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The Strategy of Two Stay Two Stray to Improve EFL Students' Reading Skill

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Abstract

The objectives of this study are to figure out whether the use of Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) strategy could improve Grade 8 EFL students' reading skill in a junior high school in Banda Aceh and to find out the students' perspective about the use of this strategy. One class was randomly chosen as the sample in this study. The data were collected by using tests and questionnaire. The data were both analyzed by using statistical formulas. The results show that the use of TSTS in teaching reading to the Grade 8 students was successful. It can be seen from the mean scores of the experimental class that was 84.70. Moreover, the t-score (6.81) was higher than t-table (2.021), and this indicates that the students in the experimental class who were taught using TSTS got better improvement than before they were taught using this strategy. The results from the questionnaire also revealed that the students' have positive responses in relation to the use of TSTS because this strategy offered a positive relationship between teacher-students and students-students, and further increase their interest in learning. This led the students to escalate their self-confidence, social interaction, individual accountability, and group skills. A better understanding of the materials taught was also attained because they could learn together as a team.

Keywords: Two Stay Two Stray, strategy, reading skill, EFL students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Reading English texts is important to be taught and learned, especially in a country that treats English as a foreign language. This is the case in Indonesia. This is because most scientific books and journals are written in English. The students need these references to study, do the task and increase their knowledge while learning in the classroom. Furthermore, according to [Richards and Rodgers \(2001\)](#), the ability to understand the meaning depends on the reader's knowledge of the language, the structure of texts, and knowledge of the subject being read. This statement is in line with [Pang et al. \(2003, p. 6\)](#) who states that the ability of reading is influenced by the readers' "background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand the written text".

According to [Mikulecky and Jeffries \(1996\)](#), there are some specific aspects involved in reading skill. These aspects are such as finding the main idea, identifying detail information, understanding vocabulary, and making inferences. They are important parts of reading comprehension and should be activated while the students are in the process of reading some materials for comprehension.

However, most students still face problems in understanding some aspects of the text in the English class. Based on the preliminary study conducted by the researchers at one of the junior high schools in Banda Aceh, it was found that the students' average score in English reading is 55.62. There were 17 students (50.73%) who could not reach the passing score that has been set by the school, which is 70. The highest score was 85 and only achieved by four students, and the lowest score of 35 was achieved by 16 students. The test results showed that these students faced difficulties in answering questions related to all four aspects of reading comprehension, i.e. finding the main idea, identifying detail information, interpreting the meanings of words and making inferences. In finding the main idea, the students' average score was 52. This is followed by the average score in detailed information that was 49, understanding the vocabulary was 50, and making inferences was 55. Overall, the scores in all reading aspects were under 70 and these results were alarming.

The researchers further conducted initial informal interviews with the students on their difficulties in reading. First, the students informed that it was difficult for them to find the main idea because they could not determine the main idea or theme of the text. Second, they could not identify detailed information in the text because of minimal vocabulary. This led to third, it was difficult for them to interpret the meaning of the words in the text due to the lack of knowledge in vocabulary. Fourth, they could not summarize the reading text because they did not know the parts of the text that can be summarized. Finally, fifth, they were not able to conclude the meaning from the text, again, because of limited vocabulary. Therefore, they cannot conclude anything.

Consequently, there is an urgent need for the researchers to assist the students in solving their reading difficulties. Seeing that previous studies have succeeded in using Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) strategy to improve reading skills of students in other parts of Indonesia ([Febrian et al., 2017](#); [Hajar, 2015](#); [Harahap, 2012](#)), therefore this research would like to experiment the same to the students in Aceh, Indonesia. TSTS is a strategy based on cooperative learning and can be applied in teaching reading. It has been found to improve students' ability in comprehending the meaning in the text by learning actively in groups. And thus, the research questions in this study are:

1. Does the use of Two Stay Two Stray improve the eighth-grade students' reading skill?

2. What are the students' responses towards the use of Two Stay Two Stray?

This study further intends to test the following hypotheses:

H_{a1}: The use of Two Stay Two Stray improves the students' ability in reading skill.

