabulary achievement, (b) improves eighth graders' reading comprehension achievement, (c) makes the difference in the vocabulary and reading comprehension achievements between the experimental group students (those who were taught by using think-pair-share strategy) and those of the control group students (who were not). Within the framework of these purposes, the following questions were tried to be answered:

- 1) Was there any significant improvement in eighth graders' vocabulary after they were taught by using think-pair-share strategy?
- 2) Was there any significant improvement in eighth graders' reading comprehension after they were taught by using think-pair-share strategy?
- 3) Was there any significant difference in the vocabulary and reading comprehension achievements between the experimental group students (those who were taught by using think-pair-

share strategy) and those of the control group students (who were not)?

## METHODOLOGY

In conducting the present study, an experimental research method was used. The researcher applied quasi experimental design and specifically choose non-equivalent (pre-test and post-test) control group design. In this research, there were two groups. Experimental and control groups. Both groups took a pre-test and a post-test. Only the experimental group received the treatment. The experimental group had pre-test, treatment of think-pair-share strategy and post-test, meanwhile control group had pre-test and post-test only (Creswell: 2003, p.170). The design of this study can be diagrammed as follows:

Group A	O1	X	O2
Group B	O3	-	O4

Where:

Group A: Experimental group

Group B: Control Group

O1 : Pre-test of experimental group

O2 : Post-test of experimental group

O3 : Pre-test of control group

O4 : Post-test of control group

X : Treatment using Think-Pair-Share strategy

In this study, the writer chose all of the eighth grade students of SMPN I Indralaya Selatan as the population in academic year of 2014/2015. The total number of the population was 149 students comprising 4 classes. In selecting the sample, purposive sampling method was used. Some criteria were used to select the sample students. They were: (1) the students who were taught by the same teacher; (2) the students did not take English course; (3) the students

who got English score 60 to 80 in their previous semester. In selecting the sample, there were three steps as follows: first, all eighth graders were chosen because they were taught by the same teacher. Second, the students who did not join English course were taken. Finally, the students who got English score 60 to 80 in previous semester were taken. To determining the experimental and control group, a dice was used. The students who got odd number, they were put in the experimental group, while the students who got even number, they were put in control group.

In this study, the writer used vocabulary and reading comprehension tests to collect the data. In collecting the data, the writer applied the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was given to the students before teaching and learning activities, while the post-test was given to the students after teaching and learning activities. The tests were taken to know how far the students can understand what they have learned. The written test was given to the students in the pre-test and post-test. For reading test, there were 25 questions. The test items for reading comprehension were in the multiple choice form. There were seven passages and each passage had 3 or 4 questions. The skills of reading comprehension were included in reading test. They were; main idea, details, inference, vocabulary, and cause and effect. The test was used to get the differences of the students' progress before and after the treatment. The reading comprehension test items were ready-made. The test items were taken from the national examination in 2011-2013. For vocabulary, it was ready-made items. The writer took the questions from the national examination in 2011-2013. The test items for vocabulary were in the multiple choice

form. The questions consisted of 25 questions.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used paired sample t-test to know the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Furthermore, the researcher used independent sample t-test which was aimed to know whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and the control groups.

Validity is the most important quality to consider in assessment and is concerned with the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from assessment results (Waugh & Gronlund, 1998, p. 67). The writer validated the items of the tests which were known as content validity. Heaton (1990, p. 160) said that content validity depends on a careful analysis of the language being tested and of the particular course objectives. To find out the validity of the tests, the syllabus and the tables of specifications of vocabulary and reading comprehension were used to know whether the test has a high degree of content validity.

To get more information about validity of vocabulary and reading comprehension test, the writer used experts' judgment to measure content validity. There were some English teachers and lecturers who asked to rate the level of appropriateness and difficulties of test items. They had more than 5 year experiences in teaching English.

Reliability is the information on the extent to which the instrument elicits accurate and relatively consistent data. According to Waugh and Gronlund (1998, p. 47), reliability refers to the consistency of assessment results. The reliability coefficient of the test should

be at least 0.70 and preferably higher. If the reliability value of the test higher than 0.70, it means that this test can be used by the writer in the pre-test and post-test.

