Strategies Used by English Teachers in Teaching Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to recognize and to discover the application of the strategy used by the English teachers in teaching reading comprehension during online learning for seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Singaraja. The research design used qualitative, with the research instruments in the form of observation and interview. The results of the research obtained were that the two English teachers used a question and answer strategy during the online learning process in teaching reading comprehension for seventh-grade students. Therefore, the strategy taught students how to interpret what kinds of questions were asked of them, as well as where to discover the answers, in that way, allowing students to think about the texts they read. In addition, motivating them to think creatively and collaboratively while challenging them to use their thinking skill, so that interactions between the English teacher and students could occur properly during the online learning process.

Keywords: reading comprehension, seventh-grade students, strategy

Introduction

It is important to note that in the learning process, there are 4 essential skills for learners to be acquired. Correspondingly, reading emerges to be one of the essential skills among the other three, as it requires learners to comprehend the meaning of English texts (Sadiku, 2015). Moreover, reading can also add insight to students about the information contained within in the text. Thus, reading shall open up opportunities for students to comprehend as much knowledge as possible that is beneficial for learning. Therefore, through the reading process, students shall form thinking skills through the process of capturing ideas/information, comprehending, imagining, applying, as well as expressing. On top of that, reading is an activity that is linked to pronunciation, spelling, sounding symbols, alphabets, and arranging each word into a meaningful sentence. Therefore, the importance of the reading process is to provide supplementary information, train students to get the hang of vocabularies and sentences in the text.

Furthermore, reading is an effort to comprehend which embroils a response from individuals who read through making assumptions, as well as collecting another comprehension in accordance with the text (Dakhi & Damanik, 2018). Furthermore, reading encloses the introduction of words to comprehend their meaning. Thus, it is a process that requires an understanding to be able to finally obtain the meaning included in the text. Therefore, receiving

information may be different depending on what sort of English texts readers read, as well as how readers interpret the meaning contained in the text. Furthermore, the information may be fictional, actual events, or responses to several questions based on the texts. Generally, to acquire information in the text, readers ought to be careful in analyzing, as reading obliges a long-time to be able to comprehend the meaning and obtain the information. The process of reading is significant to acquire the requirements to comprehend reading, with the intention of providing learners to have a better understanding of English texts. Furthermore, reading is one of the most noteworthy aptitudes for middle school learners (Mi, 2016).

Consequently, the shortcomings learners experience adds to the burden of learners, making learners become less interested in learning English, as they experience that the subject is rather difficult. Seventh-grade students additionally feel lacking the enthusiasm to read entirely which leads to weariness (Aji, 2016). Since English is not their native language, the issues experienced by seventh-grade students are reasonable in fact that learners purely do not recognize the words in the form of English. Therefore, the difficulties become a challenge for English teachers to make use of certain appropriate strategies so that English educators can resolve the problems. Thus, this is a difficult practice in which the responses and understanding of structured images are influenced by the perceptions, language bases, attitudes, and thinking capacities of learners (Ngabut, 2015). Reading is the path to the construction of meaning from the written word. Therefore, it is a sophisticated capability that involves a mixture of various data that are combined together (Anderson et al., 1985).

In short, the reading process correlates with every word written in the text. Furthermore, to detect the importance of written words, it is necessary to combine all available information so that people shall understand the meaning contained in the text. Likewise, the process of reading is not happening if both texts and readers are not involved with each other. It is not surprising that reading is not only comprised of reading aloud or clear pronunciation, however, reading is also an understanding which results in a variety of interpretations which certainly differs from individuals who read the text. The simple definition of reading is that it is a process where somebody sees and comprehends what is written. Afterward, reading is an active process for understanding the meaning of written texts related to the readers' knowledge (Pawana et al., 2014). To be exact, the process of reading is close-in from readers' knowledge about how each person interpreting the existing text.

