

Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension in SMPN 7 Medan City

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has made English increasingly important as an international language in commerce, technology and education. Knowing how to speak English is certainly very useful and beneficial, given the importance of the English language. Of the four skills that teachers teach their students, reading is one of the most important skills in English and provides many benefits. This study examines the strategies used by English teachers to teach reading comprehension and their implementation at SMPN 7 Medan City. This research is descriptive qualitative in nature, using observation and interviews. Two English teachers served as informants in this study. The result of this study is based on the observation, the researcher first found that there are three strategies used by English teachers, namely (1) Scaffolding, (2) Question Answer Relationship (QAR) and (3) Discussion Strategy. Teachers use these strategies to help students understand the reading material. Students are encouraged to concentrate more on the text, and teachers can also assist students in developing the meaning of the reading material so that they can more quickly understand the content. In the Application of strategies used by English teachers to teach reading comprehension. First, scaffolding strategies that can create readable concepts are the methods used by the teacher. Second, this teacher uses the QARs strategy, where she asks her students about the terms she uses in the text after they finish reading it. Third, the discussion strategy which can make students more active in exchanging ideas when discussing with classmates. This method is used to ensure that students understand the text they read.

Key words: Teacher Strategies; Reading Comprehension; Reading skills

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to interpersonal communication, language is key. Globalization has made English even more vital as an international language in commerce, technology, and education. Knowing how to speak English is surely highly useful and advantageous, given its importance. The act of teaching English requires setting up the classroom in a way that fosters learning. The four skills in teaching English are speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Although these talents have distinct meanings, they all strive to develop English creativity. Of the four skills that

teachers teach to their students, reading is one of the most important in English and gives us numerous benefits. Teachers must have a broad plan that covers the lesson structure, expected student conduct, instructional objectives, and a description of the methods needed to achieve the approach (Surayatika, 2022). However, teachers generally rely on kids to develop reading abilities organically without providing much guidance. In the passive approach, there is a concept that if teachers continuously teach reading comprehension in the target language, pupils will gradually improve their reading comprehension.

Dwiningtiyas et al. (2020), a teaching strategy is a thorough lesson plan that contains the teaching objectives, the expected learner behavior, and a description of the ways to apply the strategy. Ulfa et al. (2023), there are numerous approaches devised and applied utilizing tangible materials and procedures, which include reading aloud in class, asking comprehension questions, identifying the difficulty level of the text, and employing pre-reading tasks to get students ready to read. Teachers can also use additional strategies, such as helping students expand their vocabulary, stopping reading before they understand, getting the gist of the text, using context clues, teaching reading strategies, helping pupils visualize what they read, offering multiple reading purposes, identifying texts and tasks, and so on. Harmer (2007) asserts that teaching strategies are efforts made by teachers to attain one or more learning objectives. These tactics serve as broad guidance in the teaching process. To teach reading, teachers are encouraged to employ a range of strategies, such as integrating multiple methods, media, and games, to sustain students' attention. In order to help students become skilled readers, effective reading comprehension instruction requires instructor ingenuity. Successful teachers do not rely on just one method, but rather a number of strategies to fit the needs and learning styles of their students in the classroom. Munna and Kalam (2021), furthermore, detailed comments that effective teaching is not merely transferring knowledge from one person to another. Successful teachers know that reading may be taught in a variety of ways, and they must change instruction according to the requirements of the students.

Overall, adopting multiple tactics that match the requirements of students is crucial to improving the quality of learning in the classroom. Based on this reasoning, the researcher assumes that the teacher's role is highly significant in overcoming students' issues in learning to read comprehension. Teachers should develop a variety of techniques to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process, because poor teaching strategies may become obstacles to learning.

The research conducted by Pandiangan et al. (2021) is named "Reading Teaching Strategies Applied By English Teachers In Senior High School." According to the data analysis results, there are numerous ways teachers use reading strategies, including scanning, skimming, active reading, speed reading, structure-proposition-evaluation, and survey-question-read-recite review. Adjustment tactics affect students' capacity to follow lessons. Teachers must be able to use more than one method in order to assist their pupils in becoming proficient readers of English.

Another prior study was conducted by Giawa (2022) under the title "Teacher Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension at the Eighth Grade Student of Junior High School 1 Umbunasi." The research results suggest that the English teacher employed certain tactics in teaching reading comprehension, notably memorizing, activating background information, questioning, and quiet reading. Memorizing is a strategy for improving students' ability to remember information. Activating a background knowledge technique helps students grasp the text based on their prior knowledge. Questioning, the teacher is able to know how far the students understand the text. And silent reading allows the children to better understand the reading text. Based on research findings, it can be stated that memorizing, activating background information, questioning, and silent reading tactics were helpful in teaching reading comprehension since they helped students comprehend the text.

