

Identifying Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the strategies used by teachers of English in teaching reading comprehension at SMP Islam Al-Fahd Palembang. This type of research was qualitative. The research instruments were an observation checklist and interviews. The subjects of this study were two teachers of English having experience teaching English for more than five years and being certified. The results of the study found that two strategies were used by the teacher in teaching reading comprehension, namely Scaffolding and QARs (Question-Answer Relationships). With a scaffolding strategy, teachers of English can develop the ideas that students have about reading comprehension. With QARs (Question-Answer Relationships), teachers of English can determine how well their students understand what the teacher has given them. Furthermore, this study would help teachers of English improved at teaching English, especially reading comprehension because this study discussed teacher strategies for teaching reading comprehension.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Teachers' Strategies

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is crucial component in teaching reading comprehension. Oakhill et al. (2015) also defined that reading comprehension is not only for understanding text, but for broader learning, success in education, and employment. Therefore, if a reader is able to understand the message contained and the meaning of the text, then they apprehend the text. Oakhill et al. (2015) explained reading comprehension depends on adequate word reading. Readers cannot understand a text if they cannot decode the words in it. Similarly, good reading comprehension depends on a good understanding of language in general. This requires comprehension of individual words and the sentences they form. However, in order to comprehend, the reader must integrate the meaning of these words and sentences into a coherent whole. Therefore, English teachers must use effective techniques to teach reading comprehension in order to enhance students' performance.

Furthermore, in the process of teaching reading, strategy is very important. Because of a good strategy in the teaching process, good results will be obtained and vice versa. The success that will be achieved in the

teaching and learning process is very dependent on the learning strategies applied by the teacher. Harmer (2007) stated that strategy is an action taken by the teacher to achieve one or more goals of the teaching and learning process. Strategy can also be interpreted as a general direction set for the teaching-learning process. As a teacher, you have to use a lot of strategies in teaching reading comprehension such as using various methods, media and games to make students are interested in continuing to learn. Brown (2004) has explained that the basic thing of teaching strategy is to facilitate the application of various teaching methods and techniques. The trick is to create an interesting and more interactive learning environment to incorporate wearable technology into the learning experience, and use appropriate learning strategies for students.

In that case, Indonesia is one of the countries participating in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). PISA was first conducted in 2000 and the last data that has been published is PISA 2018. Since the implementation of the assessment, data on the reading ability of students in Indonesia has become so familiar to the ears of the public, especially education circles in Indonesia. This is because in each implementation, PISA Results data (including the last one), places Indonesia still in the bottom group of countries participating in the assessment (OECD, 2018). The

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results of the Indonesia National Assessment Program in 2016 conducted by the Education Research Center (Puspendik) of the Ministry of Education & Culture itself revealed data that the national average distribution of literacy in students' reading ability in Indonesia was 46.83% in the Less category, only 6.06% in the Good category, and 47.11 in the Sufficient category (Kemendikbud, 2017).

As such, some researchers have conducted research that focuses on the teacher's strategy in teaching reading comprehension as follows: First, Sarjan (2017) conducted research under the title *An Analysis on the English Teachers Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension* at the second grade students of Junior High School 1 of Wonomulyo. She concluded that the strategies used by teacher of English in teaching reading comprehension were two strategies, Scaffolding strategy and QARs (Question Answer Relationship). Second, the second research was written by Raggi (2019) with the title *Teacher Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension* at the Grade of State Junior High School 23 Jambi. His study concentrated on how teachers of English teach reading. The subject of his research was the teacher of English of third grade in state junior high school 23 Jambi. Interviews and observation were employed as the research's primary data sources. The study's findings revealed that QARs and scaffolding are strategies used by the teacher. Third, research by Anjelita (2020) with the title *Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension* at the Second Grade of SMPN 5 Kota Bengkulu. The results of the study found that there were two strategies used by the teacher, namely Scaffolding and QARs (Question Answer Relationship). With the scaffolding strategy students can develop ideas that can be read by students. QARs (Question Answer Relationship), teachers can find out how far their students understand what the teacher has given them.

