

**TEACHER'S STRATEGIES IN TEACHING READING
COMPREHENSION AT GRADE TEN OF SMAN 7 MATARAM
ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/2018**



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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to investigate the strategies used by the English teachers to teach reading comprehension in the first grade students at SMAN 7 Mataram, and the advantages of using those strategies. The data in the present study were collected through observation and interview. Three meetings were observed: in the first meeting, the teacher discussed about 'unforgettable experience', in the second meeting the teacher taught about 'how to make something', and in the third meeting, the material was about 'a farmer and an artist'. The interview was done after the class and was intended to collect the information about the strategies used by the teacher in teaching reading comprehension. Descriptive design was used as the design of the study. The result of the present study reveals that the teacher commonly applies two strategies in teaching reading comprehension: question and answer relationship and discussion. The advantages of using the question and answer relationship are to ease the teacher in recognizing the students' comprehension about the text and to help students develop an awareness of the multiple source of information in their reading. Applying discussion strategy makes the students learn not only from the teacher but also from their fellow students, and this strategy creates the active classroom atmosphere.

Keywords: comprehension, reading comprehension, reading strategy

INTRODUCTION

There are four skills in English: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. These skills are urgently required to be mastered by English learners. Many English learners, however, do not master all of the four skills. Some of English learners are sometimes good at writing skill, but sometimes are not at the other skill, for example, reading skill. Some of them may be better in speaking skill, but are not in listening. This means that English learners may have different ability in mastering a language.

Reading is one of the language skills that play an important role in foreign language acquisition. Richard (1992: 86) states “reading perceives a written in the text in order to understand the contents. The result of this understanding is called “reading comprehension”. According to Snow (2003: 13) reading does not occur in vacuum, it done for a purpose to achieve some ends. During the reading, the reader processes the text with regard to the purpose. To be a good reader, the learner must learn how to comprehend and understand the passage.

Reading is pivotal for English learners as it can enlarge their vocabulary, and information. From reading, English learner also can learn about foreign language people’s habit and culture. When learners want to learn about language, they have to learn about the habit and the culture of those foreign people. It can help them to learn about those foreign languages easily.

In Indonesia, English is considered as a compulsory subject for formal schooling. The goal of English teaching and learning is to produce and comprehend both the spoken and written language. Some people, nevertheless, think that successful English learners are those who can speak English fluently, which is restricted to only, strictly say, speaking skill. They do not even realize that the learners can be categorized as successful learners when they master all of the four skills.

In teaching and learning process, most of teachers in Indonesia commonly have some problems: one of them is the teaching strategy. According to Aswan et al (2010), teaching strategy is a teacher’s plan in teaching and learning process to achieve a purpose which has been planned. In other words, teaching strategies are

approaches to teaching students. The teachers have to apply the strategy to balance between the methods the teacher uses and the way the teacher applies the material. Furthermore, Nunan (1999: 82) argues that “success in teaching depends on many factors; one of them is teaching strategies. In fact, it is probably true to say that more time is spent on teaching reading than other skills”.

The teaching of reading comprehension as one of the language competency in English is considered being important as through reading, the students will be easier to add and get new information from any kind of text. The reading comprehension activity is also expected to make reading as the students' habit, make the students able to understand the meaning of text, and represent what they have read in their own language. In other words, the teaching of reading comprehension must enable the students to be independent reader as the purpose of teaching reading itself.

However, reading is perhaps one of the difficult language skills to teach, for it involves many different elements such as: mechanical eye movement, grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics, spelling and intellectual comprehension. Nevertheless, it is one of the most fruitful skills to teach. The majority of students of English as a foreign language may never speak much English, but most of them will have to read English in order to complete their university studies.

The English teachers, therefore, are required to have a strategy to get the students ready to read. By applying the correct strategies in teaching and learning process, the teachers are able to evoke the student's confident to read correctly. In addition, teacher's strategy is the one of crucial factors influencing the success in teaching reading. Thus based on all statements above, this study attempts to investigate the strategies used by the teacher and the advantages of using these strategies in teaching reading comprehension of the ten grade students of *SMAN 7 Mataram* in the school year 2017/2018.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Different people use the term reading in different ways. The definition of the reading has been given by Jack C. Richards and Michael H. Long quoted from Goodman (1973: 3). They define reading as a process in which reader picks and

chooses the available information to select and predict a language structure which is decodable. According to Allen and Vallent (1979: 7), reading is development process; either the first stage is learning sound-symbol correspondence, directly or by reading aloud, sentences and the words have been mastered orally.

