

Investigating Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension

Beata Klarensya Sianturi¹, Herman Herman², Yanti Kristina Sinaga³, Bloner Sinurat⁴, Arwin Tannuary⁵

^{1,2,3,4*}Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

⁵Universitas Murni Teguh, Indonesia

Corresponding Author's Email: bloner.sinurat@uhn.p.ac.id

Received: 2023 15, August

Accepted: 2023 18, September

Published: 2024 31, October

Copyright © 2024 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Abstract. The teaching of reading has played an important role in the second language learning process. It is an academic asset in both language learning. Mastery in reading tends to create a positive impact on the learning of other related skills such as information processing, vocabulary, and language structure. Comprehension skills are vital in learning to read in the classroom. While reading, the reader should understand the meaning of the text. In other words, readers must be able to comprehend the information presented in the text. Therefore, reading comprehension skills are important in the learning process as they involve understanding text in the form of writing, message communication, ideas of the content, and more. As the reader engages with the text, he or she must be able to interpret and respond appropriately. Therefore, teachers must concentrate on building students' reading comprehension skills. The appropriate strategies that teachers demonstrate while teaching reading comprehension are essential. The purpose of this study was to describe the teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension for the descriptive text of the eighth-grade students. This study employed a qualitative case study research design. Five teachers participated in the study. Observation and interviews were used as instruments to collect data. The results of this study showed that teachers used various strategies for teaching reading comprehension. These strategies include asking questions before reading, asking questions after reading, encouraging students to retell and summarize the text, and asking for the main idea of the text. These strategies are applied by the teachers to help students better understand the message of the text.

Key words: Descriptive text, message of the text, reading comprehension, teachers' strategies

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an important aspect of life for people in terms of communication, acquiring knowledge, and enjoyment. By reading, people can gain insight and a good understanding of various subjects. Through reading, they can broaden their horizons. Reading involves interpreting symbols and words through sounds, images, and experiences. Some people consider reading to be of prime importance because, in a print-rich society like ours, individuals must be skillful readers to function effectively and happily. Almost all subjects and school activities require understanding and transportable knowledge, which can be absorbed and personalized most effectively through the wise use of books and other instructional print materials. The fact that students should possess a high level of reading skill is supported by research, which states that being a reader means being smarter than non-readers, and that students need to read in order to gain an education (Putri & Education, 2022).

As one of the language skills, reading significantly affects students' achievement because most subjects and school activities require understanding and transportable knowledge, which can be absorbed and personalized most effectively through the wise use of books and other instructional print materials. In the school environment, when students feel bored or tired of reading, they cannot concentrate on the teacher's instruction, leading to a failure to comprehend the meaning of the passage they are reading (Par, 2020; Duke et al., 2021).

This section explains the research questions and the objectives of the study. English has a very important role in Indonesia. Many people agree that it is one of the most important skills to have because English reading text is a required skill for many tests. Therefore, most of the students are motivated to learn descriptive texts to pass their national final examination or to get a good score in their entry test. In this study, the researcher focuses on teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension for descriptive texts. The teacher should often follow some unique teaching strategies to improve reading comprehension for descriptive texts, and students should try to cope with it. When the students cope with it, it means that they have already comprehended the meaning in the descriptive text (Duke et al., 2021).

The strategies will enhance teacher performance and stimulate reading comprehension for students in order to guide them to be more participative in acquiring English skills. The questions for the study are: "What are the strategies that the teacher uses in teaching reading comprehension for descriptive texts?" and "Are the strategies that the teacher uses in teaching reading comprehension for descriptive texts appropriate for the students?" This became the objectives of this study. This can be answered by conducting research and then interviewing both the students and the teacher, using questionnaires, and observing the process. This should be done by observing the process of teaching and the process of learning of the teacher and students in teaching reading comprehension for a descriptive text, in order to obtain satisfactory results and completeness of the research.