Based on the description above, the researcher assumed that the involvement of teachers is very crucial to overcome students' issues in learning reading comprehension. The teachers should figure out numerous ways in order to boost the quality of the teaching and learning process. The teachers' tactics in teaching reading comprehension become an issue if not addressed promptly. To validate this premise, the researcher was interested in performing descriptive research named "Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension in SMPN 7 Medan City." The researcher wanted to know what methods were employed by the English instructors and how the English teachers used the strategies in teaching reading comprehension. The researcher thinks that the teaching and learning process will help students become better English readers and engage in English language activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Study

Previous studies have indicated by Nurdianingsih (2021) that this study is targeted at displaying instructors' tactics in teaching reading comprehension to students by using an English teacher. In gathering the data, an interview was conducted to find ways of teaching reading comprehension. The findings revealed that the tactics utilized by the teacher were understanding text, individual and group learning approaches, and QAR strategies. The result revealed that teachers need to be equipped with ways of teaching reading comprehension in order to help the students cope with the problems of learning English. The choice of tactics was adapted by the teachers with the materials, the syllabus, and the curriculum. Those tactics were effective in teaching reading comprehension because they allowed students to understand the material and exchange their views with their friends.

The literature study is on the research "Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Skills During Offline Learning in Post-Covid-19 Pandemic Period" by Nadian and Afifi (2023). This research has a descriptive-qualitative design. The data on

problems and techniques were acquired through observation and interview from two English teachers in the tenth grade of the school. The data was then evaluated following qualitative data analysis by identification, categorization, and drawing conclusions, followed by triangulation to confirm the validity of the analysis. The results showed that the teachers faced the following obstacles in the class: attendance, building motivation, sharing the lesson, vocabulary, and reading skills. The attendance difficulty was handled by understanding more about the students and the reasons for their absence. Other issues were handled by applying various teaching approaches such as apperception, brainstorming, offering feedback, and employing films in the teaching and learning process.

Teaching Strategies

Teaching is a complex process that goes beyond just transmitting information from the teacher to the students. Numerous activities might take place during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. As Harmer (2007) states, teaching is not an effortless task, but it is vital, and it can be highly fulfilling when teachers see their pupils grow, knowing they played a role in making it happen. Teaching strategies in education relate to a strategy or a sequence of actions designed to attain specified educational goals (Mulyono and Wekke, 2018). A strategy can be described as a plan that describes a set of measures targeted at accomplishing specified educational objectives. According to Mulyono and Wekke, (2018), "learning strategy is an effort to create conditions deliberately so that goals can be facilitated achievement," indicating that teaching strategies entail deliberate efforts to create settings that support the achievement of learning goals. In this context, strategy emphasizes the need to simplify the attainment of educational objectives.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is vital not only for understanding literature but also for broader learning, school performance, and future careers. It is a complex procedure that includes synchronizing numerous cognitive talents and abilities. According to experts, reading comprehension can be defined in several ways. According to Snow (2002), it is the process of simultaneously extracting and producing meaning through interaction and engagement with written language. According to Mikulecky and Jeffries (2007), reading comprehension entails making sense of what readers read and connecting the ideas in the text to their current knowledge. Duffy (2009) further simplifies it by arguing that reading comprehension is the essence of reading, as without understanding the information, reading is not genuinely happening.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This research is connected to teaching strategy and the students' perceptions towards the method of teaching English. For this, the researcher needed to undertake a descriptive study; essentially, the research developed the descriptive data, such as written words or oral, from individuals and the behavior that was observed. So therefore, the research design in this research is a descriptive qualitative strategy.

Research Instruments

Relates with the problem of research, are two instruments that researcher used, namely:

1. Observation

Observation is design to general data on activities, behaviors, and generally focus on setting. Observation is in to finding out the strategies that used by teacher in teaching reading comprehension.

2. Interviews

Interviews in this research, will meet the interviewees and provide types of questions relate to the thesis title. In this research, of course, the sources are English language teachers at SMPN 7 Medan City.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in the study, namely all data obtained from the field, both the results of interviews and documentation as well as the form of a literature review, will be classified by grouping and sorting them based on the purpose of each question to provide a detailed description that will show the various findings. Then the classified data is analyzed using descriptive methods so that it is easy to understand and obtain objective, valid results from the research results. After all the data is analyzed descriptively, then the final stage of data processing is drawing conclusions. After all the data is presented, the problem that is the object of research can be understood, and then conclusions are drawn, which are the results of this research.

