THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THINK PAIR SHARE (TPS) TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXT FOR THE SEVENTH GRADERS OF SMP NEGERI NUNPO

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Abstract: This research aimed to determine the significant effect of using the Think Pair Share (TPS) technique to improve reading comprehension of descriptive texts for seventh-graders of SMP Negeri Nunpo. This research was pre-experimental. The population of this study was the seventh-grader students of class at SMP Negeri Nunpo, with a total of 53 students. Through cluster random sampling, 25 students were taken as samples. The research instrument was a reading comprehension test for descriptive texts consisting of 25 multiple-choice items. The researcher applied the TPS technique for two meetings. The researcher analyzed students' pre-test and post-test scores on descriptive texts, which consisted of main idea questions, stated detail questions, vocabulary in context questions, reference questions, and purpose questions. The results of this study showed that there was a significant difference between the average pre-test score of 51.04 and the average post-test score of 80.64. Based on the above results, the researcher concludes that the use of the TPS technique significantly improved reading comprehension of descriptive texts for seventh-grader students of class A at SMP Negeri Nunpo.

Keywords: descriptive text, reading comprehension, TPS

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is crucial to language acquisition, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. It enables students to decode text, understand meaning, interpret ideas, and critically engage with written content (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). In junior high school, especially at the seventh-grade level, reading comprehension is a vital skill that supports both academic achievement and language development.

At SMP Negeri Nunpo, many students struggle to comprehend English texts, particularly descriptive texts that require attention to detail and specific vocabulary. According to Nation (2009), students must develop both lower-level reading skills, such as word recognition, and higher-level skills, including inference-making and summarization. These higher-level skills are often underdeveloped in early-stage EFL learners.

Descriptive texts are a key component of Indonesia's English curriculum and are designed to help students describe people, places, and things using appropriate language features (Kemendikbud, 2016). These texts support students' ability to structure and communicate information clearly. However, students at SMP Negeri Nunpo frequently face difficulties in identifying main ideas, understanding specific details, and interpreting meaning through context clues. These challenges are often linked to limited vocabulary, low motivation, and traditional teacher-centered methods—such as lecturing and reading aloud—that do not actively involve learners (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Hamra & Syatriana, 2012; Hakim, 2023). As a result, students' reading performance remains below expectations, which negatively affects their confidence and interest in learning English.

To address these challenges, student-centered approaches are essential. One such approach is the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique, a cooperative learning strategy introduced by Lyman (1981). TPS involves students first thinking individually about a question or topic, then discussing their ideas in pairs, and finally sharing their thoughts

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with the larger group. This strategy promotes active participation, collaborative learning, and deeper information-processing factors that can significantly enhance reading comprehension.

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of TPS in improving students' reading skills. Zuhriyah (2017) found that TPS improved students' understanding of narrative texts by boosting participation and reducing anxiety. Similarly, Rahmawati and Hermayawati (2018) reported significant gains in reading scores after applying TPS in a junior high school context. Al-Sobhi and Preece (2018) also emphasized that cooperative learning strategies like TPS promote meaningful peer interactions and improved comprehension. Astuti (2020), in a classroom action study conducted in a rural Indonesian school, found that TPS not only enhanced reading comprehension but also improved classroom communication and student motivation.

Despite growing evidence of TPS's benefits, limited research has specifically examined its application in teaching descriptive texts to seventh-grade students in rural Indonesian schools. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the Think-Pair-Share technique in improving the reading comprehension of descriptive texts among the seventh graders of SMP Negeri Nunpo. The findings are expected to offer practical insights for English teachers working in similar educational contexts.

METHOD
Research Design

This study employed a pre-experimental research design. According to Sugiyono (2014), a pre-experimental design is a research model that involves only one group or class, which is given both a pre-test and a post-test. The researcher selected one class to participate in this study. The type of design used was the one-group pre-test and post-test design, which aims to determine the effectiveness of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique in improving students' reading comprehension.