Starting from seeing to comprehending the text is part of the reading comprehension process. Subsequently, reading comprehension can be well-defined as the capability to comprehend texts, to evaluate information, and to read between the lines correctly what the writer is preserving (Mckee, 2012). Finally, it may be concluded that reading comprehension is the process of building significance from the text. In consequence, the purpose of reading comprehension is to assist readers to comprehend the text. Moreover, it is important to note that during the learning process, the English teacher arranges teaching strategies as support during learning activities. Therefore, a teaching strategy is needed for students so that students do not feel bored while studying. Furthermore, teaching strategies can be interpreted as methods applied by teachers to help students when studying subjects and achieving learning goals (Sarode, 2018).

Thus, a teaching strategy can be defined as a series of plans that include activities designed by the teacher to deliver subject matter by involving students and practicing various skills.

Based on field experience that the researcher found during the learning process at SMPN 2 Singaraja, the researcher got the opportunity to teach seventh-grade students. Afterward, the researcher found that seventh-grade students were still inadequate in terms of reading comprehension. The researcher observed the experience when the learning process took place in the class. The students indicated a lack of enthusiasm when reading English texts. After the researcher asked what the problems were, seventh-grade students answered that there were still many English words they did not comprehend their meaning. Other than that, they also felt difficulty in pronouncing English words, which made learners less enthusiastic. Thus, it can be seen that the obstacles experienced by seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Singaraja were common issues because students were infrequently comprehending equivalent vocabulary or sentences in English.

Despite the fact that reading is one of the momentous aptitudes, not all junior high school learners have the capabilities, for instance, English test or examination that requires time to read the text. Thus, it may be impossible for students to answer all the questions. It may take longer for learners to comprehend the text. Consequently, the only thing students may do is to randomly answer the questions, even though the answers may not be the correct ones. The issues that seventh-grade students experience in the field are a sign that English teachers need to prepare strategies in teaching reading comprehension to help students resolve difficulties in reading comprehension. In addition, due to the influence of the coronavirus outbreak which demands the government to close the learning process in the school environment, the learning process which should have taken place face-to-face has now become online based. Therefore, educators must make adjustments to changes in the educational process. Accordingly, to overcome the current issues, English educators, especially teachers who teach seventh-grade students shall prepare appropriate strategies in accordance with the issues that arise on the surface, so that the existing problems can be resolved.

Method

The researcher used a qualitative design in this study to identify and discover a phenomenon that occur in the online learning process, so that the results of the research could be translated into descriptions and personal views of the participants. Therefore, qualitative research was the research that was focused on investigation, discovery, designate, and gave quality or privilege of community stimuli that couldn't be given details, measured or defined over and done with a quantitative approach. In point of fact, qualitative research, generally, prime focused on understanding community occurrences from the standpoint of human contributors in research. To sum it up, qualitative investigation pursued to recognize human and social manners as practiced by contributors in certain communal surroundings. This was the very personal nature of the investigation, which generously be on familiar terms with the individual insights and prejudices of the contributors and examiners (Ary et al., 2010)

The location of the research took place at SMPN 2 Singaraja positioned in the range of the Buleleng Regency. The school had been chosen because this school implemented the online learning. Therefore, the subject of the current research would be the two English teachers who taught seventh-grade students. The research subjects were two English teachers who taught seventh-grade students. Furthermore, the two English teachers were appointed because they taught seventh-grade students during online learning process and have been teaching English for thirteen years. The research objects would identify the strategies used and discover how the strategies were applied by the two English teachers who taught reading comprehension for seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Singaraja.

