

# Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through the Pre-Reading, During-Reading, and Post-Reading (PDP) Methods: A Qualitative Study in Timor-Leste

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Jonita Ana Freitas, \*Salvador Magno Ximenes<sup>ab</sup>

<sup>12</sup>English Department, Instituto Católico para a Formação de Professores (ICFP) Baucau, Timor-Leste.  
Corresponding Author: [salvadormx2018@gmail.com](mailto:salvadormx2018@gmail.com)

## A B S T R A C T

The objective of this research was to evaluate how well the teacher-student relationship supported the implementation of the PDP methods, which improved students' reading comprehension. This research used a qualitative method to understand the phenomenon in an environment. The participants in this research were six students and one English teacher, selected using the purposive sampling method. Data were collected through interviews, and they were analysed using thematic analysis to interpret the findings. The result of the study shows that the implementation of the PDP methods is important and has a positive effect on students' reading comprehension, although some students still faced some challenges in the reading activity, including having difficulty understanding the academic words. The results indicate that this method attracts students who need active engagement in reading activities to maintain their increased motivation. Therefore, this method is beneficial and important to implement in an English class to stimulate students' learning performance, especially to improve their ability in reading comprehension.

**Keywords:** PDP Methods, Reading Comprehension, English Students, And Elementary School.

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a critical issue for the English learners, which involves language and interpretive skills. English is a global language that is used for communication, education and career development. It is commonly learnt as a second or third language, which provides the learner with the possibility of becoming successful in academics and careers (Bongco & David, 2020). To enhance understanding and dialogue, there is a need to use effective teaching techniques, like the pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading (PDP) methods.

English is a unit in the national curriculum program, but a number of challenges that teachers still face in teaching at elementary school in Timor-Leste (Ximenes, 2025). This program is about reading comprehension, reading ability, and writing and speaking ability. This program helps students develop their English language skills during the learning process. Basically, learning English is essential for junior and senior high school students, especially in Timor-Leste. However, the English program in the national curriculum aims to create literate and articulate individuals who can effectively communicate, analyse information, and engage with the world around them through language and literature. Reading strategies are important factors for helping learners become better readers. Teachers must understand which reading strategies their students employ and which they do not, to effectively build these strategies through both explicit and implicit instruction (Ximenes, 2024). Most of reading instruction is carried out in three stages (before-reading, such as the warming-up stage; while-reading, such as the actual reading stage; and after-reading, such as the follow-up stage) in a class.

According to some observations or experiences, the quality of teaching for reading subjects will be challenging. It means that many students have not reached a good reading level for their age or school. In Timor-Leste, none of the teachers used the PDP lesson plan in reading class. The method used by teachers is not effective or adapted to the needs of all students. Lack of resources: Some schools do not have sufficient and quality textbooks and teaching materials (Ximenes, 2025a). Some teachers do not have the specific and adequate training to teach reading well. Students and teachers who don't know Portuguese well may find it challenging to use it as the main language of instruction. This statement is important and needs attention to identify solutions to improve the quality of reading. It is fundamental to ensure that students can develop strong reading skills, as reading is the basis for learning in other areas.

In Timor-Leste, many teachers do not use the Pre-During-Post (PDP) method in schools. It is difficult for students to improve their reading comprehension while students' learning basic literacy skills does not develop well in basic education (Ximenes, 2025b). This problem shows that the Ministry of Education needs to pay more attention and support. At the same time, teachers need to use effective methods to help students understand what they read. The PDP methods is one way that students can become better at reading. This method also helps students learn new vocabulary and understand texts better. This study aimed to understand the importance of the PDP methods and the way of implementation in improving student reading comprehension in English class. This study is also guided by these research questions: First, why is the PDP methods important to develop student reading comprehension? How does the teacher use this method to teach students in the class?

### *Literature Review*

#### *Definition of the PDP methods*

The PDP methods is an effective teaching strategy that educators can incorporate into their instructional framework, particularly for grammar and vocabulary, to enhance students' reading comprehension. According to Norhayati & Din (2023), the PDP methods is a structured framework for reading instruction that divides the reading process. This approach is designed to assist students in understanding texts more effectively through three stages: pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading (PDP).

