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## An Analysis of Teaching Strategies in Reading Comprehension at 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade of a Junior High School in Bandung

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### Abstract

This research aims at analysing teaching strategies used by the teacher in reading comprehension class and investigating the problems the teacher encounter in their own reading comprehension class. The participants involved in this research are an English teacher and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of SMPIT Asmaul Husna, a private school located in the Tanjungsari Sumedang. A descriptive qualitative study was used as a research design here. The data were obtained from classroom observation, interview with the teacher, and document analysis. The findings revealed that the teacher employed three strategies in teaching reading comprehension, namely scaffolding, question answer relationship, and think-aloud. Additionally, the study identified three problems overcome by the teacher in teaching reading comprehension, including difficulty in finding out the appropriate materials, the limited knowledge of effective instructional strategies, and difficulty in transferring personal reading comprehension skills to teaching practice. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the understanding of effective reading comprehension instruction and provides valuable insights for teacher training and professional development programs.

**Keywords:** junior high school students, problems in teaching reading, teaching strategies in reading comprehension

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi pengajaran yang digunakan oleh guru di kelas pemahaman bacaan dan menyelidiki masalah yang dihadapi guru di kelas pemahaman bacaan mereka sendiri. Peserta yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini adalah seorang guru bahasa Inggris dan siswa kelas 8 SMPIT Asmaul Husna, sebuah sekolah swasta yang terletak di Tanjungsari Sumedang. Sebuah studi kualitatif deskriptif digunakan sebagai desain penelitian di sini. Data diperoleh dari pengamatan kelas, wawancara dengan guru, dan analisis dokumen. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa guru menggunakan tiga strategi dalam mengajar pemahaman bacaan, yaitu perancah, hubungan tanya jawab, dan berpikir keras. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi tiga masalah yang diatasi oleh guru dalam mengajar pemahaman membaca, termasuk kesulitan dalam menemukan materi yang sesuai, pengetahuan yang terbatas tentang strategi instruksional yang efektif, dan kesulitan dalam mentransfer keterampilan pemahaman membaca pribadi ke praktik mengajar. Temuan penelitian ini diharapkan dapat berkontribusi pada pemahaman instruksi pemahaman bacaan yang efektif dan memberikan wawasan berharga untuk pelatihan guru dan program pengembangan profesional.

**Kata Kunci:** siswa SMP, permasalahan dalam pengajaran membaca, strategi pengajaran dalam pemahaman membaca

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is regarded as one of the core topics in secondary education. The majority of secondary schools (junior and senior high schools) provide this language for about six hours a week of instruction. The students should have had good English because of the intense meetings and the premise that Indonesian students learn English for six years in secondary schools before enrolling in college or university. Nonetheless, pupils complain that English is difficult, and the education minister is worried about their limited language skills (Qoyyimah, 2010).

Reading comprehension is crucial to learning a language, EFL students should become experts in it (Kurniawan, 2017). Reading comprehension is the most important reading skill and the cornerstone of all reading exercises. Therefore, in order to aid the students' improvement in their reading comprehension skills and good sensitivity to understand the students' needs, the teachers who teach reading comprehension in EFL classrooms should have good reading comprehension. They should also know exactly where to find appropriate instructional methods, materials, activities, media, strategy, and equipment. These are both methods for learning a language directly and indirectly.

This study looked into the teaching reading strategies that the English language teachers in the chosen schools utilized to help students learn and teach reading. It made an effort to determine the most common teaching techniques employed by EFL instructors in the chosen schools with advanced, intermediate, and beginner students. Also, it made an effort to learn which teaching methods instructors believe to be successful with advanced, intermediate, and novice students (Basri et al., 2020).

In the teaching and learning process, strategy is crucial. As suggested by Antoni (2010), teaching strategies are an important component of the lesson plan and can play a crucial role in supporting the learning process. For example, by utilizing different instructional techniques, teachers can accommodate different learning styles and preferences. Moreover, Harmer (2005) defined teaching strategies as a range of approaches, methods, structures, and procedures that teachers use to support student learning. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to select appropriate strategies that align with the learning objectives and outcomes, as well as the characteristics and needs of their students.

