

Strategies for Teaching Reading in EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Reading for junior high school students becomes a fundamental skill because they will use it for further studies at senior high school and university levels. Teaching reading requires various good strategies to arouse students' motivation and optimize learning outcomes. This descriptive qualitative study investigated strategies used by two English teachers in grades seven and eight at SMPN 2 Bojonegoro, specifically in teaching descriptive and recount texts. The data derived from four reading class meetings were analyzed using an observation checklist and interviews. The results of the study demonstrated that there were 3 strategies used by the teachers, namely RCRR (Read Cover, Remember, Retell), CSR (Collaborative Strategic Reading), and translation. The first two strategies were often applied in grade eight as they were sequential and good for active learners. Meanwhile, translation became the appropriate strategy for grade seven as they had limited vocabulary and were still passive learners. By using numerous reading strategies, it is expected that the students can more easily understand the reading texts. Reading strategies provide students with the tools needed to become aware of their thinking, gain confidence in their ability to think and analyze texts, encounter barriers to comprehending text, and most importantly, make thinking visible and audible.

Keywords: reading, teacher strategy, EFL classroom

INTRODUCTION

A language is a tool for communication in the world. Many foreign speakers use the English language to communicate. Many people from many nations speak English. The majority of non-active English speakers use the language to communicate with people from other countries (Dhillon et al., 2020). In

Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language. Even though a foreign language, English is taught in Indonesian schools, such as at the junior high school level, which will be used for further study at the senior high school and university level. Therefore, English teachers need to be able to use suitable strategies for teaching students in class. In the world of education, a strategy is defined as a plan, method, or set of activities aimed at achieving a particular educational goal (Hamruni, 2012).

During learning activities, teachers need to use good strategies to generate student motivation and optimize learning outcomes. With the teacher's strategy, the learning process is successful and achieves the desired goals. Teachers need to implement strategies to balance the methods they use with the methods they apply (Aswan et al., 2010). The components of a learning strategy are interconnected to achieve teachers' and students' goals, methods, tools, and assessments (Hamruni, 2012). Learning activities also have an important factor in ensuring that learning goals have been achieved. Ratings also serve as a feedback tool that we can use to improve our teachers. Therefore, we need a strategy to assess teacher learning and improvement. There are many strategies that can be implemented in the classroom, particularly for teaching reading skills.

Reading is one of the four important roles in language proficiency. By reading, we can learn more about vocabulary, intonation, grammar, the order in which paragraphs and texts are composed, and more. "Reading allows one to obtain the knowledge required, as well as specific information" (Willis, 2008). By reading, we can get information that we did not know at first. Teachers play an important role in developing a student's reading comprehension by using appropriate methods, tactics, and reading strategies according to the student's abilities. In addition, reading can be defined as a thinking process through which readers become aware of an idea, understand it in terms of their experiential background, and interpret it concerning their own needs and purpose. As for the problems in reading, one of them is that sometimes they cannot find the ideas in the text that has been read. Fahas (2021), stated that there were several problems in reading comprehension, namely, students' difficulty comprehending the text, which makes them confused. Therefore, the teacher tries to use the right strategy for his students.

A teaching strategy is a teacher's plan to achieve the desired learning objectives. Teaching strategies are very important that teachers and students must implement for learning to run smoothly. To achieve learning objectives effectively and efficiently, the learning strategy contains all elements of the subject matter and workflow that will help students achieve certain learning objectives. Learning strategies can be interpreted as a

learning activity model that teachers select and use contextually based on student characteristics, school conditions, and the surrounding environment, and specific learning objectives established (Syahputra, 2015).

In teaching reading, the teacher can use a variety of strategies that are suitable for implementation with students. By using a reading strategy, students will be more focused and be able to understand the contents of the text that is read according to their abilities.

METHOD

This research is qualitative research. The subjects of this study were two seventh and eighth grade English teachers at SMPN 2 Bojonegoro, especially in teaching descriptive and recount texts. Data obtained from four reading class meetings will be analyzed using interviews and checklist observations. Sugiyono (2015) states that observation is the basis of all knowledge. By observing the state of the class and the teaching and learning process in the English reading class using an observation checklist, Sugiyono (2015) defines an interview as a meeting of two people to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers so that communication and the construction of shared meaning occur on a topic.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

FINDINGS

Findings of interviews and observations with two English teachers at SMPN 2 Bojonegoro, namely in English subjects using the K13 curriculum with a minimum completeness criterion of 72 for seventh grade and 73 for eighth grade, are presented. On the first day of reading class, the seventh-grade teacher repeated a little material related to the descriptive text that had been taught previously and asked about the difficulties experienced by students before starting the next lesson. The teacher involves students when learning in pairs or groups while in class. But teachers sometimes also give individual assignments. As in the reading class, the teacher gives a piece of paper containing the reading and some questions. The teacher invites students to read the text, but before that, the teacher gives examples to students so that they know how to pronounce words correctly. After that, the teacher asked some students to try to read the text aloud and take turns per sentence. Due to the passiveness of students and the low level of English vocabulary possessed by seventh-grade students, the English teacher always translates the contents of the text with students from English to Indonesian. If the teacher does not translate, students are more passive

during learning and are embarrassed to ask about the difficulties they are experiencing. This is one of the obstacles experienced by seventh-grade teachers. Even though the teacher always asks what difficulties are experienced by the students during learning to read in class, On the second day, the seventh-grade teacher carried out the same strategy as on the first day, namely by translating the reading given. But there was a difference on the second day, namely that the teacher gave a different reading text from the first day and formed a group. There are some words that are underlined to be interpreted by the students. After being given time to interpret, group representatives came forward to write down the results of the discussion. After that, there were several students who were appointed to recite the contents of the text they had read. After that, students are asked to work on questions related to the reading given to test students understanding.