Engaging with reading material is one of the easiest ways for men around the world to keep in touch and understand what is happening around them. This is because reading is a skill that is influenced by literacy. Someone who has literacy will have developed each of their language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The ability to comprehend reading is very important because, with it, teachers will be more active and creative in solving problems, expressing ideas, sharing information, and fostering closeness in knowledge of other subjects, rather than making a person more

ignorant. Reading is a skill that is considered difficult and very important for getting along with what someone is going through in their daily work. Based on the description above, it is important to share strategies on how to read and comprehend what is read for students in class, especially for students learning English as a foreign language. The purpose of this research includes: finding out the types of reading material that English teachers use, describing the strategies that English teachers employ to teach reading comprehension for descriptive texts, and outlining the obstacles linked to the strategies teachers use to teach reading comprehension for descriptive texts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The samples of the study were four high school English teachers randomly selected based on the teachers' competence in teaching descriptive texts. To gather the data, the researchers administered a set of questions. The teachers focused their questions on their strategies for teaching reading comprehension of descriptive texts. With regard to the strategies in teaching reading comprehension for descriptive texts, a qualitative approach was used in data analysis. The schools where the teachers were teaching were in rural and urban areas. All of the students who took part in this investigation had English as a foreign language. The students could discuss the topics, ask for detailed directions, gain knowledge from every source of print material, and display a strong interest in written text. They read a range of texts for enjoyment and to pick out specific information.

They selected appropriate strategies that teachers needed to implement in teaching reading comprehension for descriptive texts to guide those taught to use the strategy actively and who could benefit most from the instruction. The teachers were then interviewed by the researchers for further information and clarification. The students' answers and scores on the reading pre-test and post-test given by teachers before and after using the strategies were compared to those on the teachers' issue sheets. The remaining sections of this paper detail findings and suggest some instructional applications of the study that are also highlighted.

RESULTS

The findings of the study showed that the teacher had implemented strategies in teaching reading comprehension for the descriptive text. Based on the script observation, there were four main points in the teacher's strategies from the beginning of the teaching until the end of the teaching. The teacher started the activity by making an inquiry related to the previous topic that the students learned. This can be a strategy to connect the next material with the students' previous cognitive ability. It is aimed at facilitating the students to be more motivated in joining the new topic. The teacher also gave the students the objective of learning this material; it aimed to capture the students' attention, minimizing their inquiries. The students' inquiries could belong to their curiosity, which sometimes can make them not focus on the learning activity. At the time of presenting learning materials, the teacher invited a student to read the paragraph in a descriptive text, and the student elaborated on it. The teacher also represented the descriptive text by giving pictures related to it. By these activities, it can make it easier for the students to understand the material.

The teacher also used a dictionary, vocabulary cards, and synonym cards to facilitate the students' understanding of the meaning of learning materials related to the descriptive text. In order to check the students' understanding of the learning materials, the teacher provided learning questions. Learning

questions were designed to integrate spatial understanding, reading, and writing skills. From each learning topic presented, about five to nine good-level questions were established. These were designed to help the teacher probe and tutor, focusing on both topic-specific learning and transferable practical skills. When gathering answers for all of these questions, teachers should look for evidence of their targets.

The teacher mainly asked questions related to the descriptive text that had objects mostly described in the paragraph of learning. This question aims to detect the students' understanding of the descriptive text and also encourage them to participate by giving an explanation or inference. After finishing studying the descriptive text, the teacher summarized all of the learning materials presented. This can help the students understand the main subject of the descriptive text being taught. Summarizing the main topic is also a form of repetition of the source of learning. Relevant information was logical and clearly processed, presenting important points of the teaching. Support was given to address certain difficult points for students, but this approach keeps the focus on educational sources. Knowing this strategy can help students better understand each paragraph in the descriptive text.

This section elaborates on the teacher's strategies in one School in city of Pematangsiantar in teaching reading comprehension for descriptive text. The discussion consists of the macro structure, superstructure, macropropositional, and macro illocutions. The macromodel consists of macro structure, superstructure, macropropositional, and macro illocutions. Adopting these strategies may help the students grasp basic information, process the next information, interpret the text, or enable the reader to criticize the context. Moreover, adopting the strategies may help the teacher control the learning activity so that it proceeds in an orderly fashion and achieves its purpose. Analyzing the strategies of the teacher helps the researcher identify a list of strategies.