The pre-reading stage involves activities that occur before students engage with the text. These activities aim to activate prior knowledge, assess students' background understanding, introduce essential vocabulary necessary for comprehending the text, and generate interest in the topic. The objective of these pre-reading activities is to prepare learners for a successful reading experience. Specifically, pre-reading focuses on priming students for the main text by activating prior knowledge, introducing key vocabulary, and fostering interest in the subject matter. Activities may include brainstorming, prediction exercises, or vocabulary pre-teaching (Alghonaim, 2020).

During the reading stage of the lesson, learners engage with the text by reading or listening actively. This stage is important because it helps learners understand the main ideas, vocabulary, and details in the text. While reading or listening, they may underline or highlight important information (Norhayati & Din, 2023). Teachers might ask questions or provide tasks that help students focus on specific points in the text. For example, they could search for answers to questions, identify new words, or summarise what they've understood. This stage encourages learners to interact with the text, which helps them strengthen their language skills.

The post-reading stage takes place after learners have engaged with the text and demonstrated comprehension. In this stage, learners reflect on what they have read or listened to and apply their understanding. Teachers often use activities like discussions, summarising, or answering questions to see how well learners understand the text. This stage also helps learners connect the text to their experiences or other knowledge. For example, they might share their opinions or relate the text to real-life situations. The goal of the post-reading stage

is to help learners think critically about the text and use the information in new ways. It also gives them the chance to practice speaking or writing English based on what they have learnt (Norhayati & Din, 2023). Educators used the PDP methods to enhance students' receptive skills in listening and reading. This method served as a framework to ensure that students were motivated, engaged, and active before, during, and after lessons. Consequently, the PDP methods is crucial for the improvement of students' listening and reading abilities.

### ***Meaning of Reading***

According to Smith (2021), reading is the process of looking at and understanding written or printed words, symbols, or text. It involves recognising words and grasping their meanings within sentences to comprehend the overall message. Skilled reading includes interpreting words and connecting them to prior knowledge, making it an active way to acquire information and learn. Reading can be done silently using various materials, such as books, articles, signs, and digital content. Mastering reading requires the ability to recognise words, sentences, and paragraphs. Comprehending a text is essential for building knowledge and connecting to what students already know about a topic (da Costa and Ximenes, 2025). Additionally, reading is crucial for students, as their academic success largely depends on their reading abilities.

In addition, reading is a receptive skill because it receives information from printed and written texts. If they are proficient at reading, they will have a better chance to succeed in their study. If they can't read well, they'll struggle to learn. That's why the best speakers and writers are usually the most avid readers; they learn to be fluent and make their language clearer. However, reading is a complex process where the person needs to be an active reader to develop the reading skill, so it helps the development of the writing and speaking skills. Ali, Abdullatif & Oyed, (2024) asserts that reading is an activity that encourages someone to comprehend what she/he read, which is influenced by her/his attitudes, knowledge, and experience. It means that reading is a thinking process, and more than just producing the words. This conclusion is because reading involves integrating various skills and processes, resulting in an accumulation of knowledge over time.

### ***Importance of the PDP methods***

According to Kinsey (2024), pre-reading is an important part of our class because it empowers the students to see the pictures before they can read the story. This helps them fall in love with books and storytelling that they read. However, pre-reading strategies allow students to contemplate what they already know about a given topic and predict what they will read or hear. Before students read the text, teachers can direct their attention to how it is organised, teach unfamiliar vocabulary or other concepts, search for the main idea, and provide them with a purpose for reading or listening. Most importantly, teachers can use pre-reading strategies to increase students' interest in a text.

According to AI Roomy (2022), the process of during-reading helps students to develop their critical thinking skills and not just absorb every piece of information they read. However, the students identify the central topic, the main idea, and how the ideas relate to each other. While reading, they need to understand that text structure can facilitate comprehension and help readers locate the information they are looking for. They can assess how well they understood the text, identify the difficulty they are having, and adjust their reading strategies as needed. This metacognitive process helps readers become more aware of their reading ability, identify difficulties, and use strategies to improve comprehension.

