



Diverse strategies of teachers in teaching reading comprehension

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the strategies used by English teachers to teach reading comprehension and how these strategies are implemented. This study is classified as descriptive qualitative research. The study employed observations, interviews, and documentation as its primary methods. The research's informants were two English teachers. The results showed that the teachers used three different tactics: discussion strategies, question-answer relationships, or QARs, and scaffolding. Scaffolding involves providing support and gradually reducing this support as students become more independent, allowing them to build on their existing knowledge and skills. The QAR strategy, which involves asking questions, answering them, and then reviewing the answers, is particularly effective in deepening understanding and retention of text. Discussion, facilitated by the teacher or in small groups, encourages students to articulate their thoughts and interpretations, fostering a deeper engagement with the material. These strategies, when integrated into reading comprehension instruction, not only support students in developing their reading comprehension skills but also promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the texts they read.

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INTRODUCTION

The strategies employed by teachers in teaching reading comprehension have evolved significantly over the years. The traditional approach of teaching reading comprehension often focus on a single comprehension skill. However, a transition from research to practice prompting a shift towards teaching background knowledge as early as possible. This approach suggests that enhancing students' knowledge and vocabulary through history, science, and other content areas can better support their understanding of written texts and the world around them.

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that enables individuals to understand and interpret written text, which is crucial for academic success, personal growth, and professional development. It is a skill that is essential for navigating the world, whether through books, newspapers, websites, or social media (Voyager Sopris Learning, 2023). Sanford (2017) highlighted factors that hinder children's reading comprehension, including difficulties with phonemic awareness, letter sounds, and word recognition. Additional study by Noor (2018) supported these findings, identifying poor working memory, limited general knowledge, and insufficient language skills as contributing causes. For EFL students, anxiety while reading with unfamiliar vocabulary and unknown topics, and the fear of making mistakes was identified as the

significant factor of FL reading anxiety (Tarigan, Heriani, Simanjuntak, & Hasibuan, 2023). In a similarly, Jayanti (2019) discusses how students perceive their reading English text challenges in her study. She believes that the reading comprehension question component of the English test is challenging for the pupils to complete. Ultimately, it can be concluded that reading comprehension involves multiple skills that are needed to be improved by appropriate strategy.

Teaching reading comprehension involves more than just reading texts; it requires students to actively engage with the material, applying various strategies to make sense of the information presented. These strategies are conscious plans that good readers use to understand text, and they include monitoring comprehension, recognizing story structure, answering questions, summarizing, and more.

Teachers can use a variety of methods while teaching reading comprehension. These include ways to generate questions, ways to clarify things, ways to spot "clicks and clunks," ways to make predictions, ways to give scenarios for addressing problems, and more. Teachers can also employ vocabulary development, halt reading until comprehension is attained, concentrate on the main ideas, use contextual instruction, teach reading strategies, encourage content visualization, set a variety of reading objectives, and choose different texts and assignments. In the context of education, a strategy is the general planning of both teachers' and students' activities with the purpose of accomplishing the stated goals in teaching and learning.

Several researchers have explored various methods for teaching reading comprehension. Studies have shown that explicit instruction and modeling are highly effective in teaching reading comprehension. Teachers who provide clear explanations of comprehension strategies and demonstrate them through "thinking aloud" have been found to significantly improve students' ability to understand and interpret texts. This approach helps students understand why and when to use specific strategies, how to apply them, and how to practice them until they can do so independently (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). A meta-analysis confirmed that teaching reading comprehension strategies in combination with building background knowledge is more effective than focusing solely on strategy instruction. This approach suggests that enhancing students' knowledge and vocabulary through history, science, and other content areas can better support their understanding of written texts. It challenges the conventional wisdom that more instruction time leads to better outcomes, highlighting the importance of a balanced approach to reading comprehension instruction (Banditvilai, 2020).

In conclusion, the strategies employed by teachers in teaching reading comprehension is crucial to be investigated. These approaches are grounded in research and aim to make reading comprehension instruction more effective and aligned with evidence-based practices.

METHOD

Participants

With the aims to investigate the strategies used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension, this study used descriptive qualitative design. It was carried out at one of private senior high school in Medan named SMA Gajah Mada. The subject of this research are two English teachers in the tenth grade.

Instruments of collecting the data

In this study, researchers utilized a combination of observations, interviews, and documentation to collect data, employing qualitative research methods to gain a deep understanding of the subject matter. Observations, a type of qualitative research method, were conducted in multiple study sites, covering both participant and nonparticipant perspectives. This approach allowed for the integration of observational data as auxiliary or confirmatory research, providing a comprehensive view of the phenomena in the study. Observation was chosen for its ability to capture data as events or behaviors naturally occur, offering a more accurate and authentic representation of the phenomenon being studied. While interview was chosen for its ability to provide in-depth and rich data, capturing participants' perspectives in their own words.

Data Analysis Procedures

In the process of data analysis, researchers will use an interactive data model by Miles and Huberman (1994) which consisted of three parts ; data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involves the initial organization and simplification of the collected data, focusing on selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data to make it more manageable and intelligible in relation to the research questions. This stage is crucial for emphasizing relevant aspects of the data and minimizing or setting aside less pertinent information. It requires a balance between deductive and inductive analysis, where initial categorizations are guided by preestablished study questions, but the analyst remains open to discovering new meanings from the data . Data display, the second part of the model, goes beyond data reduction by providing an organized, compressed assembly of information that facilitates the drawing of conclusions. Data displays can be particularly useful in identifying why certain outcomes occur and what might be done to improve them. They allow the analyst to extrapolate from the data enough to discern patterns and themes that go beyond those initially discovered during data reduction. This stage is essential for making sense of the data and preparing the groundwork for drawing conclusions.