The procedures for this pre-experimental design were as follows:
1. Administering a pre-test to measure the reading comprehension of descriptive texts among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri Nunpo.
2. Applying the experimental treatment (the TPS technique) to the subjects (Class VII A).
3. Administering a post-test to assess the students' reading comprehension after the treatment.

Subject of the Study

In this study, the researcher collected data from the seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri Nunpo. The total population consisted of 53 students from two classes: Class A with 25 students and Class B with 28 students. The researcher used cluster random sampling to select one class as the sample for this research. The selected class was Class VII A, consisting of 25 students.

Instruments of the Study

To collect the data, the researcher used a multiple-choice test consisting of 25 items. Each item provided four answer choices, with only one correct answer. A correct answer was scored as 1, and an incorrect answer was scored as 0. The total score was then

multiplied by 4 to obtain a maximum score of 100. If all answers were incorrect, the score remained 0. The same test was used for both the pre-test and post-test.

Procedure of Data Collection

Before the treatment, students were given a pre-test to assess their initial reading comprehension. The test covered various aspects of reading skills, including main ideas, stated details, vocabulary in context, reference, and purpose questions. Following the pre-test, the researcher conducted teaching sessions using descriptive texts and implemented the Think-Pair-Share technique as the instructional method. After the treatment period, students took a post-test. Students who answered all questions correctly received a score of 100. The purpose of the post-test was to determine the improvement in students' reading comprehension after the implementation of the TPS technique.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data by using quantitative analysis. The formula used by the researcher to search the students' scores was:

1. Classifying the score of the students' reading into the following:

$$score = \frac{correct\ answer}{total\ number\ of\ item} \times 100$$

Table 1. Level of Mastery

No	Score	Level of mastery
1	86-100	Excellent
2	61-85	Good
3	47-60	Fair
4	0-46	Very poor

2. Calculating the rate percentage of the students' score using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N}\ x\ 100\%$$

Where: P = percentage

F = Frequency

N = Total number of sampel

3. The formula of the mean score as follow:

$$X = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where: X = Mean score

$\sum X$ = The sum of the all score

N   = Total number of sample

4. Calculating the standard deviation by using the following formula:

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum X - \frac{(\sum X)2}{n-1}}{N-1}}$$

Where: SD   =Standard Deviation

$\sum X$ =The sum all square

N   =The total number of students

$(\sum x)^2$ =The sum square of the sum of square

5. To know the difficulties faced by the students' the research analysed based on the following

Table 2. Difficulties in reading comprehension of Descriptive text

No	Reading ability to answer	Items	Total
1	Main Idea Questions	9,14,20,22	4
2	Stated Detail Questions	1,2,7,8,10,11,19,21,25	9
3	Vocabulary in Content Questions	3,5,12,13,16,18,24	7
4	Reference Questions	4,17,23	3
5	Purpose Questions	6,15	2

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results

The researcher found that the Think-Pair-Share technique in teaching descriptive texts can significantly improve students' reading comprehension. This improvement was evident in the student's ability to identify main idea questions, stated detail questions, vocabulary in context questions, reference questions, and purpose questions.

Table 3. The analysis of pre-test

Students	Main idea questions		Stated detail questions		Vocabulary in content questions		Reference questions		Purpose questions		Total		Level of mastery
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	
1.	1	4	3	12	5	20	2	8	1	4	12	48	Fair
2.	4	16	5	20	2	8	3	12	0	0	14	56	Fair
3.	2	8	4	16	4	16	2	8	0	0	12	48	Fair
4.	1	4	4	16	2	8	2	8	1	4	10	40	Very Poor
5.	3	12	6	24	3	12	2	8	1	4	15	60	Fair
6.	0	0	4	16	6	24	2	8	1	4	13	52	Fair
7.	1	4	2	8	4	16	2	8	1	4	10	40	Fair
8.	2	8	8	32	2	8	2	8	0	0	14	56	Fair
9.	2	8	5	20	4	16	0	0	1	4	12	48	Fair

