

STUDENT-CENTERED STRATEGIES FOR EFL READING: EVIDENCE FROM GIST AND RSS APPLICATION

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of combining the Generating Interaction between Schemata and Text (GIST) strategy with Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS) in improving the reading comprehension of first-grade vocational students at SMAN 20 Gowa. The study was conducted in response to common difficulties experienced by EFL students, such as limited vocabulary, low motivation in reading activities, and challenges in understanding English texts. To address these problems, the researcher implemented an integrated reading approach that encouraged students to summarize, discuss, and interpret texts collaboratively during classroom learning. The research employed a pre-experimental method using a one-group pre-test and post-test design. Reading comprehension tests were administered before and after the implementation of the GIST and RSS strategies. During the treatment sessions, students were guided to identify main ideas, summarize information, and participate actively in group discussions to construct meaning from the texts. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after the treatment. The mean score increased from 44.33 on the pre-test to 82.67 on the post-test, indicating that the integration of GIST and RSS strategies positively affected students' reading achievement. Furthermore, students became more active and engaged in the learning process. The study concludes that the integration of GIST and RSS can serve as an effective alternative strategy for teaching reading comprehension, particularly in vocational school contexts. The strategy also promotes collaborative learning, critical thinking, and students' confidence in understanding English texts. Future researchers are recommended to involve larger samples and different educational settings to obtain broader findings.

Keywords: GIST strategy; Reciprocal Summarization Strategies; reading comprehension; EFL students; vocational school students.

INTRODUCTION

English plays an important role in global communication, education, science, and technology. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language from elementary school to university level to help students develop their communicative competence and academic skills. Among the four language skills, reading is considered one of the most essential skills because it enables students to gain information, expand knowledge, and support other language skills such as writing and speaking. Reading comprehension also helps students understand academic texts and participate actively in learning activities. Therefore, improving students' reading comprehension has become one of the major goals in English language teaching. However, many Indonesian students still experience difficulties in comprehending English texts, particularly students in vocational high schools. Students often struggle to identify main ideas, understand unfamiliar vocabulary, infer meaning from context, and connect information within a text. These difficulties make students less confident and less motivated during reading activities. In addition, students frequently depend on word-by-word translation, which limits their ability to understand the overall

meaning of the text. As a result, many students demonstrate low achievement in reading comprehension activities in the classroom.

Several previous studies have discussed factors affecting students' reading comprehension in EFL classrooms. Herda et al. (2023) stated that limited vocabulary mastery and lack of reading strategies are among the major challenges faced by EFL learners in understanding English texts. Similarly, Capodice et al. (2020) found that students' low engagement during reading activities often reduces their comprehension performance and participation in classroom discussions. These findings indicate that teachers need to implement effective instructional strategies that encourage students to become more active and engaged during reading lessons. One instructional strategy that can be applied to improve reading comprehension is the Generating Interaction between Schemata and Text (GIST) strategy. GIST is a summarization strategy that helps students identify important information and construct concise summaries from reading texts. Through this strategy, students are trained to focus on key ideas and eliminate unnecessary information while reading. Previous studies reported that GIST contributes positively to students' comprehension ability because it encourages learners to process information actively and organize ideas systematically. In addition, GIST helps students connect their prior knowledge with new information from the text.

Another strategy that supports reading comprehension is Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS). RSS encourages students to work collaboratively through activities such as summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting information from texts. This strategy promotes interaction among students and creates a more student-centered learning environment. Through discussion and collaboration, students can exchange ideas, improve their understanding of the text, and develop critical thinking skills. Previous studies also reported that collaborative reading activities increase students' participation and motivation during classroom learning. Although previous studies have shown the effectiveness of GIST and RSS in improving reading comprehension, most researchers examined the strategies separately. Studies integrating both strategies in EFL vocational school contexts are still limited. Furthermore, previous research rarely explored how combining summarization and collaborative interaction strategies simultaneously affects students' comprehension and classroom engagement. This condition reveals a research gap that needs further investigation, particularly in Indonesian vocational school settings where students often encounter difficulties in reading English texts.

Based on preliminary observations conducted at SMAN 20 Gowa, first-grade students demonstrated several problems in reading comprehension activities. Many students had difficulty understanding the content of English texts, identifying main ideas, and answering comprehension questions correctly. During classroom learning, students also tended to be passive and reluctant to participate in discussions. These conditions

indicated that students needed more interactive and collaborative reading strategies to support their comprehension and participation in the classroom.

