



Teaching Strategies for Reading Comprehension: EFL Teachers' Best Practices

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ABSTRACT

This case study aims to discover teachers' practices for teaching second-grade reading comprehension at one of Kendari's Islamic state senior high schools. Using depth-interviews with two EFL teachers, the researchers scrutinized teachers' various strategies as best practices in teaching reading. Two teachers from one of Kendari's state Islamic senior high schools took part in this study. The findings of this study were based on the reading tactics utilized in class. The teacher employed pre-reading strategy training, asking students to check their memory of the text and having a brief conversation about the text's title. Also, the teacher employed calculative vocabulary, allowing the students to acquire skills for predicting word meanings based on context and prior knowledge. As for reading comprehension, the teacher engaged the class to read aloud and discuss how they understand what is written, observing students who asked questions about complex vocabulary during reading instruction and directing students to learn difficult vocabulary. Meanwhile, students' challenge in reading class requires more vocabulary and enthusiasm.

Keywords: *reading class; reading comprehension; teaching reading strategy.*

INTRODUCTION

The term strategies became popular in the 1970s to signify the cognitive aspect of information processing and to describe features of children's reading development as well as features of teachers' reading instruction (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). The term strategies became popular in psychology with the advent of information processing models, in which strategies, such as the rehearsal, could be applied to information in short-term memory to preserve the information and move it into long (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968). Besides, the term strategy has a long history of widespread use in the field of reading. Its use is proven in a published curriculum and reading education to research documents. The first mention in professional literature is in the Twenty-Four Yearbook of the National Society for Educational Studies (Whipple, 1925). Strategies entered daily practice in the classroom when they became part of basic instruction in the early 1990s, driving a wave of prevalent instructional research lines demonstrating their effectiveness (Paris, Lipson, & Wixon, 1983).

Several studies in Indonesia have been conducted on the issue of students' reading comprehension. Even though reading is one of the skills in general English subject which is compulsory taught at the school level, studies about it still emerge. Sheorey and Mohktari (2001) stated the importance of metacognitive strategies to understand complicated texts. This metacognitive strategy is central to productive learning



because it includes the preparation and planning, monitoring, evaluation, and selection of appropriate reading strategies (Anderson, 2002). Also, the use of metacognitive reading strategies triggers one's thinking and can increase student performance (Anderson, 2002). Metacognitive is a strong determinant of learning outcomes. It plays a strategic role in developing various assessment methods and instruments. Therefore, effective and efficient learners can develop metacognitive skills to manage and exploit their learning.

These studies have shown that teacher skills develop over time; for example, a teacher first needs adequate classroom management skills to provide reading strategy instruction. Strategic instruction, including reading strategies, does not often occur during classroom observations in secondary education because it is considered a complex and challenging form of learning behavior that requires years of teaching experience. Another explanation for the fact that strategy instruction does not occur often is because teachers' knowledge of reading strategies is inadequate (Seymour & Osana, 2003) or because a teacher does not feel skilled to do it or is responsible for providing this type of learning (Hall, 2005; Ness, 2016). Before researchers conducted the research, the researchers observed students who had completed an internship at the school. They said that some teachers do that teaching focusing on the lesson plan. Moreover, some teachers also use their teaching strategies as something unique to scrutinize as their best practices. Therefore, it is significant to conduct the research to explore the strategies used by EFL teachers for EFL students' reading comprehension in various contexts, especially in teaching reading as an integrated skill in general English course.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed the qualitative method by case study design. The case study approach is beneficial when there is a need to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event, or phenomenon of interest in its natural, real-life context. This kind of research is appropriate to be used to obtain information on teaching general English subjects for reading comprehension. The researchers desired to analyze the teachers' strategy in teaching students on their reading comprehension who has difficulty understanding reading during the learning process. Intervention in the case study was also done. The purpose of using a single case study in this research was to explore whether implementing the strategies contributes to students' reading comprehension. Thus, in the present study, the case was represented as a teaching approach consisting of steps to form sequential activities given to the students (Creswell, 2012, p. 465, see also Merriam, 1988, p. 13) to certain reading activities. In other words, in the present study, a single-case study was conducted while an "intervention" took place at the same time as the teachers implemented something "to the subject (re. Students) being investigated" and gained in-depth results of what happened (Nunan, 1992, p. 82). This study collected information about strategies for teaching reading comprehension from two EFL teachers by purposive sampling at one of the state Islamic senior high schools in Kendari. Data was gathered on the existing conditions and the methods and techniques used by the teachers for teaching reading comprehension there. In analyzing the data, the interview script was listed and classified by highlighting the key terms related to the main idea of their teaching strategies used for EFL students reading comprehension, which is in line with the reading strategies proposed by Harida & Eka (2016) adopted form reading strategies concept by Brown (2004). The researchers then interpreted and elaborated on the data, compared or contrasted it with relevant research, and came up with the conclusion.