2. Method

The research design for this study used a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is a scientific methodology valuable for investigating and interpreting a key concept (Creswell, 2012). The subject of this study was chosen by using purposeful sampling for qualitative research. Creswell (2012) stated that purposeful sampling is the way researcher intentionally select individuals for study. The criteria for selecting the sample were having experience teaching English for more than five years and being certified. Furthermore, the subject of this research are two teachers of English at SMP Islam Al-Fahd Palembang for the academic year 2022/2023. Therefore, there are two steps in the data

collection. The first was an observation checklist for the teacher of English in action. Creswell (2012) confirmed that observation is a natural process of observing people and places at the research location and collecting available information. The second step was interviewing the teacher of English. Based on Fraenkel et al. (2011), an interview is an efficient method for a researcher to confirm the consistency, validate, or refute the understanding they have acquired from previous data collection. Furthermore, Data analysis is the next task completed after the data collection procedure. The purpose of data analysis is to describe the contents of the data. The researcher employed a three-part interactive data model by Miles et al. (2014) in the data analysis process.

3. Results and Discussion

a. Results of Observation

Before describing the strategies used by teachers of English for teaching reading and how to used them, the participants in this study were two teachers of English at SMP Islam Al-Fahd Palembang, namely Mr. AZ and Mrs. TS, who are certified and have more than five years of teaching experienced.

This research was conducted from May 15, 2023, to May 17, 2023. The observation checklist was collected in three meetings to obtain accurate results. There are observation checklist results that have been carried out on two teachers of English who met this study's criteria. Observation checklists directly in class during the lesson. Below are the results of the observations of two teachers of English at SMP Islam Al-Fahd Palembang that the researcher has carried out:

1). The First Teacher (Mr. AZ)

His name is Mr. AZ, and he is the first teacher of English. The researcher observed the first meeting on Monday, May 15, 2023. Teacher of English and researcher came to class VII at 08.00–09.30 WIB, and the teaching and learning process started with the initial action of the teacher greeting the students and continuing to pray before entering the learning material. Scaffolding is used by teacher starting from introducing material such as: at the beginning of learning, the teacher of English builds chemistry by connecting students' experiences with the material to be taught, namely recounting text. So, students can more easily understand the aims and objectives of learning. Students understand the material to be studied; the teacher explained the material, and students listen to the material carefully. The teacher of English asked students to see if they understood the material that had been presented. If the answer given by the student is correct, then the teacher judges that the student already understands.

However, when the answer given by the student is wrong, the teacher will explain again the correct answer to the question given so that when students find the same question, they can answer it correctly. QARs are used by the teacher when the teacher finished explaining all the material, the teacher assign tasks to students to answer the questions given by the teacher such as: the teacher instructs students to answer the questions under the reading text they have studied and to analyze these questions to get the correct answers. After the students have finished answering all the questions, the teacher invites them one by one to answer the questions that have been asked. When a student's answer is not quite right, the teacher instructs other students to answer the question, and when the student's answer is correct, it will be explained again why the student's answer was wrong so that when students find the same question, they already know the correct answer. When all the questions have been discussed and there are no more questions from students, the teacher closes the meeting by greeting and leaving the class. In short, from the observation checklist conducted during the lesson in the first meeting, Mr. AZ used scaffolding and QARs to teach reading comprehension.

On the second day of observation, Tuesday, May 16, 2023. The teacher of English and researcher entered class VII at 08.00–09.30 WIB with the teacher of English, Mr. AZ. In this meeting, the teaching strategies used by the teacher of English were mostly the same. As usual, the teacher of English opened the class by saying a greeting and continuing to pray. Scaffolding is used by teacher starting from introducing material such as: before the lesson started, the teacher of English greeted the students and slowly entered the sample material, recounting text related to the students' experiences. The teacher of English explained the material in as much detail as possible, starting with the text and how to make the text tell the contents of the text. The teacher of English explained all the material in great detail. The teacher of English gave questions to students randomly to answer questions from the teacher of English, and the student could answer correctly. The teacher of English instructs students to ask questions if the material needs clarification. At this meeting, no students asked questions, and the teacher assumed that all students had already understood the material that had been explained. QARs are used by the teacher when the teacher finished explaining all the material, the teacher assign tasks to students to answer the questions given by the teacher such as: on the next book, sheet reading texts and questions instructed by the teacher to be worked on by students. Students answer all questions; the teacher instructs students to answer questions in turn; all

students answer questions appropriately and correctly, so the teacher concludes that students understand the material presented by the teacher. When class is over, the teacher closes by greeting and leaving the class. In summary, from the observation checklist conducted during the lesson in the second meeting, Mr. AZ used scaffolding and QARs to teach reading comprehension.