The purpose of collecting data was to discover ways to gather the evidence needed with the intention of accomplishing research objectives. Completing it, all qualitative analysis implicated efforts, manufactured information and gave detailed relationships, speculate about exactly how, as well as why the interactions perform as they did, and recombined the fresh facts through what was previously recognized (Ary et al., 2010). The first data collection technique would be in the form of observation. This technique was used to discover a phenomenon that happened around the research area. Simply put, an observation was an activity of a process with the intention of feeling and understanding the knowledge of a phenomenon to obtain the information needed to continue research. The second technique of collecting data would be in the form of interview. It's important to note that interview is a process based on question and answer between two parties, namely the interviewer and resource persons to obtain data, information, and opinions about something, or events that occurred in the surrounding environment.

Findings and Discussions

The question-answer relationship strategy helped the English teachers in teaching reading comprehension during the online learning process. Through this strategy, the English teachers could find out the extent to which students understand what had been given to them.

The first English teacher whose data were collected explained that he used the question-answer relationship strategy to teach reading comprehension for seventh-grade students. Furthermore, the English teacher revealed that he utilized the question-answer relationship strategy in teaching reading comprehension during online learning for seventh-grade students. Firstly, the teacher started online learning by seeing how many students attended the online learning. Afterward, the English teacher guided literacy activities in which students were given motivation and guidance to see, observe, and read related material in the textbook through learning applications, namely WhatsApp and Google Meet. Furthermore, the English teacher assisted students to think critically where seventh graders were given the opportunity to identify things that they might not comprehend in the textbook. Also, at this stage, the English teacher provided several questions and examples to students regarding the topic, so that students could think and discover answers to the questions given by the English teacher. According to the English teacher, the strategy was utilized to provide comprehension of the learning material to students so that they could accept or comprehend the explanations given by the English teacher. Consequently, the English teacher also considered the strategy to be useful, as it familiarized students to express what came to their mind and trained the courage to communicate their

opinions without fear and trembling. Thus, increasing their love for lessons and arousing their active critical thinking. Subsequently, this love of learning was very important for students, for it could foster enthusiasm for learning. If there was no interest in learning, it would be difficult to comprehend the subject matter, also, if students had a high interest in learning, and if they could comprehend the material that had been explained by the English teacher, then, it would made it easier for the English teacher to teach them. Hereinafter, if there were students who had not been able to answer, the English teacher would guide the students so that the students were able to answer the questions given with the results of their own thoughts. Consequently, the strategy was used by the English teacher to see whether students really comprehend learning according to the text they read. Thereunto, if seventh-grade students could answer the question, then, they already comprehend it well, and if students could not answer the question, then, seventh-grade student did not comprehend the text. Thus, the strategy could help the teacher to perceive if students were actually answering the question based on their own thoughts or with existing answers from the textbook. Apart from that, he also mentioned that the situation during the online learning process was highly dependent on the signal strength of the individuals which caused many seventh graders were unable to attend the entire class. Moreover, he continued, only a few seventh-grade students managed to complete the entire class. Even though there were signal constraints, the reactions of seventh-grade students when the online learning process took place were quite good, for example, seventh-grade students who took part in learning were also active during the learning process, although not all of them participated.

In fact, those who were present from the beginning to the end of the online learning process had good enthusiasm to participate in the online learning process. At the end of the online learning process, the English teacher did not forget to provide conclusions about the learning material that had been studied together. Thereto, for further online learning, the English teacher always provided the assignment. The assignment was set so that seventh graders who had taken online learning could study the assignment at home. Forward, for seventh-grade students who were unable to take part during online learning to stay in touch with their friends and ask their friends about things that have been conveyed by the English teacher during online learning, as well as doing and collecting the assignment so as not to miss the learning material. Furthermore, he explained that the online learning process only took approximately 30-minutes to minimize the use of too much internet data during learning, and so that seventh-grade students were not too overwhelmed when receiving learning during the online learning process. Subsequently, the 30-minute learning policy was implemented to reduce complaints from each student's parents.