Strang (1978: 1) posits that reading is more than pronouncing print words, recognizing meaning of isolated words; it requires someone to think, feel, and imagine. Reading is not reaction to a text, but an interaction between writer and reader mediated through the text. Reading efficiency is a matter of how effective a discourse the reader can create from the text, either in terms of report with the writer or in terms of this purpose in engaging in discourse in the first places, (Widdowson and Dubin, 1982).

It is widely accepted that reading is begun from getting meaning from written symbols. The reader imagines transferring sounds into letters to get the meaning out. This view is strongly influenced by audio-lingual method which claims that reading a second language was viewed primarily as an adjunct to oral language skills (Fries, 1963, 1972 in Sutarsyah, 2015: 22). According to this view, decoding sound symbol-relationship was considered to be the primary steps in the development of reading proficiency (Carrell, 1992 in Sutarsyah, 2015: 23).

These concepts basically characterize the theory bottom-up processing. This bottom-up model was proposed by structural linguists and behavioral psychologists. According to his theory reading entailed the application of automatic habit, induced response to written text. Reading is considered essentially a mechanical decoding process.

The explanations above show that reading is not only a process to read a text, but the essential thing is the ability to understand and interpret the meaning of the text. As Dallman (1982:10) argues, reading is more than knowing what each letter of alphabet stands for, but reading involves more than word recognition, and comprehension is an essential in reading. Reading is not simply making sound of the text, but it is about comprehending the idea of the text itself. It means that no reading takes place without comprehension.

Reading and comprehension are regarded as the one activity involved to each other. Teale and Yokota (in Westwood, 2001: 28) state that comprehension

must be the central focus of teaching students to read and not something to be emphasized only after students have learned how to decode and identify the words. Comprehension is a progressive skill in attaching meaning at the same level and proceeding to attach meaning into entire reading selection. All comprehension revolves around the readers' ability in finding main idea and topic sentence from the text (Doyle, 2004: 57).

According to Rubin (in Westwood, 2001: 65), reading comprehension has been described as a complex intellectual process involving a number of abilities. Readers must use information already acquired to filter, interpret, organize, reflect upon and establish relationships with the new incoming information on the page. In order to understand the text, a reader must be able to identify words rapidly, know the meaning of the most all of the words and be able to combine units of meaning into a coherent message. Lyon and Scarborough cited in Westwood (2001) contend that understanding of text results from an interaction between word identification, prior knowledge and the effective use of cognitive strategies. Thus, according to Tokesen (in Westwood, 2001: 66), reading comprehension is a cognitive, motivational and effective activity.

Furthermore, Pressley (in Westwood, 2001: 67) says that good 'comprehenders' are effective users of comprehension strategies when they work with the text. Effective comprehension requires the reader to maintain the meaning throughout the reading of the text. If meaning is lost, the reader should be aware of this fact immediately and take necessary compensatory action.

It is essential that reading comprehension is seen as something that begins as early as the beginning of reading and not something that students move on to after they have learned the decode print. Loban *et al.* (1969) contends that reading comprehension is indeed a very elaborate procedure which involves a balance of many elements in a passage and their organization in the proper relation to each other comprehension in reading depending on knowing the literal meaning of words in various contexts. It can be said that the reader must be able to perceive the relation of each part to the other and each of the whole of the text.

In addition, Smith (in Westwood, 2001: 23) states that reading comprehension is considered to occur at four levels of complexity. These levels

are often referred to as literal level, inferential level, critical level, and creative level.

The Teaching of Reading

In learning English at school, the students try to be able to read English text in which it is an important skill to achievement the goal of their study about English. Reading is useful for other purposes in which any exposure to English is a good thing for language students. Reading texts provide good models for English writing. They also provide opportunities to study language such as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way we construct sentences, paragraph, and texts. Lastly, good reading texts can introduce interesting topics, stimulate discussion, excite imaginative responses and be the springboard for well-rounded, fascinating lessons.