According to Ramazonovna & Bakhor (2025), post-reading is the stage of the reading process that occurs after the text has been read, where learners reflect on, analyse, and evaluate the content to deepen comprehension, consolidate knowledge, and connect ideas to broader contexts. The purpose of post-reading is to enhance understanding, facilitate information retention, and establish connections beyond the text. Readers take time to contemplate the main ideas, key details, and overall message of the text. They can mentally or physically summarise the content using their own words. Readers might analyse the author's purpose,

identify themes, explore literary devices, and form their own interpretations of the content (da Costa and Ximenes, 2025).

Post-reading encourages readers to connect the text to their prior knowledge, personal experiences, other texts they have read, or broader world events. This helps contextualise the information, making it more meaningful. Readers may critically evaluate the information presented in the text. They might question the author's arguments, consider different perspectives, and form their opinions. The goal of this stage's activities is to help readers remember the most important parts of the text so they can use them later. These activities can involve note-taking, outlining, or discussing the content. Sometimes, post-reading involves applying the knowledge gained from the text in a new way, such as solving a problem, writing a response, or engaging in a related activity (Ramazonovna & Bakhor, 2025).

### ***The Stages of Implementation of the PDP methods***

The pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading method is a structured approach to reading comprehension that divides the reading process into three distinct stages.

First, the implementation of pre-reading strategies in the classroom involves a systematic approach to prepare students for reading by activating their prior knowledge, building vocabulary, and setting a purpose for reading (Jacob, 2023). This process can significantly enhance comprehension and engagement with the text. Pre-reading activities are a way for the students to comprehend an English text easily. According to Rustika (2019), pre-reading activities are also motivational devices because they are advantageous before reading the passage. Pre-reading activities can be combined in a reading instruction, helpfully preparing students for the content of reading materials. It can be done before reading to help understand the text better.

Second, during-reading activities are essential for enhancing students' comprehension and engagement with the text as they read. These activities encourage active participation, critical thinking, and reflection on the material. Teachers provide students with specific questions to consider while reading. These questions should focus on key themes, character motivations, or plot developments. By prompting students to think critically about the text, they can better understand and retain the information (Kinsey, 2025).

Reading activities are the actions a reader engages in while reading. To maximise reader interactions with text, they should be guided during reading activities. To influence how a reader processes a text to increase comprehension, various interventions can be applied. Tanjung (2022) suggests five activities to do while reading. First, readers identify the main idea of the text through giving a title, selecting the most appropriate title, and identifying the topic sentence through skimming. Then, readers discover the details in the text by scanning it and finding specific information. Third, readers follow a sequence by relating items in a particular order or process. Fourth, readers infer from the text by trying to understand the text using their schemata and experience. Fifth, readers identify the discourse patterns by applying all their linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge to understand the text holistically.

Ness (2011) suggested questioning techniques and guides as strategies during reading activities. The questioning technique involves prompting students to retrieve prior knowledge, focusing their attention on checking literal comprehension, inferring meaning, applying information, and predicting possible test items. Questions in the reading activity are also useful to guide and focus students' attentions and performance. In addition, the questions also activate students' background knowledge. Finally, predictions at the time of reading are useful to keep students involved with the text.

Last, post-reading activities are the activities conducted by a reader after reading. Readers use these activities to confirm their comprehension of the text topic they have read. In post-reading activities, students do post-questions, feedback, and group and whole-class discussions. The post-questions are more effective for incidental comprehension and the objective since information of both greater and lesser importance is learnt. The activities serve to assess students' understanding of the text they are reading. After the reading class activity,

the post-questions play a crucial role in ensuring students learn information of both greater and lesser importance.

Teachers can do this by asking the students some open questions that ask them to summarise, synthesise, and verify their conclusions. Besides asking questions, the activity of summarising the contents of the text is also applicable to the students, encouraging them to become more actively involved with it. The summary can be used to assess the students' comprehension of the text. The activity of post-reading can also be in the form of discussion. Students are asked to discuss the writer's ideas. This discussion can be in a group or a whole class. The discussion may depend on the class size. If the class is big, it will be better to have a group discussion. If the class is small, it will be better to have a whole-class discussion (Tanjung, 2022). The purpose of the follow-up was to help the students develop the information gained from what they had learnt. It enabled students not only to review or conclude what they have read from the text but also to integrate the textual information into their experiences. In the post-reading step, students were asked to discuss the key concepts, review and summarise what they had read, and integrate the textual information with their knowledge of the world.

