

AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHING READING STRATEGIES: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Reading plays an important role in English language learning because it helps students understand written information and develop their language skills. However, many junior high school students still face difficulties in comprehending English texts due to limited vocabulary and low interest in reading activities. Therefore, teachers are required to implement appropriate teaching strategies to support students in understanding reading materials. This study aims to explore the teaching strategies used by an English teacher in teaching reading and to describe students' learning experiences during the reading process. This research employed a qualitative case study design conducted at SMP Wahid Hasyim Malang. The participants consisted of one English teacher and several seventh-grade students. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and documentation. The findings indicate that the teacher applied contextual reading strategies by connecting reading materials with students' daily experiences, using familiar topics, and encouraging students to relate the text to real-life situations. These strategies helped create a more meaningful learning environment and encouraged students to participate more actively in reading activities. The study suggests that contextual strategies can help students understand reading materials and make the learning process more engaging.

Keywords: Contextual reading, Teaching Reading Strategies, Reading Comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an essential skill in learning English because it enables students to understand written information and develop their language competence. Through reading activities, students can gain knowledge, interpret ideas, and connect information from texts with their prior understanding. In the context of English as a foreign language, reading also helps students expand their vocabulary and improve their comprehension skills.

However, many junior high school students still experience difficulties in understanding English texts. Limited vocabulary and unfamiliar topics often make students struggle to comprehend the meaning of the text. These difficulties can reduce students' confidence and interest in reading activities. Machfud and Afidah (2022) state that limited vocabulary knowledge is one of the main factors that influences students' reading comprehension.

Teachers play an important role in helping students overcome these difficulties by implementing appropriate teaching strategies. Effective teaching strategies can support students in understanding reading materials and create a more meaningful learning process. According to Lu (2022), the use of appropriate reading strategies can guide students to interpret texts and improve their comprehension ability.

Several previous studies have discussed the importance of teaching strategies in reading instruction. Villarente (2024) explains that appropriate teaching strategies can significantly support students' reading comprehension performance. Similarly, Nguyen (2022) states that teachers' strategies in teaching reading can influence students' engagement and understanding during reading activities. In addition, Novitasari et al. (2020) found that contextual strategies can help students understand descriptive texts by connecting the meaning of words with the context of the text.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the teaching strategies used in teaching reading. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study aimed to understand the teaching process and students' learning experiences in a natural classroom setting. The research was conducted at SMP Wahid Hasyim Malang. The participants of this study consisted of one English teacher and several seventh-grade students who were involved in the reading lessons. The participants were selected because they were directly involved in the teaching and learning process related to reading activities.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and documentation. The interviews were conducted with the English teacher to explore the strategies used in teaching reading and with students to understand their experiences during the learning process. Documentation was used to support the data obtained from interviews, including teaching materials and other relevant classroom documents.

The data analysis was conducted through several stages. First, the researcher organized the collected data from interviews and documentation. Second, the researcher identified important themes related to teaching strategies and students' experiences in reading activities. Finally, the findings were interpreted to describe how contextual strategies were implemented in the classroom and how they influenced students' engagement during reading lessons.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study describe the teaching strategies used by the English teacher in teaching reading and students' responses during the learning process. Based on the interview data and documentation, several contextual strategies were identified in the reading activities.

First, the teacher selected reading materials that were closely related to students' daily lives. The topics used in the classroom included situations that were familiar to students, such as school activities and everyday experiences. By presenting texts with familiar themes, students were able to connect the content of the reading material with their own experiences.

Second, the teacher encouraged students to share their opinions and personal experiences related to the reading topic. During the reading activities, students were asked to discuss the content of the text and express their understanding. This activity allowed students to become more involved in the learning process and helped them interpret the meaning of the text more easily.

Third, the teacher guided students through the reading process by asking questions related to the text. These questions helped students identify important information and understand the main ideas of the reading material. Through teacher guidance, students were encouraged to focus on understanding the overall meaning of the text rather than translating each individual word.

In addition, the findings also revealed some challenges faced by students during reading activities. Some students still had difficulties understanding unfamiliar vocabulary. As a result, they sometimes depended on the teacher's explanation to understand certain parts of the text. Despite these challenges, the contextual strategies implemented by the teacher helped create a more interactive learning environment.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that contextual reading strategies can support students' comprehension during reading activities. By connecting reading materials with students' real-life experiences, teachers can create a more meaningful learning environment.

This finding is consistent with Lu (2022), who states that reading strategies play an important role in helping students interpret texts and improve their comprehension ability. When teachers apply appropriate strategies, students can understand the content of the text more effectively.

The results also support the findings of Moral and Villarente (2024), which show that teaching strategies significantly influence students' reading comprehension performance. In addition, Nguyen (2022) explains that teachers' instructional strategies can increase students' engagement and participation during reading activities.

Contextual strategies also help students interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words by using the context of the text. Novitasari et al. (2020) found that contextual strategies can support students in understanding descriptive texts by connecting vocabulary with the surrounding context.

However, the findings also show that vocabulary remains one of the main challenges in reading activities. As stated by Machfudi and Afidah (2022), limited vocabulary knowledge can affect students' ability to understand English texts. Therefore, teachers need to provide additional support to help students develop their vocabulary knowledge.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the teaching strategies used in teaching reading at SMP Wahid Hasyim Malang. The findings indicate that the English teacher implemented contextual strategies by connecting reading materials with students' daily experiences, selecting familiar topics, and encouraging classroom discussions related to the text. These strategies helped create a more meaningful learning process and encouraged students to participate more actively in reading activities. By relating reading materials to real-life situations, students were able to understand the content of the text more easily and became more engaged during the learning process. However, several challenges were also identified, particularly related to students' limited vocabulary and their dependence on teacher guidance. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to continue developing strategies that support students in improving their vocabulary and independent reading skills. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that contextual strategies can be useful in supporting reading instruction in English classrooms. By creating learning experiences that are relevant to students' lives, teachers can help students become more engaged and motivated in reading activities.

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