H_{o1}: The use of Two Stay Two Stray does not improve the students' ability in reading skill.

H_{a2}: The students' responses on the use of Two Stay Two Stray is positive.

H_{o2}: The students' responses on the use of Two Stay Two Stray is negative.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Aspects of Reading

Reading is an important skill in a second language learning, especially in English as a second or foreign language (Hatch, 2001). Reading is an active mental process of interrelating with print and monitor comprehension to build up meaning (Carrell, 2006). There are some aspects of reading that are highly related to each other. They are the main idea, detail information, vocabulary and inference in reading comprehension. These aspects cannot be separated and are commonly inquired in English reading exams in Indonesia. The aspects are:

- Main idea: the main idea of a passage or reading text is the central thought or message (Olson & Diller, 2012). In contrast to 'topic', which refers to the subject under discussion, 'main idea' refers to the point or thought being expressed.
- Detail: Facts, statements, examples-specifics that guide readers to understand a text are called supporting details in reading comprehension. These details clarify, illuminate, explain, describe, expand and illustrate the main idea so that readers can better comprehend the text.
- Vocabulary: vocabulary knowledge strongly relates to students' reading comprehension and overall academic success (Lehr, 2009). This relationship is logical as it is to get meaning from the text students' read. Students need both vocabulary and the ability to use various strategies to establish the meanings of newly learned words.
- Inference: inference is the ability to read between the lines or to get the meaning of the writers' implications in the text. All comprehension strategies are said to involve inference (Duffy, 2009). This requires the students to note text clues, to access prior knowledge associated with clues, and then, on the basis of that background knowledge, predict (infer) what the meaning is.

To conclude, to understand a reading text, students must have good competence in knowing the meaning of words, sentences, content, and most importantly, knowing and understanding the writer's idea. Therefore, while students read a text, they not only know the meaning of a word by word but also must know how to grasp the writer's idea in the text.

2.2 The Nature of TSTS

Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) strategy was developed by Spencer Kagan (Kagan, 2005). TSTS is one of the types of cooperative learning groups that provides opportunities for students to share reading results and information with other learning groups in classroom activities (Santoso, 2011). This is done because, traditionally, a

lot of teaching and learning activities are characterized by individual activities. Students work alone and are not allowed to see the work of other students. Whereas in real life outside of school, work-life are interdependent on one another.

In cooperative learning, there is both individual and group accountability, which helps students to understand that there is much more in group work than just sitting in groups (Aji, 2012). In this case, TSTS stimulates students to become active, creative, critical, and responsible. TSTS is a strategy where students work in groups in order to manage and assist each other in problem-solving, sharing knowledge and information that they have learned from discussion in other groups, and encourage each other to gain the best achievement by 'staying' to share and discuss and 'straying' to explain information (Lie, 2002).

2.2.1 The procedure of TSTS

In this strategy, each group (containing four members or students) is given an opportunity to share the result of their group discussion to other groups by sending their two 'representatives' to the other groups. The other two members stay in their group and become the host for the 'guests' who are coming from other groups to search for information.

Beforehand, the teacher delivers learning indicators at the beginning of the class, identify and explain the material in accordance with the lesson plans that have been made. Then, he/she divides students into some groups which consist of four members for a group. He/she distributes one same short reading text to each group. Each group member has to underline the difficult words in the reading text. Then, each of them tries to help each other to understand these difficult words by opening the dictionary or directly telling their friends the meaning of the words (if they happen to understand). Having completed this activity, the group members will discuss the content of the reading text and try to comprehend it.

After a while, for each group, the teacher asks two students to stay and two students to stray. In this part, two members of each cooperative group visit another group to find information. Next, group members who stray re-join their own group to share what they have learned from the visited group. The strayed and the visited group can discuss and compare answers to the problems. The teacher moves around from one group to another to make sure that everyone a chance to speak in their groups.