## METHOD

### Type of Research

This study used a qualitative research method that explores and understands the qualities and meanings of human experiences and social phenomena. Qualitative research not only seeks to describe phenomena but also to interpret the underlying motivations, beliefs, and emotions that shape individuals' actions and interactions (Khan, 2021). Overall, qualitative methods are important because the researcher can understand reality through the human perspective, answer in-depth questions, and adapt to the natural context. This method allows for the exploration of the meanings, senses, and subjective experiences of the participants, revealing the social, cultural, and emotional context that affects their thoughts and actions.

### Sampling and Research Site

The research subject is a person who will collaborate with the researcher to collect information and data regarding problems that occur in the field. This subject is important to the researcher because he is the primary target for gathering information according to the procedures established by the researcher (Kelman, 2022). In this study, the researcher employed purposive sampling, which means that the representative subject serves as the main source of information to address the research objectives (Thomas, 2022). The participants involved in this research included an English teacher and six students from grade 8.

Researchers conduct research in a specific location or environment to collect data. The researcher identifies and addresses the problem under study at the research site (Williams, 2021). The EBC VILA-NOVA BAUCAU school is chosen as a place to conduct the research. This place is chosen because the teacher implements the PDP methods in this school.

### Data Collection and Validity

This research employed interviews as a data collection method to gather information from various sources in order to achieve the research objectives. According to Sugiyono (2013), data collection techniques include participant in-depth interviews and triangulation methods that the researcher implements. Furthermore, the author emphasises the strategic importance of this stage by stating that data collection techniques are crucial for research, as their main objective is to obtain reliable data. This approach aims to ensure the quality and credibility of the research, allowing readers to value and appreciate the results.

The data were obtained using semi-structured interviews that consisted of 8 open-ended questions that were used to decide the way teachers and students viewed the strategies implemented to enhance English reading comprehension. All the interviews took about 45–60 minutes and were held in English and Tetum, according to the desires and comforts of the

participants. All interviews were audiotaped with permission and then transcribed verbatim. The Tetum transcripts have been translated into English without altering the meaning. The transcripts were then thematically coded and analysed by the researcher in accordance with the six-step method recommended by Braun and Clarke (Naeem et al., 2023) to determine the common themes regarding practices and challenges associated with reading comprehension.

This research used the member checking method to validate the data gathered from the interview. Member checking is a technique used in qualitative research to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of the data collected. This allows participants to confirm, clarify, or correct what has been recorded (McKim, 2023). The validation of data is important because it helps the researchers identify errors and increase the accuracy of their results.

#### ***Data Analysis Technique***

In this research, the researcher used thematic analysis to analysing interview data. This is a method widely used in qualitative research, aimed at identifying and organising themes and describing relevant themes emerging from the collected data, also allowing the preparation of interpretative reports (Rozali, 2022). Thematic analysis is a methodological approach for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns or themes in qualitative data (Campbell et al., 2022). Initially, it is necessary to become acquainted with the data, achieve deep reading and note-taking; then, the initial codes should be created to label the important features; then, these codes should be grouped into possible themes; then, the identification and description of each theme through clear and consistent language should be developed; and finally, the formation of a comprehensive report that will combine and explain the identified themes (Campbell et al., 2022).

#### ***Ethical consideration***

Ethical considerations in research are a set of principles that guide research designs and practices (Swain, 2016). The researcher communicated with the school by sending a formal letter from *Instituto Católico para a Formação de Professores* (ICFP) to the director of EBC. 03 Vila Nova Baucau, which allowed for the continuation of research at the school. The researcher also sent authorisation letter to the director of the municipality of Education, who granted permission for this research.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The thematic analysis results of the interviews with teachers and students identified important themes as follows.