In this research, the instrument was tried out to non-sample group of eighth grader of SMPN 1 Indralaya Selatan. The result of the tried out test were calculated by using the SPSS version 16 to find out the validity and reliability of the test. The researcher found out the reliability of the test analyzed by using internal-consistency reliability; Cronbach Alpha. After conducting the try out, it was found out that the Cronbach Alpha of the vocabulary and reading comprehension test was 0.823. Since the scores were above 0.50 for samples less than 100, it meant that instruments, vocabulary and reading comprehension test were reliable. Therefore, there were 25 valid and reliable questions of vocabulary, and 25 valid and reliable questions of reading comprehension test that were used in this study as the instruments.

Readability level is defined as the level of linguistics difficulty. Readability formula is the instrument to have the data from the EFL texts. The EFL text will come from many sources such as magazines, newspapers, and textbooks. In this study, the writer used Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch Reading Kincaid. Both of instruments were used to find the readability of the materials and to find the level of reading comprehension of the students. The objective was to find out whether the reading text was appropriate to the level of reading comprehension of the sample or not.

**Table 1. The Readability of the Reading Test**

Text	Readability Level
1	88.4
2	98
3	70.7
4	91
5	65.4
6	79.4
7	78.4

**FINDINGS**

In this study, the writer presented (1) results of pre- and post-tests of vocabulary and reading comprehension test in experimental and control groups, (2) results of post-tests of vocabulary test in experimental and control groups, (3) results of post-test of reading comprehension test in experimental and control groups.

**Results of Vocabulary Test of Both Groups**

The analysis was done by using frequency analysis through the application of SPSS 16. Students that follow the test in experimental and control groups were 70.

The lowest score in the experimental group was 52. The highest score was 96 and the mean score was 73.94 and standard deviation was 1.25. Meanwhile, the lowest score in control group was 36, the highest score was 80, and the mean score was 61.03 and standard deviation was 1.14. Table 2 described the data description of students' vocabulary comprehension achievements in experimental and control groups.

**Table 2. Students' Vocabulary Achievements of both Groups**

Variable	Score	Exp	Control
Voc. Achievement	Lowest	52	36
	Highest	96	80
	Std. Dev	1.25	1.14
	Mean	73.94	61.03
	Gain mean	12.91	

### Results of Reading Comprehension Test of Both Groups

The analysis was done by using frequency analysis through the application of SPSS 16. Students that follow the test in experimental and control groups were 70.

The lowest score in the experimental group was 56. The highest score was 96 and the mean score was 77.49 and standard deviation was 1.21. Meanwhile, the lowest score in control group was 32, the highest score was 80, and the mean score was 60.91 and standard deviation was 1.41. Table 3 described the data description of students' reading comprehension achievements in experimental and control groups.

**Table 3. Students' Reading Comprehension Achievements of both Groups**

Variable	Score	Exp	Control
Reading Comp Achievement	Lowest	56	32
	Highest	96	80
	Std. Dev	1.21	1.41
	Mean	77.49	60.91
	Gain Mean	16.58	

### Results of Statistical Analyses

The statistical analyses were applied to know whether or not there was a significant progress in both students' vocabulary and reading comprehension achievements after the treatment using think-pair-share strategy. In order to see whether think-pair-share strategy did make a difference in experimental group in terms of their vocabulary and reading achievements, the group was compared with the control group which was not having any treatment. To do this, independent sample t-test was applied. But before the results of t-test are described, the

normality and homogeneity of the data will be presented.

### Normality and Homogeneity

To find out whether the data obtained in this study were normal or not, one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. According to Priyatno (2010, p. 71), the data can be categorized as normal data if the value is at or higher than 0.05. Based on the test, asymp.sig value of the vocabulary and reading achievements all variances were distributed normally. One-way ANOVA test was used to find out whether the data obtained in this study were homogeneous or not. According to Priyatno (2010, p. 71), the data can be categorized as homogeneous data if the value is at or higher than 0.05. Based on the test, asymp.sig value of the vocabulary and reading achievements all variances were homogeneous.

### Result of Students' Vocabulary and Reading Achievements in the Experimental Group

The results of the analysis showed that the mean difference of the pre-test and post-test scores of the vocabulary achievement in the experimental group was 17.94 while the mean difference of the pre-test and post-test scores of reading achievement was 17.83. It can be concluded that Ho (think-pair-share strategy did not increase vocabulary achievement of the eighth grade students of SMPN I Indralaya Selatan) was rejected and Ha was accepted because t-obtained value of vocabulary (15.554) was higher than the value of the t-table (2.032).