RESULT AND DISUSSION

The findings of this study contain teacher strategies in teaching reading comprehension and the results of interviews about the strategies used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension. The interview was conducted at SMPN 7 Medan City with 2 informants. To strengthen the interview and observation data, document and archive studies were conducted. This study involved two English teachers at SMPN 7 Medan City. The following Table 1 below shows the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1
Characteristic Of Two English Teachers

Name	Description	Gender	Age
IS	Class Teacher VIII-4	Female	45
IN	Class Teacher VIII-2	Female	35

(Source: Processed By Researchers In 2024)

1. Observation in Class

From the results of the observation, the researcher noticed IS teacher's habit of communicating with students, starting with saying “Good morning, students”. Next, the teacher checks attendance. After that, the teacher asks the class leader to lead the prayer. When the learning process begins, the IS teacher continues with the explanation of the previous material before adding an explanation of the new material. Then the teacher explains the material to be learned today and writes “My Cat” on the board. The teacher tells the students that they will learn about “descriptive text”, which tells a two-paragraph short story about a pet story. In the closing stage, the teacher reminds the students about what descriptive text is. The teacher asks if there are any questions or not, and if everyone has understood. After that, the teacher says goodbye and leaves the class.

2. Interview Results

Teachers must prepare everything from various angles so that the teaching and learning process can run smoothly and successfully when conducting teaching and learning activities to determine whether students understand the material, especially in reading comprehension. So the researcher will prepare 2 questions to answer the problem formulation in this study. The first question is about what strategies are used by teachers in teaching reading. The second question is what steps to implement the strategy. To find out the answer to this question, the researcher conducted an interview and the results of the interview are as follows:

Table 2
Interviews With Two English Teachers

No	Researcher	Teachers
1	Do you have a learning strategy in a reading course? If so, what learning strategies were used? When reading learning takes place?	IS: Of course, every time I do the learning process in class, I using learning strategies so that the learning process is more effective, the applications that I usually use in teaching reading include, are scaffolding and question answer relationship.
		IN: In every lesson I use learning strategies, in my reading lessons usually use a scaffolding strategy, question answer relationship, and discussion strategies.
2	What are the specific steps/ways to	IS: Used in the scaffolding strategies and question answer relationship, for example at the beginning of my meeting ask students if there are difficult

	implement strategies? the	words that they have not understood. Then at the end of the lesson I also asked students about the material that I had conveyed. IN: The steps for scaffolding are by asking students to look for difficult words. The question and answer relationship is me always ask and answer this according to the material. The material is which we discussed together were discussed in the previous class. I give students one to two questions. It is very help me because I can know the student's ability how far they understand and understand about the material that I have give. Next was a discussion so I divided into several groups and then I give different texts/topics in each group. After that the results of the discussion they are presented in front of the class.
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(Source: Processed By Researchers In 2024)

From Table 2 above, based on the results of the interview strategies in teaching reading comprehension to students, teacher IS said that the scaffolding strategy and question and answer strategy in teaching are considered more effective. Strategies that are used when students experience difficulties and seek understanding. So that these strategies are useful for improving student understanding. Results of the interview with IN teacher, said that the scaffolding strategy, question and answer and discussion strategy. Strategies used when students face difficulties, seek understanding, and make students think hard to find ideas. So that these strategies make it easier for teachers to overcome student problems while learning.

Furthermore, from Table 2 above, based on the interview results regarding the steps to implement strategies in teaching reading comprehension to students, IS teacher explained that the first strategy used was scaffolding. This strategy is to help students who have difficulty in understanding the text. The teacher will ask who has not understood or which part has not been understood. That way students will be helped in the learning process. The second strategy is the question-and-answer relationship. This strategy aims to make students understand reading in the classroom. The strategy used, giving problems or questions to students according to the text that has been read previously as much as 1 to 2 questions. According to teacher IS, this strategy is used to provide material to students so that they can easily accept the material provided by the teacher. Because students must provide ideas to get the correct answer. However, this strategy cannot work well if only a few students are active.

Results of the interview with teacher, the first strategy is scaffolding. IN teacher mentioned scaffolding helps students' reading ability and can prepare the lesson material by guiding students through learning difficulties, such as finding difficult

words, how to read correctly, and understanding the text. The second strategy is question and answer relationship, this strategy, the teacher gives one to two questions to the students. These questions are about the lesson they have discussed. This is done by the teacher to find out whether or not students understand the material. And it is done at the end of the lesson by the teacher appointing one of the students to answer the question. The last strategy is discussing, this strategy the teacher gives instructions to students to form groups of 4 and 5 people. Students will be given the task of reading one by one in sequence, completing the assigned tasks by discussing together such as exchanging ideas. Then present the results of the discussion in front of the class.

Based on the research conducted on two English teachers, after knowing the strategies used in teaching there are also ways to implement the strategies used when teaching. First, the scaffolding learning strategy can stimulate the creativity of SMPN 7 Medan City students in the teaching and learning process. When students mention the words in the text, the teacher helps them and also asks students which words they do not know in the text. So Scaffolding can be concluded by the researcher as a technique that can help students in reading the text accurately. Hidayah and Addinna (2023), defined scaffolding as a pedagogical approach that employs assistance and direction to facilitate student learning. Educators use scaffolding techniques to help students acquire new information and improve their comprehension of it. It should be emphasized that scaffolding is a transitory tool employed by individuals with expertise to enhance pupils' comprehension.