After group work, the teacher announces that all students shall take an individual quiz in which they have to answer ten questions related to the reading text they have discussed. Later, the teacher will score the quiz and each group will combine the scores of all four members. A group should at least have a total score of 300 to win. If they get less than 300, all group members should take the test again. Awards as simple as compliments to gifts of pencils and notebooks are given to the group who receive the highest average score. This evaluation phase is to determine how much of the students' skills in understanding the material has been obtained using the model of cooperative learning through TSTS.

To end with, in TSTS strategy, the role of each student in the group is to gain information and alternative perspectives by listening and discussing with other groups and returning to share the information with their own groups. The number of times the group sends the representative to another group depends on the level of complexity of the problem.

Lie (2002) finds TSTS effectively for lessons in class because parallel groups of students work on the same laboratory, place of investigation, problem set or other activities. The use of this strategy enables them to check their procedures, answers, results, and conclusions with peers but still under the guidance of their teacher. Gillies and Ashman (2003) further argue that group attachment powerfully influences the adoption of goals and commitment to achieve them. Cohen (1994) also explains that he has added tools to his teaching to help challenge students more and to make the classroom environment enjoyable for both teachers and students. He adds that students learn more, remember more, build relationships, and learn group skills that they can use outside of the classroom (Cohen, 1994).

2.2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of TSTS

Santoso (2011, p. 9) states that a strategy of learning certainly has its advantages and disadvantages. As for TSTS, the advantages are:

- it can be applied to all classes/levels,
- it has a tendency to be more meaningful to student learning,
- it is more oriented to class activities,
- it is expected that students would be brave to express their opinions,
- it adds cohesiveness and self-confidence of students,
- the students' ability to speak can be improved, and
- it helps increase interest and learning achievement

Meanwhile, the shortcomings of TSTS strategy are:

- it takes some time,
- some students do not want to or not comfortable to work in groups,
- for teachers, it requires a lot of preparation (materials, money (for gifts, if any, and efforts)), and
- for teachers, there is difficulty in classroom management because group work can cause the class to be noisy and the students to be active all at once.

Nevertheless, Santoso (2011) has provided some suggestions to overcome the shortcomings of TSTS strategy. Firstly, teachers should prepare in advance and form study groups heterogeneously in terms of gender and academic ability. Based on the gender side, there should be equal numbers of male and female students in one group. If based on the academic ability, in one group there should be at least one student with high academic performance, two students with moderate academic performance and one with weak academic performance. This kind of formation (i.e. a heterogeneous group) provides an opportunity for each student to learn and support each other so as to facilitate management of the classroom.

3. METHODS

The method used in this research is experimental quantitative research. In this research, the word experiment means a way of trying something new, especially in order to gain experience. Webb (2007) states that quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are enjoyed to obtain information about a phenomenon.

The sample of this study is one class of eighth graders at a junior high school, SMPN 16 Banda Aceh, Indonesia. They were the students in class VIII-D and chosen

randomly. Cohen et al. (2000) explain that in simple random sampling, each member of the population under a study has the same chance of being selected and the probability of a member of the population. This school is chosen as the place for the experiment because it is the place in which the third researcher conducted her teaching internship and discovered that many students in this school still faced difficulties in comprehending English reading texts during their lessons in class. Furthermore, the English teachers in the school also have never used the TSTS strategy in teaching English. Therefore, the researchers initiated this research to develop the students' reading ability.

3.1 Research Instruments and Data Collection

The instruments used for this study are tests and a questionnaire.

3.1.1 Tests

According to Arikunto (2006), a test is a procedure or an instrument used to know or to measure something (ability, attitude, achievement, and intelligence) with some particular roles. The researchers used tests to measure the students' reading comprehension before and after implementing the TSTS strategy to the students in teaching English reading. The pre-test was given in the first meeting and it was used to know how far they have learned with their previous school teacher before. The test consisted of 20 multiple choice questions about the main idea, identifying detail information, understanding vocabulary, and making inferences related to the text given. After applying TSTS strategy in three meetings, the third researcher, who acted as the teacher during the TSTS treatment to the students, gave a post-test. It was used to know the students' reading comprehension progress after receiving the treatment. The test also consisted of 20 multiple choice questions.