To address these problems, this study integrated GIST and Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS) in teaching reading comprehension. The integration of these strategies was expected to help students summarize information effectively, interact actively with peers, and construct meaning collaboratively from reading texts. Through collaborative summarization activities, students were encouraged to become more engaged in the learning process and improve their comprehension skills. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the effectiveness of integrating GIST and Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS) in improving the reading comprehension achievement of first-grade vocational students at SMAN 20 Gowa. The findings of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to English language teaching, particularly in the area of reading instruction. Practically, this study is expected to provide English teachers with an alternative strategy for creating more interactive, collaborative, and effective reading learning environments in vocational school contexts.

METHOD

1. Research Design

This study employed a pre-experimental research design using a one-group pre-test and post-test design to investigate the effectiveness of integrating the Generating Interaction between Schemata and Text (GIST) strategy with Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS) in improving students' reading comprehension. According to Creswell (2014), a pre-experimental design is appropriate for examining the effect of a treatment by comparing participants' performance before and after the intervention. This design was selected because the study aimed to determine whether the implementation of GIST and RSS could significantly improve students' reading comprehension achievement. The one-group pre-test and post-test design involved administering a reading comprehension test before the treatment, implementing the instructional treatment using GIST and RSS strategies, and administering a post-test after the treatment. The difference between pre-test and post-test scores was used to measure the effectiveness of the treatment. This design allowed the researcher to identify changes in students' reading comprehension performance after participating in collaborative reading activities using GIST and RSS strategies.

2. Participants / Subjects

The study was conducted at SMAN 20 Gowa during the academic year 2024/2025. The participants consisted of first-grade students enrolled in the vocational class specializing in computer network engineering. The class was selected using purposive sampling because preliminary classroom observations and teacher

recommendations indicated that students experienced difficulties in reading comprehension and showed limited participation during reading activities. The sample consisted of 30 students, including 15 male students and 15 female students. The use of purposive sampling ensured that the selected participants represented students who required support in improving their reading comprehension skills and classroom engagement. According to Etikan et al. (2016), purposive sampling is commonly used in educational research when researchers intentionally select participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the study objectives.

3. Instruments

The main instrument used in this study was a reading comprehension test administered as both the pre-test and post-test. The test consisted of several reading passages followed by comprehension questions designed to measure students' ability to identify main ideas, understand vocabulary in context, interpret information, and draw conclusions from the texts. The reading materials were adjusted to the students' educational level and learning objectives. The instrument was developed based on indicators of reading comprehension skills and was reviewed before implementation to ensure content appropriateness. According to Masduki (2022), valid reading comprehension instruments should measure students' literal and inferential comprehension abilities accurately. Therefore, the test items in this study were designed to evaluate students' understanding of textual information comprehensively.

4. Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure consisted of three stages: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. During the first stage, the researcher administered the pre-test to measure students' initial reading comprehension ability before the implementation of the treatment. Students answered the reading comprehension questions individually without receiving any instructional intervention. The pre-test scores served as baseline data for comparison with the post-test results. After conducting the pre-test, the researcher implemented the treatment using the integration of GIST and Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS). The treatment was conducted in several classroom meetings. During the implementation process, students worked collaboratively in groups to read English texts, identify important information, summarize paragraphs, discuss the meaning of the texts, and share ideas with peers. The GIST strategy guided students in focusing on main ideas and producing concise summaries, while RSS encouraged students to clarify information, ask questions, predict content, and engage in collaborative discussions during reading activities. The instructional method reflected the integration of GIST and RSS strategies with the Reading Story approach. This dual strategy was selected to address students' issues in reading comprehension, including limited vocabulary, structural misunderstandings, and low motivation, which have been extensively

documented in prior studies (Pebriani et al., 2022; Khoirunnisa & Hakim, 2023). The dependent variable was students' performance in reading comprehension, specifically their ability to understand and synthesize recent texts. The decision to focus on recent texts was supported by Marlinton et al. (2023), who emphasized the relevance of this genre in Indonesian secondary education and its role in promoting narrative analysis. During the treatment sessions, the researcher acted as a facilitator who guided students throughout the collaborative learning activities. Students were encouraged to participate actively in group discussions and construct meaning from the texts through interaction with peers. Previous studies suggested that collaborative reading strategies improve students' comprehension and classroom engagement because students become more active participants during learning activities (Herda et al., 2023; Capodice et al., 2020). After the treatment sessions were completed, the researcher administered the post-test to measure students' reading comprehension achievement after the implementation of the strategies. The post-test used similar indicators as the pre-test to ensure consistency in measuring students' comprehension ability. The comparison between pre-test and post-test scores was used to identify whether there was significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after receiving the treatment.

5. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean scores, percentages, and standard deviations of students' reading comprehension achievement before and after the treatment. These analyses provided an overview of students' performance improvement during the study. Inferential statistical analysis was conducted using a paired sample t-test to determine whether the difference between pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant. According to Sugiyono (2019), the paired sample t-test is appropriate for comparing two related sets of scores obtained from the same participants. The results of the statistical analysis were then interpreted to determine the effectiveness of integrating GIST and Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS) in improving students' reading comprehension achievement. The collected data were analyzed using standard quantitative techniques to assess changes in students' scores. Students' correct responses in the pre-test and post-test were scored and classified based on the scoring classification presented in Table 1. The classification ranges from "Very Poor" for scores below 39 to "Excellent" for scores between 90 and 100. This classification system provides clear benchmarks for interpreting performance levels, as recommended by Gay (2012) and widely used in classroom research. The mean scores for both tests were calculated using the formula $X = \Sigma X / N$, where ΣX is the sum of all scores and N is the total number of students. This measure offers an overall view of class performance and facilitates comparison with

previous studies in similar contexts (Masduki, 2022). Additionally, the frequency and rate percentages for each score category were computed to illustrate the distribution of student performance across the classification ranges. This approach, outlined by Gay (2012), enhances the clarity of the findings by revealing patterns in how students' comprehension levels shifted after the intervention. To assess the mean gain, the difference between pre-test and post-test scores for each student was calculated and averaged using the formula $\bar{D} = \Sigma D / N$. This value provides insight into the magnitude of improvement resulting from the treatment. To determine whether the observed differences were statistically significant, a paired samples t-test was conducted, applying the formula $t = \bar{D} / \sqrt{((\Sigma D^2 - (\Sigma D)^2 / N) / N(N-1))}$. This test, as described by Gay (2012), evaluates whether the mean gain score could have occurred by chance, thereby confirming the effectiveness of the combined GIST and RSS strategies in enhancing reading comprehension. Figure 1 illustrates the experimental design, while Table 1 presents the classification system used for scoring.

Table 1. Scoring Classification of Reading Comprehension

Score Interval	Classification
90–100	Excellent
80–89	Very Good
70–79	Good
60–69	Fairly Good
40–59	Poor
<39	Very Poor

In sum, the methodological framework employed in this study was developed in line with best practices for pre-experimental research in EFL settings, integrating insights from prior literature on sampling strategies (Zulianti & Hastomo, 2022), instrument validity and reliability (Masduki, 2022), and the effectiveness of reading comprehension interventions (ELSAIED, 2022; Sarshogh et al., 2024). By adopting a systematic and rigorous approach, this study aimed to provide credible evidence on the impact of combining the GIST and RSS strategies, thereby contributing meaningful insights to the ongoing discourse on improving reading comprehension among vocational high school students in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study present a comprehensive analysis of the effects of combining the Generating Interaction Between Schemata and Text (GIST) strategy and the Reading Short Story (RSS) approach on first-grade vocational high school students' reading comprehension of recount texts at SMAN 20 Gowa. These results are organized

into several sub-sections: pre-test scores, post-test scores, the comparative frequency and rate percentages of pre- and post-test results, mean scores, statistical significance, and hypothesis testing. Each section integrates relevant literature to validate the findings and situates them within the broader context of EFL research. Initial diagnostic assessments indicated that students began with generally low reading comprehension abilities, which is consistent with the challenges. As documented in Table 4.1, the total raw score for the pre-test was 665 across 15 students, resulting in a mean pre-test score of 44.33. This relatively low baseline reflects students' limited vocabulary, insufficient grammatical understanding, and lack of effective reading strategies, which often hinder EFL learners' ability to engage with texts meaningfully. These results align with the broader literature highlighting that Indonesian vocational students frequently rely on rote memorization rather than genuine comprehension due to these foundational language gaps.