Scaffolding is widely regarded as a highly successful pedagogical approach. Nurdianingsih (2021) defines scaffolding technique as an instructional approach that can foster students' creativity during the teaching and learning process. By implementing this approach, educators will acquire greater creativity in enhancing instructional methodologies, as each student presents unique challenges and circumstances, thereby necessitating diverse approaches to their resolution. Teachers will optimize their provision of support and guidance to students in order to effectively motivate them to enhance their skills in addressing challenges and generating learning ideas related to comprehending texts. It is critical for teachers to use scaffolding tactics in teaching reading that can inspire children while they learn (Narina, 2022). The actions during this period can help; (a) To improve students' reading comprehension, train them to read regularly. (b) The teacher urges pupils to always be involved in the text. (c) Students should be encouraged to respond to the contents of reading texts, such as retelling the contents of what they read. (d) Prediction is the fundamental component in reading. (e) Give assignments that are following the text that is read. (f) To bring the book to life, the teacher develops the reading text into an interesting lesson sequence and uses a variety of activities.

Second, the teachers used the QAR strategy, a method that helps students build the meaning in the reading text, making it easier for them to understand the problem. The teachers explained their thoughts by speaking aloud while reading.

Furthermore, the teachers ensured that the students at SMPN 7 Medan City understood the reading material and its content. Although there are issues in teaching, they can be overcome with the help of the strategies utilized, so the learning process runs easily. According to observations at SMPN 7 Kota Medan, this strategy assists teachers in presenting information as pupils become more involved. Previous studies have stressed the effectiveness of the QAR (question-answer relationship) strategy in teaching reading comprehension. For example, Solihin & Muaz (2022) says that this strategy aids students by leading them through the process of reading the question, understanding the nature of the question, reading the text, and preparing the answer. This method helps teachers determine whether students have understood the reading material by examining their responses to the given questions. Pupils who can answer properly demonstrate a good knowledge of the reading text, while pupils who have trouble may require extra clarification. Further highlighting this point, Nurhayati et al., (2019) believe that the QAR technique helps students distinguish the sorts of questions and where to locate the answers, which is vital for acquiring deeper knowledge of the text. This strategy boosts students' capacity to identify information in the text and ask the relevant questions, therefore increasing their critical thinking skills. In line with this, Sari and Emelia, (2022) argues that the presence of explicit and implicit questions in the QAR framework allows students to relate the text to the information or experience they have, thereby promoting a more complete understanding. In conclusion, this combination of strategies makes it easier for teachers to engage students in reading comprehension tasks and test their understanding successfully.

Third, the conversation technique is used to assist students in learning and improving their understanding of the subject. At SMPN 7 Medan City, students collaborate not only to learn, but also to support each other in understanding the subject matter. This strategy stimulates the exchange of ideas among students, building a collaborative learning atmosphere. As explained by Junita et al., (2023) research, working in groups can increase students' knowledge of a topic. The effectiveness of group discussion depends on the joint efforts of its members, as students are given the opportunity to discuss ideas, practice communication and give positive feedback to each other. However, as Teacher IN said, this strategy is only effective if all students actively contribute to the conversation. If only a few students participate, this strategy may not be successful in improving understanding. To reinforce the lesson, the teacher occasionally asks students to retell the material discussed during the group exercise. This helps students understand the text in a broader context, which is crucial for full comprehension. In addition, teachers encourage students to give short presentations based on their group conversations, helping them consolidate their ideas and improve their communication skills. These exercises do not rely solely on the textbook, but also incorporate material from online sources, thus enhancing the learning experience and broadening students' perspectives.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion was drawn by the researcher from observing the teaching strategies for reading comprehension in a specific class at SMPN 7 Medan City.

1. Based on the observation, the researcher first found that there were three strategies used by the English teacher, namely (1) Scaffolding, (2) Question Answer Relationships Strategy (QARs) and (3) Discussion Strategy. Teachers use these strategies to help students understand the reading material. Students are encouraged to concentrate more on the text, and the teacher can also help students in developing the meaning of the reading material so that they can more quickly understand the content.
2. The implementation of strategies used by English teachers to teach reading comprehension. First, scaffolding strategies that can create readable concepts are the methods used by the teacher. Second, this teacher uses the QARs strategy, where she asks her students about the terms she uses in the text after they finish reading it. Third, the discussion strategy which can make students more active in exchanging ideas when discussing with classmates. This method is used to ensure that students understand the text they read.

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