In addition to selecting effective teaching strategies, teachers must also be creative in their content selection and inspire their students to learn. Therefore, teachers need to be flexible and adaptable in their approach to teaching and learning to support student success (Purwanto & Atmaja, 2022). According to Vacca et al. (2021), several strategies can be implemented in teaching reading comprehension including scaffolding, think-aloud, SQ3R (Surveying, Questioning, Reading, Reciting, Reviewing), and QARs (Question-Answers Relationship).

Scaffolding is a widely recognized instructional approach that is widely used in teaching and learning (Vacca et al., 2021). It is a process that involves providing support to students in the early stages of their learning, with the goal of gradually reducing this assistance as the student's knowledge and skill level increases. Gasong (2007) defined that scaffolding is a method that involves providing support for students during the initial stages of learning, with the ultimate goal of increasing their independence and confidence as they gain mastery of a subject. Piamsai (2020) and Dewi et al., (2023) added that scaffolding is a term for an effective instructional method that enables students to deepen their comprehension and complete any assigned activities on their own. This approach has been found to be particularly effective in helping students who struggle with reading comprehension, by breaking down complex tasks into smaller, more manageable parts and providing targeted guidance and feedback throughout the learning process.

Think-aloud is a cognitive strategy that has been proven to be effective in promoting students' reading comprehension learning (Vacca et al., 2021). This strategy involves verbalizing one's thoughts while reading a text, making the thinking process explicit for the students. By doing so, teachers can model their own cognitive processes and provide students with the necessary guidance in comprehending texts. Furthermore, the teacher's ability to transfer their creativity and control the learning process can lead to successful implementation of the think-aloud strategy in understanding reading passages. This strategy has been widely used in various educational contexts and has shown positive effects on students' reading comprehension.

SQ3R is a systematic reading strategy that aids in the organization of the reading process into manageable units learning (Vacca et al., 2021). Comprising of five steps, namely surveying, questioning, reading, reciting, and reviewing, SQ3R enables students to effectively approach their reading materials. By surveying, students get an overview of the text, while questioning enables them to set a purpose for reading. Reading involves the act of thoroughly going through the text, whereas reciting promotes comprehension by encouraging students to recall what they have just read. Lastly, reviewing assists students in retaining information by allowing them to review what they have learned.

QARs (Question-Answer Relationships) is a reading strategy that aims to facilitate the development of students' reading comprehension skills through the analysis of questions learning (Vacca et al., 2021). Specifically, this strategy encourages students to examine the relationship between the questions asked and the information presented in a text. By doing so, students can focus their attention on the key elements of a text and deepen their understanding of its content. QARs requires students to read the text actively, and to constantly refer back to the questions posed by the teacher in order to extract meaning from the text.

Based on the researcher's observations at a private junior high school in Sumedang, the problem in teacher strategies and students in learning English to understand a reading comprehension. Probably the cause of this is the teacher's strategies not effective and lack of vocabularies and the activities that do not suit them. In addition, the researcher finds students will become bored because the teacher only focuses on their study but the teacher occasionally forgets about the strategies.

A teacher can use a variety of strategies to teach reading. Whoever instructs students must understand the guiding concepts and presuppositions that underlie any particular technique in order to use them successfully. Categorized activities related to instruction lack no labels or descriptions. Muslaini (2017) has said that a strategy is an action that the teacher takes to attain one or more of her teaching-learning goals. The strategy can also be defined as a general direction set for the teaching process.

Previous study was conducted by Muslaini (2017) under the title "Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension". The result of the research was about the strategies that the teachers should use in teaching reading comprehension. She said that the more strategies used in teaching reading comprehension, the result would be better. The research conducted by Aidil (2014) entitle "The Strategies Used by English Teachers in Teaching Reading Comprehension (A Descriptive Study at SMPN 3 Sabang)". He said that the students would be better studying reading comprehension if the teacher used appropriate strategies. The other previous study was conducted by Nurhamidah et.al., (2018) entitle "The Analysis of Teaching Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension". The research showed that strategies that teachers used were very important. The teacher can combine more various strategies in teaching reading comprehension.