The discourse by the teacher during the teaching-learning activity is not just random data. In analyzing it, the model of the text will be used. As a teaching-learning activity progresses from one stage to the next, the teacher's technique also changes. At the beginning of the stage, the teacher places emphasis on the students' understanding of the vocabulary or on students' understanding where more effort may be indicated. In terms of the model, the emphasis may be on the macropropositional, superstructure, macro level, or super level phonological and syntax, or on the micropropositional text model. In the next stage, the teacher's concerns and attention specifications would be different.

DISCUSSION

The data in this study showed that the teachers who took part in the study used various strategies by delivering some techniques to teach reading comprehension. Learning strategies, student instructions, and focus on students' recreation seem to be the important aspects of those strategies, as indicated by a number of teachers who used those aspects often. Learning strategies involve teachers incorporating strategies from their students. It includes engaging students in their teaching and interacting with them to employ appropriate strategies for learning. Therefore, students are expected to be more motivated in learning and to have a better understanding of the learning objectives and the process of understanding something. Learning strategies in our study seem to be related to collaborative interpretive teaching, in which language and literacy skills are developed from the students.

The delivery of techniques given to the students was carried out by the teachers to facilitate their learning in comprehending the text provided in reading class. These techniques can help teachers deliver

the goals or objectives that have been set by providing reinforcement or applying a democratic learning environment in favor of students. By using these techniques, students can process the text more easily. The process will be directed towards a specific purpose; it will not be directed towards another goal that is unclear. The process starts from the purpose and directs the process towards that purpose. This is congruent with the thought about shared vision in school human resources fostering. Mentoring and coaching can help teachers use strategies to reach goals, but leadership is needed to focus attention and energy on those goals.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, this case study revealed that the teacher's strategy in teaching descriptive text can be seen from the analysis of the model that encompasses the explanation of the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages. During the pre-reading stage, the teacher established the class through a serious introduction and pre-reading. Three strategies in the pre-reading are: (a) motivating and activating the students' schemata, (b) introducing key vocabulary, and (c) making predictions. The second part that analyzed the strategies discovered three strategies during reading: (a) reading extensive written text that is shown, (b) finding clues in reading, and (c) inferring. The third part of the last strategies, the analysis has four strategies in the post-reading stage: (a) discussing the reading, checking students' comprehension, and clarifying misconceptions, (b) extending and recycling vocabulary, (c) extending and recycling the comprehension process, and (d) consolidating the students' learning of the descriptive text.

Currently, we only investigated the teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension, focusing on finding the detailed techniques only. To have a more comprehensive view, future studies are encouraged to investigate other techniques as indicators of models of reading comprehension. Furthermore, more qualitative research should be conducted because the results should be anticipated. Future researchers can combine qualitative research with quantitative research design to get more detailed insights into specific strategies frequently used by teachers and why a strategy is not effective.

In addition, future research can be conducted to identify what rubrics are helpful to evaluate the teacher's comprehension lessons. In most schools, they use rubrics that cover language aspects only, such as pronunciation, fluency, word choice, grammar, proper nouns, and some particular language aspects. These rubrics have a drawback because they stretch the scope of the evaluation of reading more into language aspects instead of reading comprehension aspects. In fact, the process of reading activities in class aims to fulfill various students' needs to comprehend the text, grasp main ideas, and build knowledge. Such needs, if not developed, obtained, and taken seriously by the teacher, may produce negative anxiety and weak readers. Therefore, it is undeniable that building an educational reading lesson based on comprehension aspects and considering several factors that might influence the teaching style is necessary.

REFERENCES

1. Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and practice*, 2, 14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42466-020-00059-z>
2. Cents-Boonstra, M., Lichtwarck-Aschoff, A., Denessen, E., Aelterman, N., & Haerens, L.