In other words, the experimental group had significant progress in vocabulary achievement. In line with vocabulary, the reading achievement showed the same tendency; the t-

obtained value of reading (14.748) was higher than that of t-table (2.032). See Table 4.

**Table 4. Pre-Test and Post-Test of the Experimental Group**

	Within Experimental Group			
	Grammar		Reading	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	56.00	73.94	59.66	77.49
Mean Diff	17.94		17.83	
Std Dev	6.953		7.152	
Df	34		34	
t-table	2.032		2.032	
t-obtained	15.554		14.748	
Sig.	.000		.000	

**Result of Students' Vocabulary and Reading Achievements in the Control Group**

The result of the analysis showed that the mean difference of the pre-test and post-test scores of the vocabulary achievement in the control group was 11.66 while the mean difference of the pre-test and post-test scores of reading achievement was 5.71. T-obtained value of vocabulary in control group is 11.329. It means that t-obtained value of vocabulary (11.329) is higher than the value of the t-table (2.032). In other words, control group also had significant progress in vocabulary achievement. In line with vocabulary, the reading achievement showed the same tendency; the t-obtained value of reading (5.236) was higher than that of t-table (2.032). See Table 5.

**Table 5. Pre-Test and Post-Test of the Control Group**

	Within Experimental Group			
	Grammar		Reading	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	49.94	61.60	55.20	60.91
Mean Diff	11.66		5.71	
Std Dev	6.087		6.456	
Df	34		34	
t-table	2.032		2.032	
t-obtained	11.329		5.236	
Sig.	.000		.000	

**Results of Vocabulary and Reading Achievements of Experimental and Control Groups**

**Students' Vocabulary Achievement**

The results of the analysis showed that the mean difference of the pre-test scores between experimental and control groups were 6.471 while the mean difference of the post-test scores was 12.884. Since the t-obtained value was higher than critical value of t-table that was  $4.450 > 1.996$  the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted. Therefore it could be stated that there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the students who were taught by using think-pair-share strategy and those who were not. See Table 6.

**Table 6. Students' Vocabulary between Control and Experimental Groups**

Mean Diff	12.884
df	67
t-table	1.996
t-obtained	4.450
Sig	.911

**Students' Reading Achievement**

The result of the analysis showed that the mean difference of the pre-test scores between experimental and control groups was 4.716 while the mean difference of the post-test scores was 16.545. Since the t-obtained value was higher than critical value of t-table that was  $5.189 > 1.996$  the null hypothesis was rejected the research hypothesis was accepted. Therefore it could be stated that there was a significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the students who were taught by using think-pair-share strategy and those who were not. See Table 7.

**Table 7. Students' Vocabulary between Control and Experimental Groups**

Mean Diff	12.884
df	16.545
t-table	67
t-obtained	1.996
Sig	5.189

## CONCLUSION SUGGESTION

On the basis of the results of data analysis and interpretation, it can be concluded that Think-Pair-Share strategy seems effective for the teaching reading as well as vocabulary. The students who were taught using think-pair-share strategy had better vocabulary and reading comprehension achievement than those who were not. Based on the calculation of independent samples t-test on the post-test scores, the t-obtained was higher than the value of t-table. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the research hypothesis (H1) was accepted. Thus, it could be concluded that there was a significant difference in vocabulary and reading comprehension achievements between the experimental group students (those who were taught by using think-pair-share strategy) and those of the control group students (who were not).

Based on the conclusions, some suggestions are presented in order to develop the teaching and learning EFL. Firstly, for the teacher of English, since, the students were weak in finding main idea, it is suggested for the teacher to more focus on it. It is also suggested to apply think-pair-share strategy as an alternative strategy in teaching and learning process. There were some researchers had proved that think-pair-share strategy could improve students' reading comprehension achievement as well as vocabulary achievement. For the school itself, it is suggested to provide

computer based media so the teachers and students are easily in finding materials that are suitable for each level.

Finally, for other researchers, it is suggested to conduct similar studies on other skills since this research only focused on vocabulary and reading comprehension.

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#### About the Author:

Kiki R Amelia completed her Magister Pendidikan in English language teaching at Postgraduate Study Program, Sriwijaya University. She is the lecturer at the English Education Study Program, FKIP, Uniski.