The second English teacher stated that she was also implementing the same strategy, namely question-answer relationship, by using a combination of learning applications, namely, WhatsApp and Google Meet. Afterward, she added, the use of the textbook, PowerPoint, and learning videos from YouTube was also used during online learning. The English teacher started online learning by checking the attendance of seventh-grade students. Furthermore, the English teacher given seventh-grade students motivation and guidance to see, observe, and read related material in the textbook. Afterward, the English teacher requested seventh-grade students to read the textbook, and the English teacher gave several questions. Thereunto, there would be a

thought process among seventh-grade students to think carefully about the questions given by the English teacher. Moreover, the strategy developed creative thinking of seventh-grade students actively, so as to foster interest in learning and new knowledge in the learning process. Therefore, the interaction between the English teacher and seventh-grade students in learning occurred by the way the English teacher provided questions and were answered by the seventh-grade students who had been appointed to answer questions, and vice versa.

Therefore, also made it easier for seventh-grade students if they did not comprehend the material, they could ask the English teacher. Additionally, she also revealed that when the online learning process took place, students were actively participated during the online learning process. Furthermore, compared to using a learning application in the form of WhatsApp which only provided chat features, the Google Meet application made seventh-grade students more active in participating in the online learning process, for the Google Meet application presented a good face and audio display so that the appearance and face of the English teacher and students could be seen well. This caused students to catch the explanation given by the English teacher noticeably. Thus, students were able to listen and ask questions to the English teacher or to other students, even though there was a slight signal predicament that caused the sound to be intermittent, both from the English teacher when she wanted to deliver the material or from students when they desired to ask questions, as well as problems displaying delayed facial images due to jams or the presence of pauses between the sound produced through the speakers of each device.

Apart from those predicaments, the online learning experience certainly felt much better and seventh-grade students could be more expressive and active when they desired to ask questions using the Google Meet application instead of WhatsApp. In addition, the online learning process was restricted to only 40-minutes, so as not to overwhelm students from excessive data usage. The second teacher also explained that the application of the question-answer relationship could aid her in the online learning process, for not only the English teacher played an active role in the online learning process, but seventh-grade students also took an active role. Furthermore, through the application of the strategy, seventh-grade students could exchange their thoughts, both with the English teacher and with their friends. So that they could bring out the ideas based on their own comprehension, and the English teacher could discover the abilities of each student, as each student had a variety of answers according to how well seventh-grade students comprehend questions given by the English teacher.

Thereunto, if there were students who did not ask, the English teacher would gave the students questions. Thus, by giving students the opportunity to answer questions, the English teacher also provided opportunities for students to think and try to answer questions. And, if the answers given by students were not considered as appropriate, then the teacher's role was to guide students to comprehend the questions, and after that, permit students to try again to answer questions according to the results of their own comprehension. Thus, it could be concluded that the two English teachers teaching seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Singaraja implemented the same strategy, namely question-answer relationship, with the same learning applications, however with different learning experiences due to differences in characteristics and enthusiasm

of seventh-grade students. Furthermore, the online learning process also did not take much time, instead it took up more internet quota to join in one meeting. For this reason, a policy from the school was enforced to reduce lesson hours, so as not to burden students when they wanted to take online-based learning. Thereunto, in addition to signal constraints and internet quotas, students who do not attend or did not submit assignments will receive warnings from the teacher, the counseling teachers, or home visits from the school principal to discover what difficulties that students were experiencing.

Through the use of this strategy, the English teacher could determine the mastery of the subject matter through memory and the expression of students' feelings and attitudes about the facts learned, heard, or read. Furthermore, strengthening the connection between a question and its answer, so could help the growth of students' attention to the lesson, and develop their ability to use the knowledge and experience. Consequently, questions can arouse students' interest and motivation to learn and were able to connect previous lessons with new ones. Additionally, from the answers obtained, it could be feedback for the teacher regarding the knowledge, attitudes, and characteristics of students and the results of the teaching and learning process.