On the third day of observation, Wednesday, May 17, 2023. The teacher of English and researcher entered class IX at 08.00–09.30 WIB. The teacher of English greeted the students and continued by praying. At this meeting, the teacher of English instructs students to opened the book and look at the reading text, namely the narrative text. Scaffolding is used by teacher starting from introducing material such as: before explained the text, the teacher of English related the material to students' experiences to make it easier to understand the material studied. The teacher invites students to read the text together until they are finished, while interpreting the meaning of the existing text. The teacher explains the material they are studying, namely, recount text, so the teacher explains it in detail. At this stage, the teacher asks students whether they understand the material provided, and students answer that they understand and there are no questions. After explaining the material, QARs are used by the teacher such as: the teacher instructs students to form groups. Each group was tasked with answering the questions on the question sheet. The teacher instructs students in one group to be translators, answer questions, and read the text. All students finished answering the questions, and one by one, the group presented the results of their answers. When student answers need to be corrected, the teacher will ask other groups to answer these questions, and the teacher will explain later. At the end of the lesson, the teacher concluded and instruct students to ask questions if something is unclear. It was felt that no students asked the teacher to closed the lesson and leave the class. To sum up, from the observation checklist conducted during the lesson in the third meeting, Mr. AZ used scaffolding and QARs to teach reading comprehension.

2). The Second Teacher (Mrs. TS)

Her name is Mrs. TS, and she was the second teacher of English during the first observation meeting on Monday, May 15, 2023. The teacher of English and researcher entered class VIII at 10.00–11.30 WIB. The teacher sat at her desk while saying hello to the students, greets them, and continues by praying. Scaffolding is used by teacher starting from open the lesson such as: the teacher opened the lesson by reminding them of the previously studied material. The teacher displayed a PowerPoint presentation containing narrative text as

teaching material for students. Alternately, students are called randomly to read the text until it is finished while being guided if there is an inaccurate pronunciation, and the meaning of the text is interpreted together. The teacher explains the material they will learn by referring to the reading text. While explaining the material, the teacher asks students about what has just been explained, and students answer correctly so that the teacher draws the conclusion that students already understand the explanation. QARs are used by the teacher when the teacher finished explaining all the material, the teacher assigns tasks to students to answer the questions given by the teacher such as: the teacher has explained the material for this meeting, so the teacher instructs students to work on some of the questions in the following text and analyze the questions to find the correct answers. The teacher and students discuss the questions that have been worked on; the teacher instructs one student at a time to answer questions, and each student has answered. The teacher will clarify the answers given by students so that there is no misinformation. After all the questions have been discussed, the teacher again asks the students if there is anything they want to ask before the class is closed, but no one asks. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asks students several questions about the material studied and closes by greeting them while leaving the class. In short, from the observation checklist conducted during the lesson in the first meeting, Mrs. TS used scaffolding and QARs to teach reading comprehension.

On the second meeting on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, the teacher of English and researcher entered class VIII at 10.00–11.30 WIB. When the lesson is opened, the teacher greets and then greets students and instructs students to pray first. After praying, the teacher invites students to remember the lessons they have learned before and occasionally asks students. The teacher begins to introduce the material they will learn, namely narrative text. The teacher instructs several students to take turns reading the reading text they will learn while reading the teacher's paragraphs, with the students interpreting the sentences in the reading text until they are finished. Scaffolding is used by teacher starting from explained the material such as: the teacher explained the parts of the reading text, the function of the reading text, and what is related to the narrative text. While explaining the material, the teacher occasionally asked students to relate to the material that has been explained, and students answer correctly so that the teacher can continue his explanation. After explaining everything, the teacher allows students to ask if something still needs to be clarified, but no students ask, so the teacher concluded that students already understand the material.

QARs are used by the teacher when the teacher finished explaining all the material, the teacher assign tasks to students to answer the questions given by the teacher such as: the teacher instructs students to answer the questions on the next sheet by giving them time. When time is up, the teacher invites students to discuss questions that they have answered. One by one, the teacher selects the students sequentially to answer questions. After each question is finished, they will be discussed to equalize information so that misunderstandings do not occur in the future. All questions have been answered and discussed, and the teacher again allows students to ask if something is unclear, but no students ask, and the teacher closes the lesson by greeting and leaving the class. To conclude, from the observation checklist conducted during the lesson in the second meeting, Mrs. TS used scaffolding and QARs to teach reading comprehension.