#### ***Theme 1: Usage of the PDP methods***

This theme underlines how using the PDP (pre-reading, during-reading, post-reading) method is an excellent framework for enhancing reading comprehension and engagement in an English class. The teacher reported that this is an effective teaching method that teachers should apply in teaching to develop their reading ability through a variety of activities. Teacher said that,

"I use this method starts by introducing the topic with music, games, pictures, and some role-playing, so that it makes students more active in their learning process."

Additionally, this method aids students in enhancing their reading comprehension skills. A teacher stated that;

"The PDP methods is critical for me as a teacher to use during teaching English because I believe that students have the opportunity to explore more of their capacity for reading skills."

The PDP methods is a strategy to help students with their reading time; it is an effective teaching method for teachers to implement during reading class. The PDP methods helps students strengthen their vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure, as well as increase their knowledge of the English language.

#### ***Theme 2: Benefits of PDP***

This theme highlights the many excellent benefits of the PDP methods offers for English teachers to conduct teaching structurally in an English class. The teacher reported that it helps the teacher himself to have a clear implementation structurally. An English teacher stated that;

“The PDP methods gives me a clear structure of activities in the lesson plan.” However, teachers know exactly what to do *before, during, and after* reading; it's an easy way for teachers to create lesson plans faster and with less stress. The PDP methods makes it easy for me to help all students, whether they are very proficient at English or just starting.”

When the teachers prepare different activities for different capacities of learning capacities, students are more likely to participate in reading class, and students feel more confident speaking and sharing. The PDP methods is a powerful tool for English teachers because it brings structure, clarity, engagement, and effectiveness to their lessons; it can bring benefits for both the teachers' planning and the students' learning.

### ***Theme 3: Overcome the Challenges***

This theme highlights the challenges that teachers face during the learning process. Teacher reported that the challenges she faced during the PDP methods implementation were that some students did not want to listen during teacher explanations, played during reading time, and were passive while learning. An English teacher states that;

“The common challenges that I face during the learning process are students' behaviour, which is extremely difficult for me to control, and some of the students being uninterested in learning. I saw that this behaviour is affected by the environment that consists of violent practices.”

Eventually, she faced the challenge, but she found another strategy to overcome it. To help students pay attention and be active in class. She states that,

“I should create lesson plans by using games, stories, and group work. Through activities, my students are willing to learn more English.”

Such involvement makes learning deeper and more meaningful. The teacher can support these factors by giving students time to explore, share their ideas, and solve problems together. When students feel involved, they enjoy learning more and become more confident about what they learn. But as a teacher, she said that;

“I always discover alternative ways to overcome challenges during the learning process.”

Creating a friendly classroom, using simple instructions and reviewing lessons also help students stay focused and enjoy learning.

### ***Theme 4: Importance of Using the PDP Methods***

This theme underlines the importance of using PDP methods to help students learn better. The teacher reported that PDP methods guide students to understand the text more, learn new words, and improve reading skills. Students become more active, remember more, and feel more confident when reading in English. An English teacher states that;

“The implementation of the PDP methods in my class can help students learn how to read well, pronounce words correctly, understand the content of the text clearly, and also identify the main ideas of the text, vocabulary, and grammar as a strong basis to develop communication skills and critical thinking.”

Through this method, students change their reading behaviours and understand what to do before, during, and after reading. Over time, students learn how to read and understand by themselves. It also helps students improve their speaking and writing skills. This practice helps students use new vocabulary and grammar in their own words. They learn how to express ideas in English in their daily life.

### ***Theme 5: Involvement in a Reading Activity***

This theme highlights how the students' involvement in a reading activity through collaboration, critical thinking, and communication skills. The students reported that their teacher supplied clear instructions for activities that they did, such as individual, pair, and

group work; this creates a dynamic learning environment. Individual reading helps students to develop independent comprehension, while reading in pairs and groups will bring up their collaboration. The students state that;

“The teacher invites us in pairs and groups to be involved in the activities, including doing the reading exercise activity in the class. When we make a mistake, the other group will correct our exercise in front of us or write on the board.”

This manner really helps students because they help each other and learn from each other, and they are more confident in exploring their ideas. This also improves their communication and social skills.