The Strategies for Reading Comprehension

To gain the better result on language learning process, there will be a need of good and appropriate strategies in reading comprehension. Brown (2001) states that reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate and efficient comprehension strategies. There are ten such strategies in which they can be applied to the classroom technique that will be explained as follows:

Identifying the purpose of reading. This strategy needs the teacher to make the students know their purposes in reading something. It is needed to make an efficient reading during the teaching learning process in which an efficient reading consists of clearly identifying the purposes of reading something. By doing so, the students know what they are looking for and can weed out potential distracting information.

Using graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding (especially for beginning level learners). At the beginning levels of learning English, one of the difficulties students encounter in learning to read is making the correspondences between spoken and written English. In many cases, learners have become acquainted with oral language and have some difficulty learning English spelling conventions. They may need hints and explanations about certain English orthographic rules and peculiarities. While you can often assume that one-

to-one grapheme-phoneme correspondences will be acquired with ease, other relationships might prove difficult.

Using efficient silent reading techniques for relatively rapid comprehension (for intermediate to advanced learners). At the intermediate-to-advanced level, students do not need to be speed readers. They only need the help to increase the efficiency by using a few silent reading rules taught by the teacher. Aside from these fundamental guidelines, which if followed can help students to be efficient readers, reading speed is usually not too much of an issue for all but the most advanced students. Academic reading, for example, is something most students manage to accomplish by allocating whatever time they personally need in order to complete the material. If your students can read 250 to 300 words per minute, further concern over speed may not be necessary.

Skimming the text for main idea. Skimming consists of quickly running one's eyes across a whole text (such as an essay, article, or chapter) for its gist. Skimming gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic, or message, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas. This gives them a head start as they embark on more focused reading.

Scan the text for specific information. Scanning can be defined as a technique of quickly searching for some particular pieces of information in a text. Scanning exercises may ask students to look for names or dates, to find a definition of a key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details. The purpose of scanning is to extract specific information without reading through the whole text. For academic English, scanning is absolutely essential. In vocational or general English, scanning is important in dealing with genre like schedules, manuals, forms, etc.

Guessing when you are not certain. Students can use guessing to their advantage to guess the meaning of a word, a grammatical relationship (e.g., a pronoun reference), a discourse relationship, a cultural reference, content message and infer implied meaning ("between the line"). They should utilize all their skills and put forth as much effort as possible to be on target with their hypotheses where the key to successful guessing is to make it reasonably accurate. We can

help students to become accurate guesser by encouraging them to use effective compensation strategies in which they fill gaps in their competence by intelligent attempts to use whatever clues are available to them.

RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher used descriptive design in this research as it focused on a certain phenomenon in the school environment. In this case the phenomenon was the activities of teaching and learning English. Also, this research did not need to give the treatment to the object of the research. Then, the researcher observed and described the phenomena as in the fact as clear as possible without manipulation. The design consisted of two stages. The first was observation to the teacher and the student. The researcher observed the class the school condition and teaching learning process. The second stage was doing the interview with the English teacher. This interview took place after the researcher doing the observation. In this process the interview the researcher ask detail about the strategies that he used for his teaching.

Of the three meetings observed, the language used in the classroom is mostly Bahasa Indonesia, and the process of teaching and learning in the classroom are dominated by the students. Their domination is shown through their activities in the classroom. In the first meeting observed, the teacher greets the students and tells them about her unforgettable experience. Finishing telling her story, the teacher informs the students that they are going to discuss about 'unforgettable experience'. The teacher then divides the students into groups consisting of 6 students. The group is divided into a pair of sub-group which consists of 3 members of each. The first sub-group is called as expert group and the second is student group. Teacher gives a text to the expert groups and the student groups get some clues related to the text. Then, they have to discuss about the text along with members. After the expert group finishes reading the text, the student group asks some questions to know what kind of the impression the readers get after reading the story. For examples: What is the author's message?

How well does the author tell the story? Then, the expert group answers the questions.

In the second meeting observed, the teacher teaches about 'How to Make Something'. The teacher tells the students that she can make some cookies. The students seem to be so interested in her story. Some students even ask the teacher to bring them some cookies when she comes to the class on the other day. Their request soon makes some laughter. The teacher then asks the students to count from 1 to six. This is the way the teacher to divide the students into some groups. Those who count on the same number belong to the same group. After dividing students into several groups, each group is provided with different title reading text, but with the same genre: procedural text. Finishing reading the text each group is allowed to ask some question to the other groups.