The QAR strategy was design in which students categorize understanding questions according to how and from what sources the questions were answered (Pearson & Johnson, 1978). The researcher observed the online learning process carried out by the English teachers. The classroom atmosphere in the online learning using QAR revealed that seventh-grade students looked quite active and enthusiastic. However, a common problem, namely, not all students could join in taking lessons online. Based on the data obtained through observation, the researcher assumed that using QAR was good in developing creative thinking among seventh-grade students. Subsequently, the question and answer relationship generally provided questions to students to see whether they comprehend the text or not (Sarjan & Mardiana, 2017). Therefore, this was where students' understanding of the text can be understood. In addition, the strategy helped English teachers discover answers made by students. If students were able to answer questions based on their own language, then students could be characterized as understanding the text.

The strategy guided seventh-grade students to comprehend questions in order to obtain information based on the textbook. Furthermore, the English teacher applied the strategy to aid seventh-grade students to comprehend the information provided in the textbook. As mentioned by Anggun (2017), question-answer relationship (QAR) was a reading comprehension strategy developed to explain how students improve their thoughts of reading text by answering questions. It was concluded that the QAR strategy could improve students' reading comprehension. By using this strategy, students could learn to develop their way of thinking toward the text. Afterward, seventh-grade students not only read, but they were also able to comprehend, develop students' own thoughts in comprehending the content in the textbook. Moreover, the strategy was used by the English teacher to observe students' understanding in reading the text. If students were able to answer the questions, it meant that they had comprehended the text, and if they could not answer the questions, then seventh-grade students

did not understand the text. This strategy could support seventh-grade students if students were able to answer questions using their own thoughts or with answers from the text.

The English teacher started the online learning by saying "Good afternoon, everybody" and asked seventh-grade students about their condition "How are you feeling today?" The English teacher encouraged a religious attitude to open activities in the online learning process. After that, the English teacher asked students about the previous lesson to be reminded again, seventh-grade students were asked to explain in English. Thus, the English teacher provided an explanation of the previous lesson. Thereunto, the English teacher applied the strategy to determine the extent to which seventh-grade students understood the content of the text. For example "what does this mean? "What is this function?" If students could answer questions, it meant they comprehended the textbook. However, if students could answer questions from the English teacher, then, students did not comprehend the text. Therefore, the role of the teacher was to provide explanations of questions until students could answer them in their own words. Hereinafter, the strategy was especially helpful for seventh graders if they were capable of answering questions in their own words. Furthermore, the English teacher helped students by translating words that were difficult for them to comprehend and the English teacher repeated words that were difficult to pronounce.

Conclusions and Suggestions

It was found that the strategy used was question-answer relationship. Furthermore, the implementation in online learning, namely, by using learning media, such as WhatsApp, Google Classroom, and Google Meet. For the delivery of the material, the English teachers used textbooks, PowerPoint, and learning videos from YouTube. Furthermore, the application of the question and answer relationship strategy in the online learning process, namely, by providing material that was delivered first by the English teachers, then, guiding seventh-grade students to read, while giving questions to students regarding the material in the textbook. Thus, by using the QAR strategy, students are able to understand the contents of the reading, students are able to find information, so that it can provide motivation for students to discuss with teachers and friends. However, of course there are some activities that are reduced to save time during the online learning process. For the record, online learning only lasts about 30-minutes to 40-minutes. This kind of policy is intended so that students are not too overwhelmed in carrying it out, because online learning also requires a large internet connection and a quota for one meeting.

The researcher expects that the English teachers can build up enthusiasm among seventh-grade students to be able to always take part in the online learning process, so that no seventh-grade students will miss the online learning process. Thereunto, for the tasks of online learning, there shouldn't be too many, and if there are several students who don't do the assignments, it would be better if they are guided so that students are no longer lazy to do their assignments. Since the online learning process has been going on for almost a year due to an outbreak that has not been resolved properly, the researcher expect that seventh-grade students will not be discouraged in participating in the online learning process at home, so that the knowledge from each lesson can still be obtained properly.

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