3.1.2 Questionnaire

After the post-test, the questionnaire, which aims to find out what students' responses on the use of TSTS in teaching reading, was distributed to the students. There were 10 closed-ended questions and they were divided into inquiries for the relationship among students (statements numbers 1-3), motivation (statements numbers 4-6) and learning materials (statements numbers 7-10). The students were to choose strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree for each statement in the questionnaire. The students were given 15 minutes to fill in the questionnaire after the post-test.

3.2 Technique of Data Analysis

Each test consisted of 20 multiple choice questions and each correct answer is scored 5, therefore, the maximum score is 100. Furthermore, to find the t-score, the following formula suggested by Sudjana (2005) is used:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu_0}{s / \sqrt{n}}$$

From the formula, t is the t-score, \bar{x} is the mean score, μ_0 is the passing score, s is the standard deviation and n equals to the number of students.

As for the questionnaire, the researchers use a simple percentage formula to analyze the students' responses for each statement; it is from [Sudjana \(2005\)](#) as follow:

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

From the formula, P is the total percentage, f is the frequency and n is the number of samples. The constant value is 100%.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Tests

The researchers tabulated the data of the pre-test in the experimental class to analyze and find out the mean score, variants, and standard deviation. The results are shown in Table 1. It was found that the highest score for the pre-test is 82, in which only five students could achieve. The lowest score is 62, achieved by seven students.

Table 1. Results of the pre-test.

Score	Frequency	Median (xi)	$(xi)^2$	$fi.xi$	$fi(xi)^2$
60 – 64	7	62	3844	434	26908
65 – 69	8	67	4489	536	35912
70 – 74	5	72	5184	360	25920
75 – 79	5	77	5929	385	29645
80 – 85	5	82	6724	410	33620
Total	30			2125	152005

The researchers then tabulated the data of the post-test to analyze and find out the mean score, variants, and standard deviation. The results are shown in Table 2 and the scores in the graph are shown in Figure 2. The result shows that the mean scores of the post-test of the experiment class were higher after the TSTS treatment was given, which is 98, in which eight students could achieve it. The lowest score is 63, achieved by three students.

Table 2. Results of the pre-test.

Score	Frequency (i)	Median (xi)	$(xi)^2$	$fi.xi$	$fi(xi)^2$
60 – 66	3	63	3969	189	11907
67- 73	3	70	4900	210	14700
74 – 80	5	77	5929	385	29645
81 -87	4	84	7056	336	28224
88 – 94	7	91	8281	637	57967
95- 100	8	98	9604	784	76832
Total	30			2541	219275

The results show that the use of TSTS could improve the students' ability in reading skill. This can be seen from the mean scores where the mean score of the pre-test was 70.83, meanwhile, the mean score of the post-test was 84.70 (see Figure 1).

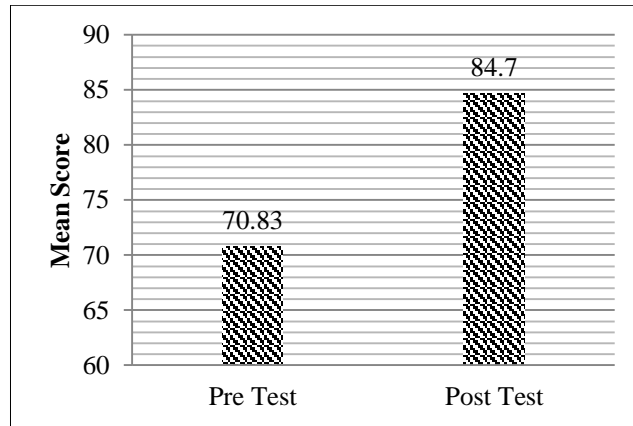


Figure 1. The comparison of mean scores.

In Figure 2, it shows that the value of the t-table is 2.00 and the t-score is 6.81. When the t-score is higher than t-table, therefore the alternative hypothesis (H_{a1}) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_{o1}) is rejected. It indicates that there is a significant difference in the students' ability in mastering reading comprehension. It can be concluded that the students in the experimental class who were taught using TSTS have achieved better before they were taught by using this strategy.