FINDINGS

During the observation in while-teaching phase, the teacher presented a descriptive text example and directed the students to read it comprehensively. The teachers implemented various strategy in teaching reading comprehension.

Based on the interview, both English teachers agreed they used various strategies in teaching reading comprehension and they understood the name and procedure of its strategy. They prefer employing the scaffolding strategy, the question-and-answer method, and the strategy of engaging in discussions. These strategies are put into action when students encounter challenges, actively pursue comprehension, and encourage students to think deeply to generate ideas. Consequently, these strategies facilitate teachers in addressing student difficulties during reading comprehension.

The initial strategy employed is scaffolding. The teacher utilized this strategy during learning tasks by providing assistance to students struggling to grasp the text. It was started with explicit instruction and gradually moving towards guided practice and independent reading. Then the teachers identified those who haven't comprehended

or which sections remain unclear. Implementing scaffolding strategies in reading enhances student engagement, leading to improved comprehension of study materials and consequently, higher academic performance among students.

The second strategy involves an interactive question-and-answer approach. The teacher used this technique to help students better understand what they're reading in the classroom. In this teaching approach, the teacher gives students problems or questions related to the text they've previously read, typically 1 to 2 questions near the end of the lesson. It encourages students to engage with and respond to these questions. According to the teachers, the purpose of this strategy is to deliver educational material to students in a way that's easily understandable. This strategy encourages them to develop their own ideas since they need to provide their input to arrive at the correct answers.

The third strategy involves is discussion technique, where the teacher directed students to create groups consisting of 3 to 4 individuals. Students are assigned the task of taking turns reading and then working collaboratively to complete the assigned task through discussions, including sharing ideas with each other. Subsequently, they present the outcomes of their discussion in front of the class.

Based on interviewing 42 students it reveals that those strategies above are encouraging them to be better reader since those strategies are implemented in various activities so they were not bored. The teachers also ensured that they were not only reading the text but also actively engaging with it, thereby enhancing their comprehension skills.

Tactic	Teacher's Role	Students' Engagement	Impact
Discussion Strategies	Facilitate discussions to deepen understanding	Actively involved in discussions	Enhances comprehension, critical thinking, and engagement
QARs	Pose open-ended questions to the text	Respond to questions, engage in dialogue	Fosters critical thinking, interpretation, and articulation
Scaffolding	Provide support and guidance as students read	Receive immediate assistance and feedback	Supports development of reading comprehension skills and confidence

DISCUSSION

The analysis of teaching strategies in reading comprehension reveals the importance of scaffolding, the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy, and discussion as effective methods for enhancing students' understanding and retention of text.

Scaffolding is a technique that involves providing support to students as they learn to become more independent in their learning process. This strategy is particularly beneficial in reading comprehension as it allows teachers to gradually reduce the amount of support they provide, enabling students to develop their own comprehension skills. By starting with explicit instruction and gradually moving towards guided practice and independent reading, scaffolding ensures that students are prepared to tackle more complex texts and comprehension tasks. In addition, this approach not only supports students in the early stages of learning but also builds their confidence and independence in reading comprehension (Novi, Yanti, Clarry, Sada, Eusabinus, Bunau, 2022).

The Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is another effective method for teaching reading comprehension. This strategy involves teaching students how to ask key questions about their reading and then how to find the answers to these questions. The QAR strategy distinguishes between four types of questions: Right There, Think and Search, Author and You, and On My Own (Afdhalina, 2022). By understanding these question types, students can better navigate the text to find the information they need, whether it's a specific fact, an inference, or a connection to their own experiences. The QAR strategy has been shown to improve students' reading comprehension by teaching them how to think critically about the text and how to use their prior knowledge and the text itself to answer questions. This strategy not only enhances students' ability to understand and interpret texts but also encourages them to engage in higher-level thinking skills.

Discussion, as a teaching strategy, plays a crucial role in reading comprehension by fostering a deeper understanding of the text. Through discussion, students can share their interpretations, clarify their understanding, and build on each other's ideas. This collaborative approach to learning encourages students to think critically about the text, draw connections between the text and their own experiences, and develop a deeper understanding of the material. Discussion also provides an opportunity for students to practice their comprehension skills in a social context, making the learning process more engaging and effective. By encouraging students to discuss the text, teachers can ensure that they are not only reading the text but also actively engaging with it, thereby enhancing their comprehension skills.

In conclusion, scaffolding, the QAR strategy, and discussion are all critical strategies for teaching reading comprehension. These strategies support students in developing their comprehension skills, encouraging them to become more independent and proficient readers. By integrating these strategies into their teaching practices, educators can create a more effective and engaging learning environment that promotes a deeper understanding of text.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of strategies employed by teachers in teaching reading comprehension highlights the effectiveness of scaffolding, the Question-Answer-Review (QAR) strategy, and discussion as critical components in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. Scaffolding involves providing support and gradually reducing this support as students become more independent, allowing them to build on their existing knowledge and skills. The QAR strategy, which involves asking questions, answering them, and then reviewing the answers, is particularly effective in deepening understanding and retention of text. Discussion, facilitated by the teacher or in small groups, encourages students to articulate their thoughts and interpretations, fostering a deeper engagement with the material. These strategies, when integrated into reading comprehension instruction, not only support students in developing their reading comprehension skills but also promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the texts they read.

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