FINDINGS



Based on the interview with English teacher 1, the following table 1 summarizes the strategies used by English teacher 1 in English class.

Tabel 1.1 Strategies used by English Teacher 1

Strategies	Strategies in teaching
Pre Reading Instruction	The teacher asked students to review their memories related to the text and made short discussions related to the title of the text, so the students could predict the topic of the text they would read. The teacher divided students into groups, gave each a different text title, and then asked each group to discuss the title given. After knowing the topic of the given text, then the representative from each group explained the topic that had been obtained from the results of the discussions.
Teach for comprehension	The teacher clarified the students' comprehension by questioning them after reading a passage. The teacher could model with the class how comprehension was reached. The class read together and discussed how they understood what was written. The teacher gives questions to students according to the text that students have read before. However, students need help answering the questions given by the teacher. Then the teacher explained the text that had been given so that the students quickly understood the text.
During reading strategies	The teacher observed students who inquired about complex vocabulary and directed them to memorize difficult vocabulary to improve their reading comprehension. Many obstacles frequently arise for students to understand the text, such as the need for more vocabulary. As a result, the teacher employs a memorization strategy to teach students reading comprehension. The teacher requires students to memorize at least five vocabulary words at the end of each lesson. Following that, students were instructed to memorize the vocabulary on

Strategies	Strategies in teaching
	their assigned chairs based on the attendance list.

The following table 2 presents a summary of the tactics employed by English teacher 2 in English class based on the interview.

Table 2 Strategies used by English Teacher 2

Strategies	Strategies in teaching
Calculative vocabulary Strategy	One of the main methods for assisting students in expanding their reading vocabulary was to encourage them to create methods for determining word meanings based on context and prior knowledge. The methods included determining the unknown word's part of speech, which required simplifying the context, looking at the unknown word's larger context, speculating on the meaning of the unknown word, and confirming that the hypothetical meaning is accurate. Based on this strategy, the teacher set up a game whereby students had to guess the meaning of words as they were learning. The teacher used vocabulary-filled cards in this game. Following that, students had to estimate what the word meant, and other students had to predict whether or not their assumption was accurate. This game was simultaneously implemented by the teacher so that students were active in the class and were exposed to new vocabulary to facilitate their comprehension of the text.

From the interview, teacher 1 (T1) said, "they adjusted the material to the lesson plan they made, but they also often used additional material obtained from the internet or other book." In this case, the teacher is equipped with knowledge related to the material to explain the material to students. Teachers must plan practical reading lessons based on their knowledge. Students frequently encounter obstacles during the lesson due to the material provided. T1, on the other hand, implemented strategies to improve student's reading comprehension. She shared information while also facilitating and training the student learning process. As a result, T1 used a variety of strategies to teach reading.

The strategies were pre-reading instruction, teaching for comprehension, and steps during reading strategies. In pre-reading instruction, the teacher asked students to review their memories related to the text and have short discussions related to the text's title so that the students could predict the topic they would read. In the learning processing classroom, T1 divided students into a group and provided a different text

title; then, the teacher asked each group to discuss the title given. 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.

Besides, the strategy used by T1 is teaching for comprehension. She said, "Instead of asking the students' comprehension questions after reading a passage, a teacher could model how comprehension was reached with the class. The class read together and discusses how they understood what is written."

In the strategy used by T1, she gave questions to students according to the text that students had read before. However, students found it challenging to answer the questions given by the teacher. Then the teacher explains the text that has been given so that the students easily understand the text. This strategy facilitates students' reading comprehension in the learning process. It can be used in various situations since, in this strategy, the teacher is directly involved personally or collectively in explaining the text if students need help understanding something.