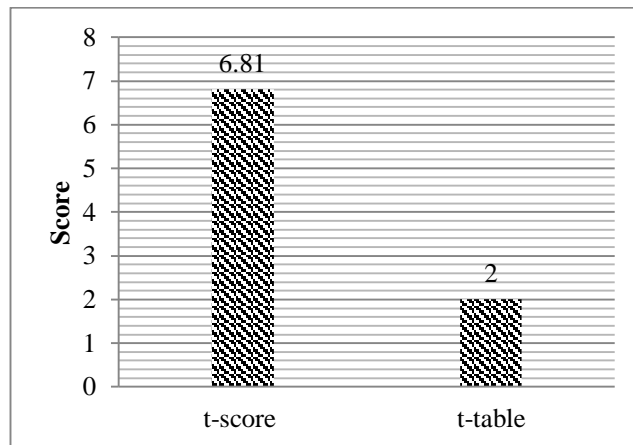


Figure 2. The comparison of t-score and t-table.

4.2 Questionnaire

Regarding the results from the questionnaire, the students generally responded positively towards the strategy of TSTS used in teaching reading. The data showed that 82.50% of the students responded 'strongly agree', 15% of the students responded 'agree', 2.5% students responded 'disagree' and 6.67% students responded 'strongly disagree'. This data showed that most of the students considered that TSTS could improve their skills in reading. They were able to answer the questions related to some aspects in reading such as main idea, detail information, inference and vocabulary. This means that H_{a2} is accepted and H_{o2} is rejected, where the students' responses on the use of TSTS strategy is positive. The percentage of these students' responses toward the use of TSTS can be seen in Figure 3.

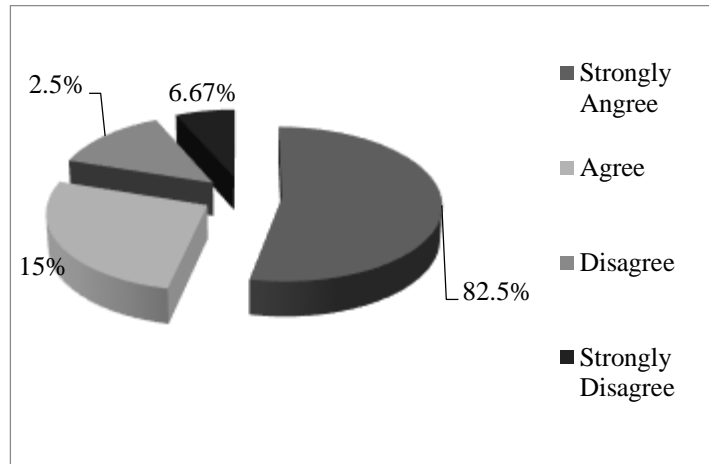


Figure 3. The students' responses toward the use of TSTS as the strategy in reading.

The next subsections discuss the divisions of the questionnaire that inquired about the relationship among students, motivation and learning materials while using TSTS strategy in the teaching and learning of reading in the classroom.

4.3.1 Relationship among students

Regarding this aspect, the students responded positively and they agree that the use of TSTS can create positive relationships especially among the members in a group (see Figure 4). The data showed that 82.50% of the students responded 'strongly agree', 15% of the students responded 'agree' and 2.5% of students responded 'disagree'. None chose 'strongly disagree'. This indicates that most of the students considered that TSTS helped them to have a positive relationship among the members in their groups in learning reading. They enthusiastically shared information with each other and worked hard to achieve the reward of the best group.