On the third day of observation, Wednesday, May 17, 2023. The teacher of English and researcher entered class IX at 10.00–11.30 WIB. As before, the teacher sat down and greeted the students, followed by greeting the students. The teacher asked about the material they studied before while getting into the material they will learn. The teacher explained the material to be studied, namely the recount text. Scaffolding is used by teacher starting from introducing material such as: the teacher instructs students randomly to read the reading text one paragraph and is assisted by the teacher when students have difficulty reading; after reading, the teacher and students interpret the sentence from the paragraph, and when it is finished, they will proceed to the next paragraph. When everything has been read and interpreted, the teacher explained the material they are studying in detail, from explaining the text's structure to examples of reading texts. While explaining, the teacher asked about the material that has just been delivered to students to find out whether students have understood the material that has been presented so far. QARs are used by the teacher when the teacher finished explaining all the material, the teacher assign tasks to students to answer the questions given by the teacher such as: he teacher instructs students to do the assignments on the question sheet within the allotted time. When the time for working on the questions is up, the teacher and students discuss the questions together by answering questions together. When all the questions were discussed, the teacher asked the students, "Are there still things that are not clear" and the students answered, "None". So, the teacher concludes that students already understand the material provided by the teacher. The teacher ended the lesson by greeting and leaving the class. In summarize, from the observation checklist

conducted during the lesson in the third meeting, Mrs. TS used scaffolding and QARs to teach reading comprehension.

In conclusion, the teachers of English at SMP Islam Al-Fahd Palembang used the same strategy for teaching reading comprehension. This can be seen from the observations made by a researcher with the teacher concerned. The results of the observation checklist show that two teachers of English at SMP Islam Al-Fahd Palembang used scaffolding strategies and QARs to teach reading comprehension.

b. Results of Interview

The interview in this study were carried out to strengthen or support the data from the results of the observation checklist. The interview in this study was conducted on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, with a structured interview type. This is because interviews are more effective. The researcher conducted interviews on questions related to the results of observations, which consisted of the teacher's strategies in reading comprehension.

According to the results of interview conducted by researcher with two English teachers at SMP Islam Al-Fahd Palembang, the two teachers of English used scaffolding and QARs strategies to teach reading comprehension. Because these two strategies are the most effective for teaching reading comprehension and are easy for students to understand, these statements were supported by the participants about used Scaffolding; The researcher said, "How do you explain errors or misunderstanding of information from your students' answers so there will be no mistakes or misunderstanding anymore?". AZ said, "By exchanging opinions with other students so that there will also be feedback from students, when there is an answer that feels right, then I will provide them with the right information.". TS said, "I will reexplain it, and if there are students who are still confused, then it will be discussed directly at that time so that the students won't misunderstand it.". The researcher said, "What do you do to reduce assistance or information?". AZ said, "By letting them look for the information on their own until they feel they are no longer capable of doing it, then they will be assisted.". TS said, "Usually, I instruct the students to think and express their opinion; if there is a correct answer from them, it will be taken."

In addition to this, these statements were supported by the participants about used QARs; The researcher said, "How do you make questions about the reading comprehension learning material that students can analyze?". AZ said, "By looking at the level of tasks that are considered easy to the level of analyzing the

questions, the students are required to analyze what the instructions are based on the questions.". TS said, "By giving multiple-choice questions, it could also be questions where the answers are from the students themselves, or the answers can also be in the reading text."

From the information above, the teachers of English said that the scaffolding strategy and QARs applied in learning could help students better understand the material without any misunderstanding. Strategies are used when students face difficulties and seek understanding. So, the strategy helps increase students' understanding of reading comprehension.

The results of the research are discussed in this section. This study examines the strategies teachers of English used in teaching reading comprehension in SMP Islam Al-Fahd Palembang. In this study, teachers of English used various instructional strategies to teach reading comprehension.

As an educator, the teacher of English must prepare in various aspects so that the teaching and learning process can run smoothly and according to the learning objectives, particularly reading comprehension. According to the research results from the observation checklist and interview, the two strategies used by teachers of English at SMP Islam Al-Fahd Palembang are used to improve understanding of the material, especially reading comprehension.

The researcher completed an observation checklist and an interview with a teacher of English to find out strategies for teaching reading comprehension. The researcher found two strategies teachers of English use to teach reading comprehension based on observation checklists and interviews in class. The learning strategies used include scaffolding and QARs. With this strategy, the student understood the text they read and could answer questions when the teacher of English used this method to verify that students read the text correctly. With this, teachers of English can assess students' level of understanding and incorporate their learning without any hindrance.

1) Scaffolding

The first strategy is the scaffolding strategy. Teachers of English must provide assistance tailored to the needs of their students, such as delivering lessons or assisting students in learning the proper method to read texts. Pebriantika and Aristia (2021) stated that scaffolding allows teachers of English to assist diverse learners in negotiating meanings and overcoming difficulties in text-related learning situations. When students have difficulty, teachers of English employ scaffolding techniques. Because it assists students in learning how to read accurately, teachers of English

frequently employ the scaffolding technique. Students received assistance at the start of class during scaffolding sessions., and assistance reduced gradually.