The previous studies showed that the teachers' strategies were very effective in teaching reading comprehension. On the other hand, the use of too many strategies would affect students' performances in learning reading comprehension. This reason was contradicted with the research that the researcher conducted at a private junior high school in Sumedang. This research shows that the teacher in implementing the strategy only uses two or three strategies and applies the student's perspective when the teacher uses the strategy in class.

Based on the background information provided above, this study evaluated how students perceive their EFL teachers' teaching strategies in English language classroom experiences and what strategies are employed by teachers in the study entitled "an analysis of teaching strategies in reading comprehension class at 2<sup>nd</sup> grade junior high school".

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative research design. According Nassaji (2015: 129) descriptive qualitative method is concerned with the subject study in describing a phenomenon and the characteristics of it, and is often comprised a rich collection of data to gain more understanding of each participant, including the opinions, perspectives, and attitudes which gained from numerous resources. The research was conducted at SMP IT Asmaul Husna, a private school located in the Tanjungsari Sumedang. The participants of this study were an English teachers and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of SMP Asmaul Husna in the 2022/2023 academic year. Some data collection techniques used in this research included observations, interview, and document analysis.

Non-participant observation was employed in this study in which the researcher simply observed without getting involved or acting in any way. Furthermore, semi structured interviews was used in this study that allows the interviewee has a clear list of topics to cover and questions to respond to. To allow the interviewee to express themselves more fully and develop their thoughts on the subjects brought up by the researcher, the interviewer's preparation for a semi-structured interview is flexible in terms of the sequence in which the topics are taken into account. The questions are open-ended, and the emphasis is primarily on the interviewer elaborating on the interviewee's topics of interest. The document analyzed in this study was the lesson plans used by the teacher.

The obtained data are compared using the triangulation approach in several different ways. Researchers in this study used document analysis, observations, and interviews to determine the veracity of information based on data collected from informants. Researchers use a variety of techniques and data sources to get knowledge. Researchers employed observation, interviews, and documentation techniques in this study. These various approaches would result in various data sets and offer various insights into an observed phenomena.

The researcher comes to the conclusion that using the triangulation methodology entails examining the consistency of the results generated by different data collection methods. It explains various yet connected facets of the same phenomenon. When done properly, qualitative research generates the most insightful conclusions from the data collected (Turner & Turner, 2009).

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section consists of the findings from three data sources, including observation, interview, and document analysis. As mentioned previously, the objectives of this study are to investigate the teacher's strategies in teaching reading comprehension and to find out problems faced by the teacher in teaching reading comprehension. To answer the first research question, the researcher interviewed an English teacher and observed an English classroom contained 21 students.

**a. Teaching Strategies Used by EFL Teachers in Reading Comprehension Class**

The first research question is about the strategies used by the teacher in teaching reading. Based on the result of interview and observation, it was found that the teacher utilized three teaching strategies in teaching reading comprehension, namely scaffolding, question-and-answer relationship, and think-aloud.

***Scaffolding***

The teacher employed a scaffolding strategy because she taught the students how to read correctly. Ketut et al., (2022) stated that scaffolding is a lesson in which students are given some assistance during the early stages of learning and then reducing the aid and providing opportunities for students. Teachers use scaffolding strategies to help students when necessary. For instance, when a teacher assists students in the classroom, they receive support in learning how to correctly read texts. As stated by the teacher:

*Every time I do the teaching process in class, I use teaching strategies so that the learning process is more effective, the applications that I usually use in teaching reading include scaffolding and question answer relationship*

Based on the results of the interview above, the teacher said that the scaffolding strategies in teaching were considered more effective strategies used when students encounter difficulties and seek understanding. Therefore, the strategy is useful to improve students' understanding.