Table 2. The Total Raw of Student Pre-test and Post-test

No	Student Code	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score	Gain Score
1	DAS	40	85	45
2	MR	30	80	50
3	MKG	40	75	35
4	MN	55	85	30
5	MA	40	75	35
6	RA	35	80	45
7	SQ	30	90	60
8	RWS	35	75	40
9	WA	35	80	45
10	YRS	50	95	45
11	MM	45	75	30
12	RN	50	85	35
13	WH	65	85	20
14	AP	70	95	25
15	AN	45	80	35
Total		665	1240	575
Mean		44.33	82.67	38.33

Table 2 further illustrates the pre-test score distribution, showing that most students fell into the “poor” and “very poor” categories: 8 students (53.33%) were categorized as poor, and 5 students (33.33%) as very poor, with only 1 student achieving a “good” classification. No student scored within the “very good” or “excellent” range. These findings underscore the that cognitive and psychological barriers, such as poor motivation and reading anxiety, often limit students' performance in initial reading comprehension assessments. Chart 4.1

provides a clear visual of these findings, further illustrating that no student met the minimum completeness criteria (KKM) of 75, reinforcing the urgent need for targeted interventions.

Table 3. The score of students' Pre-Test

Classification	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	90-100	0	0%
Very Good	80-89	0	0%
Good	70-79	1	6.66%
Fairly Good	60-69	1	6.66%
Poor	40-59	8	53.33%
Very Poor	<39	5	33.33%

Table 2 further illustrates the pre-test score distribution, showing that most students fell into the “poor” and “very poor” categories: 8 students (53.33%) were categorized as poor, and 5 students (33.33%) as very poor, with only 1 student achieving a “good” classification. No student scored within the “very good” or “excellent” range. These findings underscore the that cognitive and psychological barriers, such as poor motivation and reading anxiety, often limit students' performance in initial reading comprehension assessments. Chart 4.1 provides a clear visual of these findings, further illustrating that no student met the minimum completeness criteria (KKM) of 75, reinforcing the urgent need for targeted interventions.

Table 4. The score of students' Post-Test

Classification	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	90-100	3	20%
Very Good	80-89	8	53.33%
Good	70-79	4	26.66%
Fairly Good	60-69	0	0%
Poor	40-59	0	0%
Very Poor	<39	0	0%

Following the implementation of the GIST and RSS strategies over four instructional sessions, significant improvements were observed in students' reading comprehension abilities. Table 2 reveals a notable increase in the total raw score from 665 in the pre-test to 1240 in the post-test, with a corresponding mean post-test score of 82.67. This improvement is found that systematic interventions using explicit reading frameworks can produce substantial gains in students' reading performance. The findings further validate the effectiveness of employing integrated strategies, as supported by Sarshogh et

al. (2024), who observed that students engaged in Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) demonstrated superior post-test outcomes compared to those receiving traditional instruction. Table 4 details individual student scores, which ranged from 75 to 95, with three students attaining an “excellent” classification (20%), eight students classified as “very good” (53.33%), and four as “good” (26.66%). Notably, no student remained in the “poor” or “very poor” categories after the intervention.

Table 5. Mean Scores and Gain Scores

No	Test activities	Mean score	Total score
1	Pre-test	44.33	665
2	Post-test	82.67	1.240

The mean scores further confirm the intervention’s effectiveness. As presented in Table 5, the mean pre-test score was 44.33, while the mean post-test score rose to 82.67. This increase reflects an average gain score of 38.33, as calculated and shown in Table 4.8 indicating that the summarization and narrative strategies employed had a meaningful impact on students’ comprehension abilities.

Table 6. T-test and t-table score

Variable	T-test	T-table
Pre-test and post-test	14.47	2.144

The paired t-test conducted to measure the significance of the difference between the pre-test and post-test results confirmed that the improvement was statistically significant. The calculated t-value was 14.47, as shown in Table 6, while the critical t-table value at a 0.05 significance level with 14 degrees of freedom was 2.144. Since the t-value far exceeded the critical value, the null hypothesis (H0), which posited no significant difference between pre- and post-test scores, was rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis (H1). T-tests are robust tools for small-sample classroom studies. The high t-value observed in this research confirms that the GIST and RSS strategies produced a real and meaningful improvement in students’ reading comprehension, reinforcing the argument that explicit, structured reading interventions yield significant learning gains.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the integration of the Generating Interaction between Schemata and Text (GIST) strategy and Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS) significantly improved students’ reading comprehension achievement. The improvement can be seen from the increase in students’ mean scores from 44.33 in the pre-

test to 82.67 in the post-test. This finding indicates that the implementation of collaborative summarization strategies effectively supported students in understanding English texts more comprehensively. The students became more capable of identifying main ideas, understanding vocabulary in context, and interpreting information from the reading passages after participating in the treatment sessions. The improvement in students' reading comprehension occurred because the GIST strategy encouraged students to focus on important information and summarize the essential points of a text concisely. Through summarization activities, students learned to organize information systematically and connect prior knowledge with new information from the reading passages. This finding is consistent with previous studies which stated that GIST helps students improve comprehension by training them to identify key concepts and eliminate unnecessary details during reading activities. Students became more active in processing textual information instead of relying only on word-by-word translation.