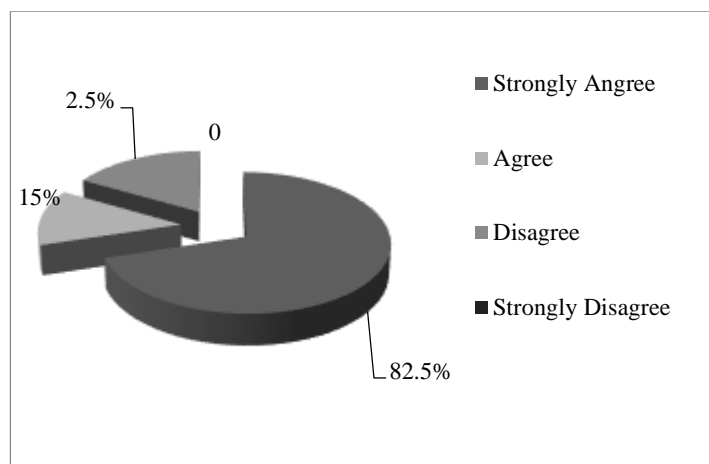


Figure 4. The students' responses towards a positive relationship among students.

4.3.2 Motivation

In this part, the statements about the students' motivation revealed that the students also responded positively; they considered that the use of TSTS increased their motivation in learning (see Figure 5). The data showed that 82.50% of the

students chose 'strongly agree', 15% of the students responded 'agree' and 2.5% of students responded 'disagree'. None chose 'strongly disagree'. This data showed that most of the students felt more motivated in learning reading by using TSTS.

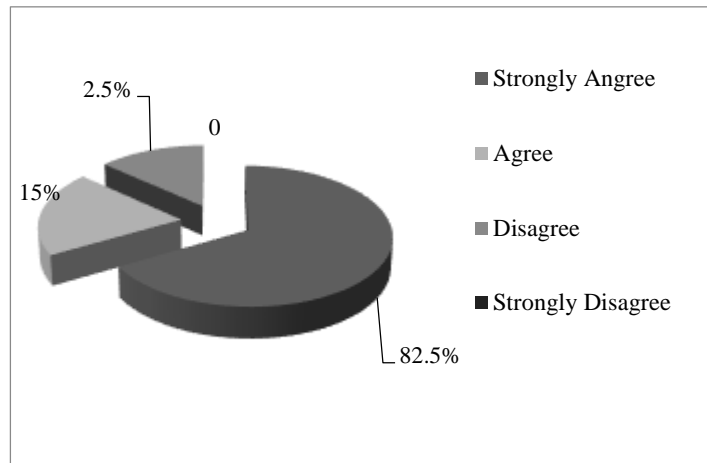


Figure 5. The students' responses towards their motivation.

4.3.3 Learning materials

The statements toward the learning materials in TSTS revealed that the students also responded positively; they considered that learning materials are more interesting. As shown in Figure 6, about 66.67% of the students chose 'strongly agree', 20% chose 'agree' and 13.33% chose 'disagree'. None chose 'strongly disagree'. This implies that most of the students were interested in the learning materials presented in the TSTS strategy.

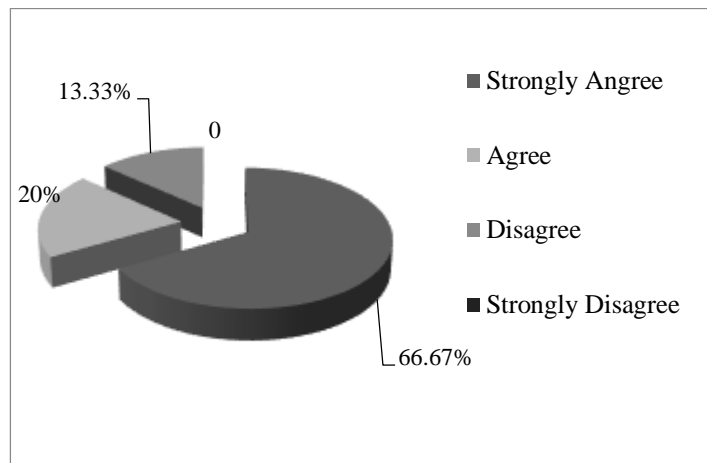


Figure 6. The students' responses toward learning materials.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the use of TSTS in the classroom teaching and learning process of English reading improved the students reading skills. The students' responses toward the use of this strategy were also mostly positive. It means that this strategy is efficient to teach reading and interesting to the students.

