

Investigating English teacher's teaching strategies in teaching reading comprehension

Endang Komariah¹, Ika Apriani Fata², Sheila Prisilia³

Affiliations:¹ Universitas Lampung, ²Universitas Syiah Kuala, ³ Universitas Syiah Kuala

¹Correspondence: endang.komariah@fkip.unila.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating types of teaching strategies used by an English teacher and analyzing how she implemented them in teaching reading comprehension in senior high school. In order to observe the teacher's strategies and how they were being applied, this study employed qualitative design. The instruments used to collect the data were observation, interview and document. The subject was an English teacher at SMAN 11 Banda Aceh. The result of the observation indicates that teacher used partial questioning strategy, review strategy, and feedback strategy. However, the teacher did not elaborate questioning strategy in her lesson plan. The teacher mixed questioning and review strategies at the beginning of the lesson and continued with feedback at the end of the lesson. Those strategies were very useful in attracting students' attention, boosting up their confidence and keeping them focus on the lesson if managed properly.

Keywords: *Teacher Strategies, questioning strategy, review strategy, feedback strategy, Reading Comprehension,*

I. INTRODUCTION

An English teacher plays an important role in students learning process to help the students master English. The teacher's success in teaching depends on many factors; one of them is teaching strategies (Nunan 1999, p.249). The ability to involve students is very important if we want them to learn as much as possible. Questioning is one of the most effective ways for teacher in involving both teacher and students in teaching learning process, so questioning is a teaching strategy. According to Eggen and Kauchak (2012), there are five strategies in teaching learning process; Questioning strategy, Teacher's Act, Focus, Feedback, and Review. Questioning strategy helps shy students to be more active and participate during the lesson, and train students' comprehension by repeating the same question to the different students. By questioning the students, the teacher can also assess students in learning. Teacher's act and believe are also important in creating the positive and happy vibe in the classroom, motivating students during the learning process. "Focus" is another strategy needed. All of the lessons begin with focus. Before the teacher asks the students to be focus, firstly the teacher needs to focus to the students. The teachers should be attractive and able to keep the students' focus along the lesson to make the students learn as much as possible. By giving the focus towards the students means the teacher could use instruments as the materials in teaching learning process such as camera documentation, slide shows, video, songs, models, or whatever possible to keep the students attracted and focus to the lesson. Feedback is also important in giving students the motivation they need since it provides information about their competition and rate in the classroom, it also helps them understand about their own development (Brophy, 2014). The effective Feedback contains three characteristics, they are; specific, focus and positive emotional

tone. The last strategy is review which is some kind of summary of the lesson to help students link the previous lesson with the present lesson that they will learn. Review actually can happen anytime, in the beginning, in the middle or in the end of the lesson.

Reading is one of language skills that attract more attentions from the Indonesian government as for the past several years reading takes a big part in the national examinations especially for high school students. Reading also has an important role in learning process because the students' success in learning other subjects is very much determined by the high degree of mastering reading. It encourages students in finding the main ideas, supporting details, factual information and meaning of the words. Graham (2007:8) states that reading comprehension involves much more than readers' responses to text. Reading comprehension is a multi-component, highly complex process that involves many interactions between reader and what they bring to the text as well as variables related to the text itself. Reading in this study refers to comprehensive reading and the process of understanding written text. Knowledge is the basic element for the comprehension. It is related to what they do not know about information to they have already known. Reading really depends on some information through the eyes to the brain

The students must have reading skills if they want to get more knowledge from text or others. Therefore, teacher should try to make reading interesting, enjoyable, meaningful, and challenging. Unfortunately, the expected goals of comprehending text as stated in 2013 English Syllabus have not been accomplished yet, especially in Aceh. A preliminary study in some schools shows that most of students still got difficulties in understanding the texts they read. One of an English teacher mentioned she has tried to use some strategies such as questioning, feedback, and review strategy to approach the students in learning process especially in reading comprehension. The English teacher has known that the use of those strategies to actively involve the students into learning process may increase student's confidence and interest towards the lesson, give the motivation they need, and also help the students keep their focus and attention while answering the question from the English teacher.

Some researchers had conducted researches that focused on teachers' strategy in teaching reading comprehension. Ahmad (2013) conducted a research about strategies for teaching speaking and reading comprehension skills. He concluded that the teachers applied three kinds of stages in teaching reading. There are pre-reading, whilst reading, and post-reading stages. On the other hand, Nurmadia (2017), who did a research about teachers' strategy in teaching reading comprehension found that there were two strategies used by the English teacher, namely scaffolding and QARs (question answer relationship). In applying those strategies, the teacher knew how far the students comprehended the text given by the teacher, and also guided the students to be more focus on the text, and understood the content of the text.

Departing from the explanation above, further detail analysis is needed to investigate how the teacher implements teaching strategies in teaching reading comprehension. This study is intended to investigate what types of teaching strategies are used by the teacher and how she implemented those strategies in teaching reading comprehension.