In the eighth-grade teacher, the teacher repeats a little material about the recount text that has been taught to previous students and asks what difficulties the students experienced before starting the next lesson. In learning, the teacher involves students either individually, in pairs, or in groups. The strategies used by the eighth-grade English teacher are very different. Because students already know a lot of vocabulary in English, the teacher does not translate it into Indonesian, but the teacher also always asks for vocabulary that they think is difficult and has never been known before. Even though the teacher always asks about the students' difficulties, they are too shy to ask. It is also one of the difficulties experienced by the eighthgrade teacher.

On the first day of reading class, the teacher repeats the material, then the eighth-grade teacher gives a reading text to the students. The teacher asks students to pair up with their classmates, where the student on the left will read the text and the student on the right will recite it. The teacher gives examples of how to pronounce words correctly in the text. After being given an example, the teacher gives time for students to read silently per paragraph, and the paragraphs that have been read are closed by hand. After that, the teacher gives students time to remember what the contents of the text are, and the teacher asks students to retell about what they read per paragraph in front of the class in turn.

The strategy for teaching reading classes was different from the first day; the teacher used a different strategy but used the same reading text. The teacher gives 2 sheets of paper, one containing several recount text titles and the other paper containing the reading text and questions. On paper containing several recited text titles, the teacher invites students to predict the contents of the text titles. The teacher asks students to pair up with their classmates, then gives examples of how to pronounce the correct words in

the text. After being given an example, the teacher asks students to read silently, then asks about difficult words in the text. The teacher asks students to rephrase the main idea in the paragraph section. After the students put forward the main idea in the paragraph section, the teacher asked the students to work on the questions contained on the given sheet of paper. The teacher asked what difficulties the students were experiencing and checked the students' answers and gave feedback to the students.

DISCUSSIONS

From the results of interviews and observations, researchers found the teacher's strategies taught in reading classes. Due to the low English vocabulary possessed by seventh grade students, the teacher uses a translation strategy. which always translates from English to Indonesian so that students better understand the contents of the text. The researcher also found the strategy used by the eighth-grade teacher. This strategy is not the same as the seventh-grade teacher's strategy. Because on the first day of the eighth grade, the teacher did not translate but asked students to read, then closed the reading by hand, recalled, and retold. This strategy is an RCRR (Read, Cover, Remember, and Retell) strategy. The steps in the RCRR strategy are:

1. Read, but only read as much as they want.
2. Use your hand to cover up the part of the story that you just read.
3. Remember to think about what he or she just read.
4. Retell, to retell what they just read and learned from the next and what important things they got from it.

This strategy is designed to help readers read the text slowly and find the meaning of the text (Dahler et al., 2018). Next, the researcher found the strategy used by the English teacher on the second day, namely, the teacher used a CSR (Collaborative Strategic Reading) strategy. This strategy is evidenced by the teacher giving several titles to students to predict and giving recount texts to read. After that, the teacher asked for difficult words that were not yet known. Then ask students to find the main idea in each paragraph and give students questions to answer. This is the same as the stages of the teaching strategy with the CSR method proposed by Novita (2012), namely:

1. Prior to reading, students recall what they already know about the topic and try to predict what the passage might be about.

2. During reading, students identify clunky or difficult words and concepts in the passage and use fix-up strategies when the text does not make sense.
3. Put forward the main idea that is important in each paragraph.
4. Wrap up: make a summary and ask a question that a teacher might ask on the task.

A study conducted by Nurmadia Sarjan (2017) under the research title "An Analysis on The English Teachers Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension SMP 1 Of Wonomulyo" This study aims to determine the strategies used by English teachers at SMP 1 Waluyo. In this study, there are two strategies used by teachers, namely (1) scaffolding. This strategy can develop ideas that can be read and (2) QARs. This strategy is used so that students understand the reading and understand the content of the reading. From the results of the researcher, these strategies are effective in teaching reading comprehension because they can help students understand the text. Students who have reading difficulties will find it easier to master reading comprehension. By using this strategy, it is easier for teachers to provide materials to students. This strategy can help teachers because students are more active. And students can exchange opinions with their friends.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion showed that there were three strategies used by English teachers at SMPN 2 Bojonegoro, namely RCRR (Read Cover, Remember, Retell), CSR (Collaborative Strategic Reading), and translation. The first two strategies are often used in the eighth grade because they are sequential and good for active learners. Meanwhile, translation is the right strategy for seventh graders because they have limited vocabulary and are still passive learners. By using reading strategies, it is expected that students can more easily understand the text. Reading strategies provide students with the tools needed to become aware of their thinking; gain confidence in their ability to think and analyze texts; encounter barriers to comprehending text; and most importantly, make thinking visible and audible.

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