10.	1	4	5	20	4	16	2	8	0	0	12	48	Fair
11.	3	12	6	24	3	12	1	4	2	8	15	60	Fair
12.	0	0	7	28	5	20	2	8	1	4	15	60	Fair
13.	2	8	4	16	5	20	1	4	1	4	13	52	Fair
14.	2	8	6	24	1	4	2	8	2	8	13	52	Fair
15.	2	8	4	16	5	20	1	4	1	4	13	52	Fair
16.	1	4	3	12	4	16	2	8	1	4	11	44	Very Poor
17.	3	12	3	12	4	16	1	4	1	4	12	48	Fair
18.	3	12	5	20	4	16	0	0	1	4	13	52	Fair
19.	4	16	5	20	3	12	2	8	2	8	16	64	Good
20.	3	12	4	16	2	8	2	8	1	4	12	48	Fair
21.	1	4	6	24	1	4	3	12	0	0	11	44	Very Poor
22.	3	12	3	12	1	4	3	12	0	0	10	40	Very Poor
23.	3	12	5	20	5	20	1	4	0	0	14	56	Fair
24.	3	12	6	24	3	12	2	8	1	4	15	60	Fair
25.	0	0	4	16	5	20	2	8	1	4	12	48	Fair
TOTAL	50	200	116	468	89	348	44	176	21	84	319	1.276	
AVERAGE	2	8	4,75	18,72	3,48	13,92	1,76	7,04	0,84	3,36	12,76	51,04	Fair

Based on the table above, one student scored 40 (3 students), 44 (2 students), 48 (7 students), 52 (5 students), 56 (3 students), 60 (4 students), and 64 (1 student). In total, four students were classified as *very poor*, 20 students as *fair*, and only one student as *good*. However, none of the students reached the *excellent* category. The total mean score of the pre-test was 51.04 (equivalent to a raw score of 1.276), indicating that students' understanding of descriptive texts can be generally categorized as *fair*.

Furthermore, students' difficulties in reading comprehension were evident from the types of questions they answered incorrectly. These included questions related to the main idea, stated details, vocabulary in context, reference, and purpose of the text.

- For the main idea questions, fifteen students answered incorrectly. Specifically, three students answered all questions incorrectly, six students answered only one question correctly, and another six students answered two questions correctly.
- For stated detail questions, twelve students answered incorrectly: one student answered two questions correctly, four students answered three questions correctly, and seven students answered four questions correctly.
- For vocabulary in context questions, eleven students answered incorrectly: three students answered one question correctly, four students answered two questions correctly, and four students answered three questions correctly.
- For reference questions, seven students answered incorrectly; two students answered all questions incorrectly, while five students answered one question correctly.
- For purpose questions, seven students answered all questions incorrectly, indicating a complete lack of understanding in this area.

These results suggest that students faced the most difficulty with purpose and main idea questions, reflecting challenges in both literal and inferential comprehension.

Table 4. The analysis of post-test

Students	Main idea questions		Stated detail questions		Vocabulary in content questions		Reference questions		Purpose questins		Total		Level of mastery
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	
1.	3	12	8	32	5	20	2	8	2	8	20	80	Good