These findings are supported by [Febrian et al. \(2017\)](#), [Hajar \(2015\)](#) and [Harahap \(2012\)](#), who also found TSTS strategy to be more effective in increasing the students' achievement than the conventional method in teaching reading as well. TSTS gives a good effect on the students' ability in reading comprehension and motivates them in learning. In the process of learning, they get better improvement in learning reading and get positive outcomes from the social relationship with their friends. They can give and share their idea with each other and gain positive interdependence while learning together in a group. As a result, their achievement in reading improves. They did not only learn to get knowledge but also the way to interact with each other. As a result, they learn to appreciate each other's ideas.

The researchers of this study also observed that TSTS did not only help the students to increase academic achievement but also give positive outcomes on their social relationship in the classroom. TSTS is capable of producing positive outcomes on society, attitude, and academic performance dimension for the students. This interesting strategy gave chances for the students to be involved in discussions, build courage and critical thinking, and thus, the students were willing to take responsibility for their own learning. [Slavin \(1994\)](#) also proclaims that cooperative study of TSTS is a study model that emphasizes on the activities and interaction between students to motivate and help each other in mastering the learning materials in order to achieve a satisfactory learning achievement.

Moreover, the researchers found that the students have positive interdependence during activities in groups. The materials taught to them was descriptive texts that more focused on animals and plants. It encouraged the student to learn the passages because the information is familiar to their background knowledge. They discussed the text together and decided the conclusion or answers based on the result of their discussion. In this case, the researcher that acted as the teacher had encouraged them to work together and not individually to construct conclusion and similar opinions of the team. The situation in the classroom shows that the students were able to interact with each other in group work. They were active in giving and asking opinions or ideas related to the materials in the reading text. They sat face to face and communicated in discussing the meaning of the text. These activities influenced their ability in the group. They could learn in a group actively without being dependent on the teacher and worked individually in answering questions while discussing in their group. Nevertheless, despite working in groups, they also have an individual responsibility to reach the team's goal.

The teacher, then, acted as the controller, guidance, and motivator while TSTS was executed. She was not active in discussing the materials, but only explained the guideline of the materials. Then, the students had to explore and found out more information on the materials by themselves in the group work. She only helped the students when they faced problems and really needed her to solve them. For example, when they faced difficulty in understanding a word even though after consulting the dictionary. In this case, the teacher stepped in to elaborate and clarify the meaning of that word.

At the end of every meeting, the students were rewarded with interesting things such as small chocolates or sweets. The rewards were found to be effective in increasing their motivation. This is supported by [Slavin \(1994\)](#) who says that group rewards are essential to the effectiveness of cooperative learning. Therefore, it motivates them to be more active to comprehend the text well and carefully to earn more scores. They are also motivated in learning by using this strategy because they

have equal opportunities to succeed, increases their self-confidence and improves their academic skill.

6. CONCLUSION

The use of Two Stay Two Stray in teaching English reading to Grade 8 of a junior high school in Banda Aceh was successful. It can be seen from the mean scores of the experimental class, which was 84.70 in the post-test. This mean score is significantly higher than the one they achieved in the pre-test, which was 70.83. The result shows that the t-score (6.81) was higher than t-table (2.021), and this indicates that the students in the experimental class who are taught by using Two Stay Two Stray attained better improvement than before they are taught by using this strategy.

Based on the questionnaire's results, the students gave positive responses related to the TSTS strategy. In the aspects of the positive relationship among members of the student group, motivation and learning materials given in learning with TSTS, the students also responded to all with positive answers. This strategy had helped them increase their self-confidence, social interaction, individual accountability, and group skill. They also got a better improvement because they could understand the materials better by learning together as a team.

The limitation of this study is that this strategy was implemented only to one class comprising 30 students in one school. Future research is recommended to apply the strategy to a larger number of students from more schools, and also to different language skills to further investigate the strategy's effectiveness in teaching and learning language skills.

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