Besides, the strategy used is during reading strategies. The teacher observed students who ask questions about complex vocabulary, and the teacher directs students to memorize difficult vocabulary to improve students reading comprehension. In the learning process in the classroom, in understanding the text, many obstacles often occurred to students, such as the lack of vocabulary that students have. Therefore, the teacher used a memorization strategy in students to teach reading comprehension. The teacher asked students to memorize five vocabulary words at the end of each lesson. After that, students were asked to memorize the vocabulary on their respective chairs according to the attendance list.

The result of the interview conducted with teacher 2 (T2), shows that the problem solved students' reading comprehension. She only used a calculative vocabulary strategy. A primary strategy in helping students build reading vocabulary is to encourage them to develop strategies for guessing word meanings from contextual clues and background knowledge. The ways are by finding the part of speech of the unknown word simplifying this context is necessary, looking at the wider context of the unknown word, guessing the meaning of the unknown word, and checking that the guess is correct. Based on this strategy, the teacher used a game to guess the meaning of words in the learning process. In this game, the teacher uses cards that contain vocabulary. Then students were asked to guess the meaning of the word given, and others guessed whether the answer was given correctly. The T2 created this game to keep students engaged in class and to provide vocabulary words to assist them understand the text.

DISCUSSION

The result of the strategies use by the teachers in the classroom are four strategies steps, they are in pre-reading instruction, teach for comprehension, during reading strategies and calculative vocabulary. The results were almost similar with the previous research by by Harida & Eka (2016) adopted form reading strategies concept by Brown (2004). Teaching strategy is the plan and the way the teacher will do the teaching by setting the main steps of teaching in accordance with the teaching objectives to be achieved and has been outlined. In the context of teaching, Milova (2015), state that the strategy is intended as a teacher's effort in creating an environment system that enables the teaching process sothat the learning objectives that have been formulated can be achieved and succeeded. So a teacher is required to have the ability to organize in general the components of learning, so interrelated function between learning components in question. In the learning process requires a strategy in improving the performance of a teacher. Because the teacher is the subject in implementing the learning strategy. According to Zohairy (2014), that school institution is a collection of learners who are at the age of growth and development for learning. Gravity of student learning centered on the brain. The super teacher is when the teacher taught the



students the learning process. Because not necessarily when teachers teach learners. Teaching and learning are two different processes.

Pre-reading instruction, teachers ask students to review their memories related to the text, and make short discussion related to the title of the text, so the students able to predict the topic of the text that they will read. This involves the reader's ability to know when they understand what they are reading, when they don't, and using appropriate strategies to increase their understanding when they are blocked. This strategy is a form of metacognition. Good readers are aware of and monitor their thought processes as they read. Marrinacio (2012) stated that pre-reading strategies help the reader effectively understand the content of the books to better comprehend the material, these pre-reading approaches include metacognition strategies and specifically, previewing vocabulary and analyzing text structure. Moreover, Issac (2010) states that the aim of teaching reading is to make students become effective and efficient readers. In order to get the target, the teacher needs to use strategy of reading comprehension. Since teaching reading comprehension strategies are conscious plans-sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text (Adler, 2001). Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. In teaching reading, a teacher may use many different strategies. In order to use any instructional technique effectively, anyone who teaches must understand the principles and assumptions upon which each specific technique is based. There is certainly no shortage of descriptions or labels for activities that may be classified as pertaining to instruction.

Pre-reading strategy involves the ability of readers to get meaning from a text by making informed predictions. Good readers use predicting to connect their existing knowledge to new information from a text to get meaning from what they read. Before reading, they may use what they know about an author to predict what a text will be about. The title of a text may trigger memories of texts with similar content, allowing them to predict the content of the new text. During reading, good readers may make predictions about what is going to happen next, or what ideas or evidence the author will present to support an argument. They tend to evaluate these predictions continuously and revise any prediction that is not confirmed by the reading. Pre-reading strategy also is very advantageous because it provides the students with knowledge that they will use during reading. Rupley and Slough (2010) said that it is important for teachers to enforce that pre-reading strategies will help students understand the information and engage them in reading.