No.													
2.	4	16	8	32	5	20	1	4	2	8	20	80	Good
3.	3	12	7	28	6	24	3	12	1	4	20	80	Good
4.	2	8	6	24	6	24	2	8	2	8	18	72	Good
5.	4	16	6	24	7	28	3	12	1	4	21	84	Good
6.	2	8	6	24	6	24	2	8	2	8	18	72	Good
7.	3	12	6	24	6	24	3	12	2	8	20	80	Good
8.	4	16	8	32	6	24	3	12	2	8	23	92	Excellent
9.	3	12	8	32	6	24	3	12	2	8	22	88	Excellent
10.	3	12	8	32	7	28	2	8	1	4	21	84	Good
11.	3	12	8	32	4	16	2	8	2	8	19	74	Good
12.	3	12	9	36	6	24	2	8	2	8	22	88	Excellent
13.	4	16	7	28	6	24	3	12	1	4	21	84	Good
14.	4	16	9	36	4	16	3	12	2	8	22	88	Excellent
15.	4	16	6	24	7	28	2	8	1	4	20	80	Good
16.	3	12	6	24	5	20	3	12	2	8	19	76	Good
17.	3	12	6	24	4	16	2	8	2	8	17	68	Good
18.	2	8	8	32	6	24	3	12	2	8	21	84	Good
19.	4	16	9	36	6	24	3	12	2	8	24	96	Excellent
20.	4	16	9	36	6	24	3	12	1	4	23	92	Excellent
21.	2	8	7	28	5	20	3	12	1	4	18	72	Good
22.	2	8	8	32	5	20	2	8	2	8	19	76	Good
23.	4	16	7	28	4	16	2	8	2	8	19	76	Good
24.	2	8	6	24	6	24	2	8	2	8	18	72	Good
25.	3	12	7	28	4	16	3	12	2	8	19	76	Good
TOTAL	78	312	183	732	138	551	62	248	43	172	504	2.016	
AVERAGE	3,12	12,48	7,32	29,28	5,52	22,04	2,48	9,92	1,72	6,88	20,16	80,64	GOOD

After the implementation of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique, a post-test was conducted to evaluate students' progress in reading comprehension of descriptive texts. The results showed significant improvement compared to the pre-test. The students' scores ranged from 68 to 96. Specifically, one student scored 68, 4 students scored 72, 5 students scored 76, 5 students scored 80, 4 students scored 84, 3 students scored 88, 2 students scored 92, and 1 student scored 96. Based on the classification, 19 students were categorized as *good* and six students as *excellent*. Notably, no student fell into the *fair* or *very poor* categories. The mean post-test score was 80.64 (equivalent to a raw score of 2.016), indicating a substantial improvement in students' reading comprehension. According to the scoring criteria, the student's performance can now be categorized as *good*.

A detailed analysis of students' responses also revealed a marked reduction in the number of incorrect answers across all question types. The most significant progress was observed in stated detail, vocabulary in context, and purpose questions, where no incorrect answers were recorded. This suggests that students were able to grasp literal meanings and the overall purpose of the texts more effectively after the intervention. However, minor challenges remained. In the main idea questions, six students still provided incorrect responses. All of them answered two questions correctly, indicating partial understanding but a need for further development in summarizing or synthesizing key information. In reference questions, only one student provided an incorrect answer, suggesting a great improvement in identifying pronoun or referent relationships in the text. Overall, the post-test results demonstrate that the TPS technique had a positive impact on students' reading comprehension, especially in helping them master both literal and inferential components of descriptive texts.

Based on the data above, the researcher also calculated the standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test. The standard deviation in the pre-test was 52.66 with a mean score of 51.04, while in the post-test, the standard deviation increased to 83.49 with a

mean score of 80.64. This indicates a significant improvement in the average score following the treatment. The substantial increase in both the mean and standard deviation suggests that the Think-Pair-Share technique was effective in enhancing students' reading comprehension. However, it is important to note that the relatively high standard deviation in both tests reflects considerable variation in students' performance, indicating differences in individual learning outcomes.

Discussion

The pre-test results revealed that the overall reading comprehension of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri Nunpo was at a *fair* level, with an average score of 51.04. The majority of students were clustered in the fair category, with only one student reaching the good level and none achieving an excellent performance. This outcome highlights a significant need for improvement in students' understanding of descriptive texts.

A closer analysis of the results revealed specific areas of difficulty, particularly in answering questions related to the main idea and purpose of the text. These question types require higher-order thinking skills, such as making inferences, synthesizing information, and identifying the author's intent—skills that are often underdeveloped in early-stage EFL learners (Nation, 2009). The findings are consistent with Grabe and Stoller's (2011) view that reading comprehension involves both lower-level decoding and higher-level interpretation, both of which need to be taught explicitly in EFL contexts.