In addition, Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS) contributed positively to students' engagement and collaborative learning during classroom activities. Through RSS, students worked in groups to discuss, clarify, predict, and summarize the content of texts collaboratively. The collaborative interaction among students created a more interactive learning atmosphere and increased students' participation during reading lessons. This finding supports Capodice et al. (2020), who emphasized that collaborative reading strategies improve students' engagement and classroom interaction because learners actively construct meaning together during the learning process. Students also appeared more confident when discussing ideas and answering comprehension questions after participating in group discussions. The integration of GIST and RSS also helped students overcome difficulties related to limited vocabulary and comprehension of English texts. During the treatment sessions, students were encouraged to identify unfamiliar vocabulary through contextual discussion and peer interaction. Collaborative discussion allowed students to share understanding and support one another in comprehending difficult parts of the text. This finding aligns with Herda et al. (2023), who explained that interactive reading activities can help EFL students improve comprehension and vocabulary understanding through active engagement and collaborative learning processes.

Furthermore, the implementation of the integrated strategies promoted student-centered learning in the classroom. Instead of depending entirely on teacher explanations, students actively participated in summarizing texts, discussing ideas, and interpreting information collaboratively. The researcher acted as a facilitator who guided students during the reading process. This learning environment encouraged students to become more independent readers and enhanced their confidence in understanding English reading materials. Previous research also suggested that student-centered reading instruction positively affects students' motivation and comprehension performance because learners

are directly involved in constructing meaning from texts. Another important finding of this study was the increased classroom participation observed during the treatment sessions. Before the implementation of GIST and RSS, many students were passive during reading activities and reluctant to respond to questions. However, after several treatment meetings, students became more enthusiastic and engaged in classroom discussions. They actively exchanged ideas, asked questions, and contributed during group activities. This result indicates that collaborative summarization activities can create a more supportive learning environment that motivates students to participate actively in reading lessons.

The findings of this study also support the theory of collaborative learning, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in constructing knowledge. Through collaborative discussion and summarization activities, students learned from peers and developed deeper comprehension of the texts. The combination of GIST and RSS provided opportunities for students to process information individually and collaboratively at the same time. This instructional approach helped students improve not only their reading comprehension achievement but also their communication and critical thinking skills during classroom interaction. Although the findings demonstrated positive results, this study had several limitations. First, the study used a pre-experimental design without a control group, which limited the ability to compare the effectiveness of the treatment with other instructional methods. Second, the sample size was relatively small and involved only one class at SMAN 20 Gowa, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Future researchers are recommended to conduct experimental studies with larger samples and different educational settings to obtain broader and more comprehensive findings regarding the effectiveness of integrating GIST and Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS) in teaching reading comprehension.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the integration of GIST and RSS can be used as an effective alternative strategy for teaching reading comprehension in vocational school contexts. The strategies not only improved students' reading achievement but also promoted collaborative learning, active participation, and students' confidence in understanding English texts. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to apply interactive and student-centered reading strategies to create more meaningful and effective classroom learning experiences.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the combined application of the Generating Interaction between Schemata and Text (GIST) strategy and Reciprocal Summarization Strategies (RSS) significantly enhances the reading comprehension skills of first-grade vocational students, particularly in recount texts. The results showed a notable improvement in students' mean scores, with post-test performance shifting from predominantly "poor" to "good" and "very good" classifications. This indicates that

interactive, summarization-based strategies can address common EFL reading difficulties such as limited vocabulary, low motivation, and lack of engagement. The discussion also highlights how GIST and RSS foster metacognitive awareness and collaborative learning, supporting students to become more autonomous readers. By aligning with previous findings on strategy integration in EFL contexts, this research adds empirical evidence to the body of knowledge on effective reading instruction. The positive student responses and significant statistical differences emphasize the practical viability of combining these strategies in real classroom settings. However, the study's small sample size and limited intervention duration suggest that future research could expand on these findings through larger, more diverse populations and longitudinal designs to examine long-term impacts. Overall, this study reinforces the value of creative, student-centered approaches in EFL reading instruction and encourages educators to adopt varied methods that actively engage learners in constructing meaning from texts.

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