#### **Theme 6: Reading comprehension**

This theme emphasizes the effect of reading activities on enhancing the students' reading comprehension. Through reading, students reported that they could understand the meaning of the text, which allows them to build knowledge, develop their critical thinking skills, and learn how to connect ideas. Through reading, they learn how to interpret the sentence, which means they can understand the full message. The students state that;

“Reading text helps us understand stories, get more information, get new vocabulary, and learn how to interpret the story and ask questions.”

This manner of reading helps students to learn new ideas and become better at speaking and writing. It also improves their vocabulary, helps them understand grammar in context, and builds confidence when sharing their thoughts or answering questions about what they read.

#### **Theme 7: Reading Challenges**

This theme highlights the challenges that the students faced during the implementation of PDP methods. The students reported that they face several challenges when engaging with reading activities in the classroom. The students state that;

“Some common challenges we face during reading time include a limited number of English books, our basic English knowledge limitations, our limited vocabulary, difficulty reading texts, difficulty pronouncing the words correctly, and difficulty identifying the main idea.”

“Sometimes the teacher does not provide us with the opportunity to read in the whole class.”

Although all these things make students feel unconfident to ask questions or share ideas during reading time, the implementation of the PDP methods is helpful to improve their learning performance, especially their reading comprehension.

#### **Discussion**

The results of the research prove that the method of Pre-During-Post (PDP) can help students to greatly improve their reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and involvement in English language learning. In line with Norhayati and Din (2023), the three-stage framework enables learners to build meaning prior to, concurrently with, and post-reading, and hence encourages comprehension and motivation. The pre-reading stage allows students to use previously gained knowledge and develop curiosity using pictures, games, and predicting tasks, which is consistent with Kinsey (2024), who also stressed the importance of pre-reading to arouse interest and background knowledge. The during-reading phase, in its turn, helps to make the learners engage with the texts and highlight essential ideas and vocabulary, which is why Tanjung (2022) argues that guided questioning and interaction reinforce comprehension.

Moreover, the activities that follow the reading teach the students to think critically and reflectively since they can relate the information they have read to the actual experiences (Ramazonovna and Bakhor, 2025). The collaboration was facilitated by the teacher through group discussions and summarising activities that supported understanding, which points to the fact that PDP aids in both cognitive and social learning. Nevertheless, other issues identified in the results include there being few English materials and poor vocabulary and pronunciation, which reiterate Ximenes (2025a; da Costa & Ximenes, 2025) on the structural

limitation of the educational environment in Timor-Leste. Researchers found that the teacher's creativity in modifying the PDP approach through storytelling, group projects, and contextualised materials played a critical role in eliminating these obstacles.

Comprehensively, this research justifies the pedagogical significance of PDP as an adaptive, student-centred method that makes passive reading effective. It does not only enhance the linguistic competence of the students but also foster their confidence and cooperative learning behaviours. The implications reveal the necessity of teacher professional development and a sufficient supply of resources to ensure optimal PDP implementation in the primary education system of Timor-Leste.

## CONCLUSIONS

The use of the PDP methods has a positive effect on students' reading comprehension. Students who learn the PDP methods can develop their knowledge of reading, which contributes to increasing their literary skills, promotes critical thinking, and stimulates students to be involved and active in the reading process. The results indicate that students require active engagement in reading activities to maintain their increased motivation. However, the students continue to struggle with issues such as limited English knowledge, limited vocabulary, difficulty reading texts, difficulty pronouncing words correctly, and difficulty identifying the main idea. Therefore, English teachers continue to use a variety of activities during reading time to engage students, improve comprehension, develop vocabulary, and foster a love for reading. The PDP methods present the teacher with the opportunity to demonstrate a pedagogical approach that stimulates students to actively engage in the reading process. Strengthening pedagogical practice in English classes: teachers should apply the PDP method more effectively by incorporating interactive, student-centered, and varied strategies at each stage of reading. Teachers should use visual supports, brainstorming, and conversations about the context to gain the students' prior understanding before they read. Teachers can help students comprehend what they read by helping them make predictions, ask questions, and build their vocabulary. They can contemplate what they've learnt by reading, discussing, writing summaries, and coming up with creative replies. Teachers can change classes to fit the different levels of proficiency of their students and keep them interested in reading activities by giving them regular feedback, working with other teachers, and using formative evaluations.

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