That finding was in line with the result of observation, scaffolding strategy was used by the teacher when students got difficulties, and the teacher needed to provide help to the needs of the students, like the teacher doing the classroom, the teacher gave help to the students to know how to correctly read the text. Scaffolding helped the students how to read properly and then told the students read the text but when the student either mentioned the words in the text the teacher helped them and also the teacher asked the students which word they did not know in the text. With this strategy, the students were expected can read and adjust how to read in accordance with the British and American so the students can repeating of the text.

Friends or other groups can learn what he thinks from here. Students will finish their exercises in small groups using this technique. Students are separated into smaller groups as part of this method. As a result, the instructor provides a variety of themes for group discussion. They are asked to translate by the teacher. Communication between students in their groups, teacher visits each group to discuss the incident and offers encouragement and help making sure everyone in the group is engaged and things are running smoothly.

Scaffolding is a support that teachers provide to their pupils to help them increase their learning abilities so that they may demonstrate a better level of mastery of the content by solving more challenging challenges.

The use of scaffolding strategy in teaching reading was also found in the previous study conducted by Rangi (2019). It was found that this strategy was used by the teacher to help directly attend to the desks of students who had difficulty understanding the text. When students ask about the correct pronunciation of the text to the teacher, the teacher immediately reads the text again. The teacher uses this scaffolding strategy so that students can be assisted directly by the teacher.

### **Question Answer Relationship (QARs)**

The second strategy utilized by the teacher was question answer relationship strategy. The teacher used this strategy to students in reading comprehension class. In this strategy, the teacher gave some questions to student as much 1 until 2 at each learning final so the students answer that the questions. Kusuma (2021) stated that QARs strategy is considered suitable in learning to understand the text because in the process of learning students in guidance to focus more on the text. According to the teacher, this strategy used to give material to the student in order the students was easy to accept material that given by teacher. This finding can be showed below.

*In every lesson I use teaching strategies, in my reading lessons usually use a scaffolding strategy, question answer relationship, and think-aloud.*

Based on the results of the interview above, the teacher said that the question and answer. Strategies used when students face difficulties, seek understanding, and make students think hard to find ideas. So that the strategy makes it easier for teachers to overcome student problems while studying.

This finding is also in line with the result of observation. The QAR strategy was used by the teacher to see if students really understand it with text they read. If the student could answer the questions, it means they have understood of the text, and if they could not answer the question then the students not understand with those text. This strategy could help students if students really answer that question with their own words or with the answer from the text. And this strategy could not help students if the 46 students answer the teacher's question got from their friends or not using his or her own words.

According to Pearson & Johnson (1978), the type of question asked to guide comprehension should be based on the information readers need to answer the question. Therefore, teachers must help student become aware of likely source of information as they respond to questions. This strategies help the teacher in teaching reading comprehension. With this strategy the teacher able to know how far their students understand what the teacher has given to them. And in this stage the students not only read the passage but also really understand what the content of the content. The teacher used this strategy because the students must understand the reading text and the students were guided to more focus on the text.

The use of the QAR strategy in teaching reading was also found in the previous study conducted by Nurdianingsih (2021). It was found that this strategy was used by the teacher so that students could better understand the reading text and receive guidance to be more focused on the content of the text. Teachers use this strategy to assess whether students really understand the text they read. The teacher uses this strategy in order to assist students in developing the meaning contained in the reading text so that students more easily understand the contents of the reading.

### **Think-aloud**

The third strategy that the teacher used in teaching reading is think-aloud. Based on the result of interview, the teacher explained that he used think-aloud strategy in teaching reading in which the teacher ask the students about the topic of the text and tell it in front of the class. This can be found in the result of interview below:

*In my reading class, I usually use a scaffolding strategy, question answer relationship, and think aloud..... sometimes I divided students into a group and provided a different text title. Then, I asked each group to discuss the text. After knowing **the topic of the given text**, the representative from **each group will explain the topic** obtained from the results of the discussions. This strategy can help the students understand the information and engage them in reading.*

As seen in the result of interview above, the teacher divided the students into several groups and asked them to discuss the text. After they had known the topic of the text, the representative of each group explained the topic of the text based on the discussion. By using this strategy, the teacher engaged the students in learning process actively.