The English teacher asked the students to open their textbooks and then instructed them on how to read and speak appropriately. Students also pay attention to what the teachers of English are doing. In actuality, the teacher of English used a scaffolding approach to teach the students how to read accurately prior to having them read the text. However, when students mispronounced the text's terms, the teacher of English corrected them and asked about the vocabulary they needed to review. In education, Raymond (2000) stated that scaffolding instruction is the role of the teacher and other people in supporting student development and providing a support structure to reach the next stage or level. With this strategy, teachers of English would be more creative in their efforts to improve their strategies, as each student has unique difficulties and conditions, requiring a diverse teaching style.

Furthermore, scaffolding learning strategies can stimulate students' creativity in teaching and learning. Pebriantika and Aristia (2021) confirmed that the teacher of English would make the most of opportunities to offer guidance and support to students in order to motivate them to advance their understanding of the difficulties they faced and how they form learning concepts regarding text comprehension difficulties. Using the scaffolding method, the teacher of English provided support that met the needs of the students. For instance, the English teacher may conduct class or assist students in comprehending how to read the material accurately. When students identified words in the text, the teacher provided assistance and asked which words they did not know. Before assigning students to read the text, they were taught how to read accurately using scaffolding.

In addition, students are expected to be able to read and use a reading style that is appropriate to American and British English so that they can repeat material. English teachers use the scaffolding strategy as a means to help children read correctly. Scaffolding is a technique that can help students read texts accurately. After students have read the text independently, the teacher of English can help them pronounce foreign terms by explaining the correct pronunciation. One of the benefits of the scaffolding strategy is that it helps students read accurately. Scaffolding is a form of support that refers to the assistance a teacher provides to students in order to promote their learning growth, strengthen their mastery of the presented material, and enable them to solve increasingly difficult problems.

2) Question Answer Relationship (QARs)

The second strategy, after students read the QARs strategy, would be applied. QARs instruct students to recognize the various types of queries they posed and where to locate the answers. The teachers of English employed this method to help students concentrate more on the reading material they must comprehend. As part of the QARs strategy, students created code that allow teachers to comprehend the questions and know how to access the necessary materials to find answers. The teachers of English employed this method to determine whether or not the students comprehended the text they had read. If students can answer the queries they have grasped while reading the text, then the text has been comprehended by the students. In addition, the teacher of English posed queries about the material, to which the students responded by writing their answers in their books.

Therefore, teachers of English must be aware of their students' needs in order to answer queries. Consider that this strategy can make it easier for the teacher to provide reading comprehension. Vacca et al. (2011) defined that the QARs enhance children's ability to answer comprehension questions by teaching them how to discover the information they need to answer questions. At this point, students have read and understood the text in depth. The primary focus for students is the act of reading the text. Students can either provide written responses in a physical book or engage in oral communication when addressing the inquiries posed by the teacher of English. Undoubtedly, this approach will assist the teacher of English in assessing the student's comprehension of the topic. In order to facilitate the integration of information from various sections with students' prior knowledge or experience, English teachers must employ both explicit and implicit questioning techniques when implementing the QARs (Question-Answer Relationships) approach.

Moreover, the teachers of English used QAR strategies for students to learn reading comprehension in class. In the strategy used by the teachers of English, the teachers of English give questions to students according to the text that has been read before This particular approach proved beneficial for students as it facilitated the cultivation and refinement of their ideas. In order to arrive at the correct answer, students are required to generate ideas. Despite various challenges in the field of education, it is possible to overcome them by employing effective strategies, thereby facilitating a successful learning process.

According to the findings of this study, the employed strategy demonstrated efficacy. The utilization of this approach can facilitate students' comprehension of the

text and enhance their reading comprehension skills. Teachers of English have found this strategy to be beneficial. Individuals who experience challenges with reading may find that their reading comprehension is enhanced. Teachers of English are more actively engaged in providing materials to students, which makes the process easier for them.

4. Conclusion

Based on the result of the data analyzed by using interactive analysis, it could answer the research problem. Also, it was found that the teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension at SMP Islam Al-Fahd Palembang. The strategy used by teachers of English when teaching reading comprehension. Based on the observations and interview that researcher conducted, researcher found two strategies used by English teachers when teaching reading comprehension: Scaffolding and QARs (Question-Answer Relationships).

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