II. METHODS

The research design used in this study is a descriptive study with qualitative approach to establish the existence of phenomena that occur in reading class activities.

Participants

The subject of the research was an English teacher at SMAN 11 Banda Aceh who taught reading comprehension skills and 28 students in her class.

Instruments

The data were collected through classroom observation, interview and document analysis. The researchers used blank papers to fill the result of classroom observation in transcription form. The observation was done in 3 meetings in which 1 meeting was for general observation and 2 meetings were for Focused Observation. The Interview notes were collected during the interview with the English teacher. In collecting data, the researcher used observation checklist adapted from Eggen & Kauchak (2012) while the interview protocol was adopted from Marzano interview protocol (2013). In addition, the teacher's lesson plan document was also analyzed.

Data analysis

The researcher collected the data in three steps; first, classroom observation to investigate teachers teaching strategies and how they are applied followed by an interview to the teacher. The last step was the document analysis. To gain data accuracy and validity of the data the researchers did for triangulation. The data then analyzed into 3 steps; data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction is the process when the mass of data gained from the observation, interview, and document analysis were reduced and organized by coding, writing summaries, and discarding the irrelevant data. Data display was used to draw conclusion from the mass of data. Third is conclusion drawing or verification.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the observation analysis shows that teacher used only three strategies in teaching reading comprehension; Partially Questioning strategy, Review strategy, and Feedback strategy. The teacher mixed questioning and review strategies at the beginning of the lesson, after that she continued with feedback at the end of the lesson. According to the teacher, mixing those strategies was very useful to gain the students' attention and kept their focus towards the lesson. Referring to Eggen & Kauchak (2012) theory, the teacher did not use two other types of teaching strategy: Focus and Teacher's Act. The teacher used one strategy for at least 20 minutes before she turned into other strategies.

From the data obtained, the first strategy applied by the teacher was questioning strategy. The teacher uses some strategies in questioning. First teacher used questioning strategy at the beginning of the class. This strategy was very useful in attracting students' attention at the beginning of the class; not only for that, by questioning students also improved their speaking ability and their confidence while answering the questions. In the beginning of the class, the teacher used questioning strategy to attract students' attention and also made the class full of fun and happy atmosphere. The teacher asked the students condition before starting the class. The

questioning strategy had a good impact as the students' answered the question with full of excitement and positive behavior; and the impact towards the teacher herself was the teacher could start the class with full of expectation to the students.

The teacher also provided many questions to the whole students and sometimes asked the same question to different students. She applied questioning strategy randomly or asked the question to a specific student. When the student could not answer, the teacher repeated the question and asked another student to answer. The teacher did not wait for much more time for the answer. For the students who did not know the answer, the teacher did not push them to get the right answer, but the teacher passed the question to another student. The purpose of asking the question was to keep the students' focus. The students anticipated their turn to answer the question, so the teacher could easily keep their focus and attention, and manage the class at the same time. Referring to this condition, the way the teacher applied the questioning strategy was slightly different from Eggen and Kauchak's theory. Eggen & Kauchak (2012) stated that prompting is crucial in applying questioning strategy. The teacher has to push the students to try answering the question until they get the right one in order to accomplish the learning goals.

The teacher sometimes asked the question in English, and then repeated the question in Bahasa Indonesia. The purpose was to make sure all of the students understand the questions, and for some of the students who were afraid to answer could feel free to answer in both English and Bahasa. The teacher allowed the students using two languages during the learning process. This strategy helped students much.

The second strategy being used was review. Review strategy gave good impact towards the students' interest and their knowledge about the text given by the teacher. The students lose their interest if they could not remember or follow the current lesson. When teacher applied the review strategy, most of the students' enjoyed answering the questions given as they already knew the answers because they learned about that on the last meeting. They looked enthusiastic to answer the question and tried to remember what they have learned. Every student participated well. In addition, the researcher also found that the students gave full attention when the teacher did the review strategy. They answered the question directly after the teacher asked. More than half of the class raised their hand, and then the teacher pointed to one student, and she answered the question well. It showed that review strategy helped the teacher link the previous lesson to the current one and really helped the teacher prepared the students to deal with the lesson that they will learn. The students also showed their interests in learning process as they did not only answer the questions being asked by the teacher, but also gave the reason after every answer. It indicated that the students paid attention during learning process and they also comprehended the previous lesson by responding with correct answer.

The last strategy used by the teacher was feedback. The teacher only gave the oral feedback on the students work at the end of the class session. While giving the feedback to the students, the teacher talked passionately. The purpose of this strategy was to make the students felt confident and eager to do the next lesson and fully focus toward the lesson. However, the teacher was not patience in commenting and praising the students' work, as she talked very fast, even some of them did not really understand what has been said by the teacher. The teacher also explained which parts should be revised and which part was wrong and why that was wrong.