In the meeting number three, the material discussed is about 'A farmer and An Artist'. Different from the previous two meetings, the students are grouped into two major teams. The first team is called 'Team Farmer' and the other is called 'Team Artist'. Also, different from the first two meetings, all teams in this meeting are given the same text. After reading the text, each team is permitted to raise some question from the text and is asked to employ question-answer relationship.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teacher's strategies in teaching reading comprehension

Based on the result of observation and interview conducted with an English teacher about teacher' strategies, there are two common strategies used by the teacher in the teaching of reading comprehension: question-answer relationship, and discussion strategies. The English teacher in SMAN 7 Mataram says that there are two strategies commonly used in teaching reading comprehension: question answer relationship and discussion strategies.

(1) "...cuma ada strategi yang saya gunakan, diantaranya adalah, question-answer relationship, and discussion strategy."

The first strategy employed is *question-answer relationship*. Employing this strategy, the students been divided into some groups raise some questions

from the reading text, and ask the the other groups to answer those questions. This strategy, the teacher asserts, is used to see if the students really understand the text they read. This means that the students' understanding about the reading text depends on the correct about answer they provide.

(2) "...Question answer relationship, staretegi ini disesuaikan dengan materinya. Materinya yaitu yang telah kita bahas bersama-sama tadi di kelas tadi. Saya memberikan kepada kelompok siswa teks yang berbeda kemudian setiap kelompok punya kesempatan untuk mengajukan pertanyaan kepada kelompok lain."

(The implementation of this strategy is based on the materials that have been discussed before. I provide the groups of students with different reading text and each group is allowed to ask some question to the other group.)

QAR strategy is a kind of strategy of reading comprehension that can be applied in teaching reading at school. In using this strategy, a teacher should know the advantages and disadvantages of this strategy when it is applied in teaching learning process. There are some benefits of using QAR strategy in teaching reading. According to Chien (2013), QARs serve as a reasonable starting point to address the problems that stand in the way of moving all students to high levels of literacy. QAR empowers students to think about the text they are reading and beyond it, too. It inspires them to think creatively and work cooperatively while challenging them to use literal and higher-level thinking skills.

In addition, the different skills required to answer the four types of questions in QAR allow students to become aware of their own thinking processes as they ask and answer questions. Moreover, generating questions facilitates deeper thought than does merely answering questions. These conditions make the students become more active in the class and challenge them to use their high-level thinking ability to answer comprehending questions because it teaches students how to ask questions about their reading and where to find the answers to them. This strategy leads the students to categorize the questions in order to ease the students in finding the answers of the questions because after they categorize the questions, they already know what they have to do and where they should find the answers.

The other strategy used by the English teacher in teaching reading comprehension at the first grade students of SMAN 7 Mataram is discussion. The teacher predicts that this strategy can allow the students to learn more about the information from the other friends. Using this strategy, the teacher gives much opportunity to students to express their opinion, make conclusion, and even solve problems. Discussion is a process sight two or more individual which get verbal's interaction and face to face for aims or targets already given through information exchange opinion problem solving (Hasibun:1985).

. In this strategy, the students are divided into several groups. The teacher then gives them difference topic to discuss with their group. When they students finish discussing the topic given, each group is asked to present the result of their discussion, and the other groups are suggested to raise some question on topic presented.

(3) "Melalui penerapan strategi diskusi saya, seperti yang sering kali saya lakukan sebelumnya, membagi siswa ke dalam beberapa kelompok. Kemudian kelompok tersebut saya berikan materi bacaan yang berbeda-beda untuk dibaca. Saya memberikan waktu beberapa menit bagi setiap kelompok untuk memahami dan mendiskusikan isi bacaan tersebut. Kemudian setelah itu ada presentasi dan sesi tanya jawab."

(Through the application of discussion strategy, as I have frequently done, I divide the students into some groups. Each group is given different reading text material. The groups are required to understand and discuss about the content of the reading text. Finishing this step, each group must present the result of their discussion and have question and answer session.)

The advantages of using the strategies

Question-answer relationship strategy helps the teacher in teaching reading comprehension. When implementing this strategy, the teacher is able to know the students' comprehension about the text. Also, in this stage the students not only read the passage but also really understand what the content of the text, including message from the author of the text.