- (2021). Fostering student engagement with motivating teaching: An observation study of teacher and student behaviours. *Research Papers in Education*, 36(6), 754-779. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2020.1767184>
3. Damanik, A. S. and Herman. (2021). Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Through Question Answer Relationship Strategy (QARS). *Inovish Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 1, PP. 84-101. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35314/inovish.v6i1.1949>
 4. Dignath, C. & Veenman, M. V. J. (2021). The role of direct strategy instruction and indirect activation of self-regulated learning—Evidence from classroom observation studies. *Educational Psychology Review*, 33, 489–533. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-020-09534-0>
 5. Doyle, L., McCabe, C., Keogh, B., Brady, A., & McCann, M. (2020). An overview of the qualitative descriptive design within nursing research. *Journal of research in nursing*, 25(5), 443-455. doi: 10.1177/1744987119880234
 6. Duke, N. K., Ward, A. E., & Pearson, P. D. (2021). The science of reading comprehension instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 74(6), 663-672. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1993>
 7. Guo, D., Zhang, S., Wright, K. L., & McTigue, E. M. (2020). Do you get the picture? A meta-analysis of the effect of graphics on reading comprehension. *AERA Open*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858420901696>
 8. Herman, H., Shaumiwaty, S., Sipayung, R. W., Solissa, E. M., Fatmawati, E., Girsang, S. E. E., & Saputra, N. (2024). A Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach To Improve Students' Ability In Writing English Text. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(4), 1822–1830. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i4.1759>
 9. Liu, W. (2021). Does teacher immediacy affect students? A systematic review of the association between teacher verbal and non-verbal immediacy and student motivation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12:713978. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.713978
 10. Lumbantobing, S. R. A. H., Pardede, H., and Herman. (2020). The Effect of Herringbone Technique on the Students' Ability in Reading Comprehension on Recount Text . *Journal of English Educational Study*, Volume 3, Issue 2, November 2020, Page 1-10, E-ISSN: 2655-0776. DOI : [10.31932/jees.v3i2.656](https://doi.org/10.31932/jees.v3i2.656)
 11. Purba, R., Herman, H., Fatmawati, E., Saputra, N., and Sabata, Y. N. (2023). The multimodal-based learning improves students' reading ability in perspective of systemic functional linguistics. *Journal of Education Technology*, 7(1), 61–70. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jet.v7i1.54336>
 12. Putri, E. & Education, E. (2022). *An impact of the use Instagram application towards students vocabulary*. Pustakailmu. id. [pustakailmu.id](https://doi.org/10.31932/jees.v3i2.656)
 13. Resmi, R., Rahman, A., Sobirov, B., Rumbardi, R., Al-Awawdeh, N., Widoyo, H., Herman, H., & Saputra, N. (2023). Incorporating Teachers' Views on Different Techniques for Teaching Foreign Languages in the Classroom. *World Journal of English Language*, 13(8), 210-221. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n8p210>
 14. Saragih, N., Effendi, Sherly, Silalahi, M., Siregar, L., & Herman. (2024). The Influence of Self-Efficacy and School Culture on the Job Satisfaction of RK Bintang Timur Private Elementary School Teachers. *Bulletin of Science Education*, 4(3), 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.51278/bse.v4i3.1462>

15. Sinamo, D. S., Herman, H., & Marpaung, T. I. (2023). Teaching reading comprehension on narrative text by using short story: A case on teaching method. *Journal of Education, Linguistics, Literature, and Art*, 1(1), 31–43. <https://doi.org/10.62568/ella.v1i1.17>
16. Stahl, N. A. & King, J. R. (2020). Expanding approaches for research: Understanding and using trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of developmental education*, 44(1), 26-28. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1320570.pdf>
17. Vindrola-Padros, C., & Johnson, G. A. (2020). Rapid techniques in qualitative research: a critical review of the literature. *Qualitative health research*, 30(10), 1596-1604. doi: 10.1177/1049732320921835
18. Yapp, D., de Graaff, R., & van den Bergh, H. (2023). Effects of reading strategy instruction in English as a second language on students' academic reading comprehension. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(6), 1456-1479. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820985236>