In order to get more detail and valid data, the researcher interviewed the English teacher about the strategies that she used in teaching reading comprehension. Here is the teacher's statement:

T: In teaching reading comprehension, I usually do questioning the students a lot, in order to keep their focus towards the lesson, also I give them feedback on every exercise they made, I remind them about the previous study so it will be easier for the students to follow.....

The teacher's also responded:

T: Yes, I often use it after opening the class; usually I also use questioning strategy in order to give the review about the last lesson.....

The following statements show how the teacher applied or gave the feedback to the students:

T: /mmm/ yes. I give feedback to the students in every meeting..... Before I pointed to the wrong part, I told my students that their sentence is already good, but they have to improve your vocabulary and grammar..... /mmm/ I did that in order to make them understand where the wrong part is, and why it was wrong..... we cannot only criticize, it will make them down and don't want to learn.

In the interview, the teacher states that she would praise the students first, and then she would point out the wrong parts of students' work and told them why that was wrong, and told them the right answer. The purpose of the strategy was to make the students know their own learning progress, and also know which aspects that they should improve. This strategy could boost up their confidence in the classroom.

Concerning with the results of the document analysis, Teacher's Lesson Plan, it was found that the teacher used scientific approach and team work for the method. The teacher also wrote cooperative learning as the teaching model but she did not mention any strategies used. The teacher did not write any activities that include questioning the students but she wrote about reviewing the previous lesson before beginning the lesson. The teacher also wrote about praising and giving the suggestion to the students at the end of the class session, it could be categorized as feedback strategy. Judging from the teacher's lesson plan, the researchers concluded that the lesson plan was not in accordance with the observation and interview results. The teacher employed different activity from what she said in the interview, also on what she did during teaching learning process.

The researcher found that the English teacher applied the strategies similar to Eggen & Kauchak theory about teacher strategies but the implementation was slightly different. In applying the questioning strategy, the teacher did not use any prompting. When the student couldn't answer the question, the teacher passed it to another student. Actually the questioning strategy would be more effective if the teacher prompted and pushed the students to answer; the answer doesn't have to be right, but the students should be given the opportunity to answer the question, and the teacher could help and guide until the student found the right answer. (Eggen & Kauchak, 2012,

p. 105). The students who did not know the answer actually did not put any effort in answering the question, because the teacher quickly passed the question to another student. In addition, the teacher did not ask a lot of questions in the middle and in the end of class session. The teacher only used the questioning strategy in the beginning of the lesson; According to Eggen & Kauchak (2012) the frequency in giving the question to the students was one of the important things to be noticed; the effective teacher asked more questions comparing with the ineffective one. Moreover, the question should have the connection to the learning purpose, the teacher should be more focus in deciding the learning purpose, and by that, the teacher will automatically give good question with good frequency also (Leinhardt & Steel, 2005). In addition, the teacher modified the strategies as she used two languages; Bahasa Indonesia and English while questioning the students. The researcher personally thought that it was very helpful, considering the students' background differences, and the obstacle while studying foreign language especially in understanding English texts. The use of their mother tongue or their L1 helped them understand the question and feedback better.

Lastly, in applying the feedback strategy, it was very important to give the attention to the details such as giving the specific information to the students about their works, the feedback also should depend on students' performance, and the teacher herself should use the positive and emotional tone in order to make the students feel confidence and have the willingness to do better (Eggen & Kauchak, 2012). Feedback plays an important role in helping students achieve their goals in reading English texts as Graham (2007:8) states that reading comprehension involves a multi-component, complex process that involves many interactions between reader and what they bring to the text as well as variables related to the text itself.

To sum up, in order to make the strategies applied in teaching reading comprehension work, the teachers need to decide the purpose of the lesson before starting the class, then the strategy would automatically work and run into the correct direction. Because the successful set of strategies would fail if they were managed incorrectly (Jonas, 2009).

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on detail analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that there are three types of teaching strategies used by the English teacher in teaching reading comprehension. Those three strategies are partially questioning strategy, review strategy, and feedback strategy.

The teacher used questioning strategy in the beginning of the class session. During the lesson, the teacher asked the same question to the different students, pointed at the specific student to answer the question. However, she did not use any prompting technique which is crucial in helping the students understand the lesson. The teacher also only used questioning strategy in the beginning of the lesson. The teacher used the review strategy in the beginning of the class session along with questioning strategy in order to remind the students about the previous lesson. While applying the feedback strategy, the teacher clearly gave an opinion and told the students about which part should be improved. In another word she directly corrected the students' mistakes. The teacher talked too fast and made some students did not really get the point.

It is recommended that teacher apply other different types of teaching strategies, consider learners individual differences and learning goals. Other researchers who want to conduct the similar research about teacher strategies in teaching reading comprehension may focus on different learner's characteristics and background.

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