The results also align with previous research by Hamra and Syatriana (2012), who observed that Indonesian students, particularly in rural settings, often lack vocabulary mastery and struggle with inferential comprehension due to teacher-centered instructional methods. At SMP Negeri Nunpo, traditional strategies such as lecturing or reading aloud may not adequately support the development of these essential skills. Moreover, the complete failure of 7 students to answer purpose questions correctly is particularly concerning, as it reflects a deeper issue with global text understanding and engagement. This finding reinforces the need for teaching strategies that not only focus on literal comprehension but also encourage students to think critically and interact meaningfully with the text.

The data suggest that an interactive and student-centered approach—such as the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique—could be beneficial in this context. As supported by Astuti (2020) and Rahmawati & Hermayawati (2018), TPS fosters discussion, peer learning, and active engagement, all of which are crucial for improving both literal and inferential comprehension skills. Therefore, the findings from the pre-test highlight the necessity of implementing more engaging, cooperative methods to support students in overcoming their specific reading challenges. These insights provide a foundation for applying the TPS technique as an intervention aimed at enhancing students' comprehension of descriptive texts in the following cycle of this study.

The post-test results revealed a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after the implementation of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique. The mean score increased from 51.04 in the pre-test to 80.64 in the post-test, shifting the overall performance classification from *fair* to *good*. This improvement suggests that TPS had a strong positive impact on students' ability to comprehend descriptive texts.

The distribution of scores further supports this finding. While no students were classified as *excellent* in the pre-test, six students achieved this level in the post-test. Additionally, 19 students were categorized as *good*, and notably, no student fell into the

fair or *very poor* categories. This sharp contrast indicates that the TPS strategy not only enhanced general comprehension skills but also helped low-performing students make substantial progress.

One of the most remarkable findings was the complete elimination of incorrect answers in stated detail, vocabulary in context, and purpose questions. This result suggests that TPS successfully supported students in retrieving explicit information, understanding word meaning within context, and grasping the overall purpose of a text—skills that are often difficult for early EFL learners (Nation, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011).

The improvements align with previous studies, such as those by Zuhriyah (2017) and Rahmawati and Hermayawati (2018), which highlight how TPS increases student engagement, encourages peer interaction, and reduces reading anxiety. Through its three-step structure—think, pair, and share—TPS provided students at SMP Negeri Nunpo with the opportunity to process information individually, discuss it collaboratively, and then articulate their understanding with confidence. This process appears to have deepened their comprehension and facilitated learning.

Despite the overall progress, some minor challenges remained. In the main idea questions, six students continued to struggle, managing to answer only two out of several questions correctly. This suggests that although students improved in literal comprehension, some still needed more practice synthesizing information to determine the main idea—a higher-order skill that requires inference and abstraction. A single student also answered a reference question incorrectly, indicating that occasional misunderstandings in tracking referents still occurred.

In conclusion, the post-test findings affirm that the Think-Pair-Share technique significantly improved students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts. It not only raised overall performance but also addressed specific reading sub-skills that were problematic in the pre-test. The few remaining challenges can inform future instructional focus, particularly in reinforcing skills like identifying the main idea and resolving textual references.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri Nunpo initially demonstrated fair reading comprehension skills, with particular difficulties in higher-order thinking areas such as identifying main ideas and understanding the author's purpose. After implementing the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique, students showed significant improvement, with average scores rising from 51.04 to 80.64 and many students moving into good and excellent performance categories. TPS effectively enhanced students' abilities in both literal and inferential comprehension, supporting the retrieval of explicit information, vocabulary interpretation, and understanding of text purpose. Although some challenges remained, particularly in synthesizing main ideas, the overall success of TPS highlights its effectiveness as a student-centered strategy for improving reading comprehension in early EFL learning contexts. It is suggested that future instruction continues to integrate interactive techniques like TPS while placing greater emphasis on developing student's ability to identify main ideas and make inferences to achieve even higher levels of comprehension.

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