A major strategy in helping students to build vocabulary for reading is to encourage them to develop strategies for guessing word meanings from contextual clues and background knowledge. The ways are by finding the part of speech of the unknown word simplifying this context is necessary, looking at the wider context of the unknown word, guessing the meaning of the unknown word, and checking that the guess is correct. Alyousef (2016) said that this strategy most important skill used by most readers in attacking new words. It is closely related to comprehension, and this is one of the most practical skills students learn. This is also helping to determine the pronunciation and meaning of an unknown word from its use in a sentence. When context is used for this purpose, a student read around an unknown word, gets the general meaning of the sentence and then guesses at the pronunciation and meaning of the unfamiliar word from the way it is used.

Teach for comprehension. Instead of asking the students comprehension questions after reading a passage, a teacher can model with the class how comprehension is reached. The class read together and discusses how they understand what is written. This strategy involves readers asking themselves questions throughout the reading of a text. The ability of readers to ask themselves relevant questions as they read is especially valuable in helping them to integrate information, identify main ideas, and summarize information. Asking the right questions allows good readers to focus on the most important information in

a text. Generating good questions may also lead readers to focus on problems with comprehension and to take actions to deal with these problems. This strategy gave a positive effect toward students reading comprehension ability in which student who was taught by this strategy gave a positive response and showed some improvements in their reading comprehension Furtado and Patel (2012).

During reading process instruction. The teacher observes students who ask questions about difficult vocabulary, and the teacher directs students to memorize difficult vocabulary to improve students' reading comprehension. Kame'enui and Bauman (2012) said that this strategy will make students retain the information that receive and prevent the information contained in short-term memory is lost quickly, and it can encourage information to be reused or processed through short term memory. The information stored in the memory will be easier to recover when needed. Besides, this strategy makes the students develop their ability to retain words and recall them and give the students a sense of improvement in their reading skill. This strategy involves the ability of readers to get meaning from a text by making informed predictions. Good readers use predicting as a way to connect their existing knowledge to new information from a text to get meaning from what they read. Before reading, they may use what they know about an author to predict what a text will be about. The title of a text may trigger memories of texts with similar content, allowing them to predict the content of the new text. During reading, good readers may make predictions about what is going to happen next, or what ideas or evidence the author will present to support an argument. They tend to evaluate these predictions continuously, and revise any prediction that is not confirmed by the reading.

The last strategy is calculative vocabulary. It is a major strategy in helping students to build vocabulary for reading is to encourage them to develop strategies for guessing word meanings from contextual clues and background knowledge. The ways are by finding the part of speech of the unknown word simplifying this context is necessary, looking at the wider context of the unknown word, guessing the meaning of the unknown word, and checking that the guess is correct. Teach for comprehension, instead of asking the students comprehension questions after reading a passage, a teacher can model with the class how comprehension is reached. The class read together and discusses how they understand what is written. And during reading instruction, the teacher observes students who ask questions about difficult vocabulary, and the teacher directs students to memorize difficult vocabulary to improve students' reading comprehension. It agrees that teaching strategy is generalized plan for a lesson or a lesson which includes structure, desire learner behavior, in terms of the goals of instruction, and an outline of tactics necessary to implement the strategy, Antoni (2010). Furthermore, teachers' strategies often expect students to develop their reading skill by osmosis (absorption) and without help. In the osmosis approach, it is believed that if a teacher teaching reading comprehension to the target language all day, they will improve their reading comprehension. Calculative vocabulary is often conceptualized as a global understanding of a passage of text. However, monitoring word knowledge is an essential metacognitive step in the construction of global meanings. Teaching to apply metacognitive skills to vocabulary mastery is likely to strengthen both domains, strengthening the relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary (Blachowicz, 1986). Therefore, in teaching to monitor word comprehension and organize word learning strategies may be a useful approach to vocabulary development.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that teachers implement various strategies as their best practices for teaching general English in reading comprehension. The teaching strategies are pre-reading instruction, teach for



comprehension, during reading instruction, and calculative strategies. The pre-reading activity includes reviewing memory, engaging students in short discussions, and asking them to present the result. The teach-for-comprehension phase involves clarifying students' comprehension, modeling how to reach comprehension, reading aloud together, and helping students answer questions with brief explanations. During-reading instruction comprises observing students who inquire about the complex vocabulary and employing a memorization strategy. Meanwhile, by calculative strategies, teachers employ vocabulary games in the larger context. Both teachers used various strategies; moreover, they were both very creative in handling their classes, and they made the students actively involved in the teaching-learning for English reading comprehension.

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