Think-aloud strategy involves verbalizing one's thoughts while reading a text, making the thinking process explicit for the students. By doing so, teachers can model their own cognitive processes and provide students with the necessary guidance in comprehending texts (Vacca et al., 2021).

Based on the result of observation. The teacher helped the students in the learning process and tried to remind them the important information of the materials. Moreover, the teacher asked the students about what the text tells about and also the topic of each paragraph. In this situation, the teacher mostly asked the students to explain the topic of text after they have discussed in a group. At last, the teacher gave the students chances to ask the difficult parts of the text and then the teacher re-read the text. From the findings above, the teacher can ask the students to be more engaged in the learning process by asking them to discuss the text in the group.

#### **b. Problems Overcome by the Teacher in Teaching Reading Comprehension**

This section focuses on the problems that teachers encounter in their own teaching process of reading comprehension. The identified problems, such as the difficulty in finding out the appropriate materials, the limited knowledge of effective instructional strategies, and difficulties in transferring personal reading comprehension skills to teaching practice are discussed in detail. The findings are analyzed in relation to the existing literature to understand the underlying factors contributing to these problems. Possible solutions and recommendations for addressing these challenges are explored.

Based on the result of interview, the first problem that the teacher encountered in teaching reading comprehension is to find out the appropriate teaching materials, especially text for students. This problem was occurred because of the limitation of time that the teacher have to prepare the class. This situation was explained by the teacher below:

*Sometimes I find it difficult to choose the appropriate teaching materials. Because of the time limit, the class situations, and another external factor, sometimes I choose the materials that are too easy for them or too hard.*

As stated by the teacher above, the teacher had restricted time and found the class situation that was not really conducive, sometimes the teacher chose the materials or reading texts that were not appropriate for their students, whether they were too easy or too hard.

The next problem that the teacher found in teaching reading comprehension is the limited knowledge of effective instructional strategies. This is expressed by the teacher in the interview below:

*I don't really know what the good strategy in teaching reading is. But, for several years, I've been using the same strategies, and it is doing really well. The students were engaged to focus on the learning process.*

From the result of interview above, the teacher didn't really know the good strategy in teaching reading. However, the teacher had already used certain strategies in teaching reading for several years and the students were engaged very well in learning process.

The last problem that the teacher encountered was the difficulty in implementing think-aloud strategy. The teacher used scaffolding and QARs strategies during learning activities by helping students who have difficulty understanding the text. The teacher asked who has not understood or which parts have not been reached. That way students were helped in the learning process. However, teachers have difficulty implementing the think aloud strategy because think aloud strategy aims to have students speak aloud any word in their mind. Only a few students who can verbalize their thought while reading the text. This happens because the students have limited vocabularies.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, the researcher found out two types of teaching strategies used by the teacher in teaching reading comprehension: scaffolding and question answer relationship (QARs). Scaffolding strategy was used by the teacher when students got difficulties, the teacher provided tailored help to the needs of the students. The next strategy, question answer relationship, was used by the teacher to see if students really understand it with text they read.

Based on the findings and their implications, this section provides practical recommendations for educators and practitioners involved in teaching reading comprehension. The recommendations focus on leveraging the effective strategies identified in the study to enhance instructional practices. They also address the problems encountered by teachers in their own learning process, suggesting approaches to support their professional development and overcome the identified challenges. The recommendations are practical, actionable, and tailored to the specific needs of teachers and students in the context of reading comprehension instruction.

This section offers suggestions for future research endeavors in the field of teaching reading comprehension. It identifies areas that warrant further investigation based on the gaps and limitations uncovered in the current study. These suggestions may include exploring the long-term impact of specific strategies on students' reading comprehension abilities, investigating the effectiveness of innovative instructional approaches, examining the influence of contextual factors on the implementation of strategies, or exploring the relationship between teachers' own reading comprehension skills and their instructional practices. By highlighting avenues for future research, this section contributes to the ongoing development of knowledge and best practices in the field.

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