- (4) “Dalam menerapkan strategi question-answer relationship ini saya sangat terbantu karena melalui strategi ini saya dapat dengan mudah melihat sejauh mana pemahaman siswa terhadap teks yang diberikan, misalnya tahu makna yang disiratkan pengarang dalam teks. Untuk mengetahui tingkat pemahaman siswa terhadap teks lebih kurangnya dengan melihat jawaban-jawaban yang diberikan atas pertanyaan yang diajukan oleh kelompok lain.”

(Applying this (question-answer relationship) strategy really helps me as through this strategy I can see how well the students understand about the reading text provided, for instance, knowing implied meaning of the text. Knowing their understanding about the text can be seen from how well they answer the questions asked by the other groups.)

By applying QAR the students are expected to use their time well during the reading class. QAR also helps students develop an awareness of the multiple source of information in their reading. When students are consciously aware of the different sources of information available to answer the questions, they became strategic in their reading and thinking, and their comprehension is improved.

- (5) “Strategy QAR ini bisa membuat siswa dapat menggunakan waktunya dengan baik saat di materi reading. Jadi strategi ini bisa mengembangkan kepekaan siswa pada berbagai sumber informasi dalam teks reading. Kalau mereka sudah peka begini, mereka memiliki siasat dalam membaca dan berpikir. Hal inilah yang menjadikan pemahaman mereka bertambah.”

QAR is not easy to be applied, however. It takes time to develop with students. Students will need a fair amount of instruction and guided practice using QAR. Teacher should give many examples to use this strategy. First step is explaining QAR to students. Second is demonstrating it. Teachers must use clear example to differentiate the types of questions. Third, guide students to apply the strategy. Teacher control the class in applying QAR and has to active in guiding the students.

- (6) “Penerapan metode ini tentu saja tidak mudah. Butuh waktu yang lumayan lama untuk benar-benar bisa menerapkan strategi ini. Ada banyak tahapan yang harus dilakukan, misalnya menjelaskan apa itu CAR, kemudian memberikan contoh yang benar-benar jelas dari jenis pertanyaan, dan setelah itu baru dicobakan kepada siswa.”

The advantage of applying the discussion strategy is that to have the students learn not only from the teacher but also from their fellow students. Moreover, through this strategy the students can make connection between their prior knowledge and the content of information in the reading text so that they can understand the text very well.

- (7) “...discussion. Strategi ini dilakukan agar siswa dapat belajar dari siswa lain di dalam kelas, tidak hanya dari guru. Melalui diskusi ini siswa dapat menerapkan ataupun menghubungkan pengetahuannya sebelumnya dengan apa yang terkandung di dalam teks sehingga mereka bisa paham betul dengan isi teks.”

The other benefit of using the discussion strategy is that it creates the active classroom atmosphere. This strategy is also used to make the students feel confident in giving opinion.

- (8) “...discussion. Diskusi ini dapat membantu saya dalam proses belajar mengajar karena tidak hanya guru yang berperan aktif dalam pembelajaran ini tetapi murid-murid juga ikut berperan aktif. Dengan diskusi murid-murid dapat bertukar pendapat dengan teman-temannya dan bahkan menentang pendapat murid yang lain.”

(Discussion strategy can help me in the process of teaching and learning as it makes the students active in the classroom participation. Through discussion, the students can express their opinions, and even argue with the other students' idea.)

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the result of the research that has been discussed in previous section, the researcher concludes that the strategies commonly used by the English teacher in teaching reading comprehension at ten grade students of SMAN 7 Mataram are question-answer relationship and discussion. The former eases the teacher in recognizing the students' comprehension about the text, and helps the students develop an awareness of the multiple source of information in their reading. The later makes the students learn not only from the teacher but also from their fellow, and this strategy creates the active classroom atmosphere. In short, the mentioned strategies provide good contribution for both parties in the classroom: teacher and students.

The implementation of some strategies in teaching reading comprehension is found to be beneficial for both teacher and students. The result of this study may be used as a reference for English teacher in teaching reading comprehension skill. The researcher wishes that other researcher could conduct the relevant research in wider area. Therefore, that result will provide much contribution to the English language teaching, and be applied in a larger area.

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