**Enhancing Reading Comprehension of Junior High School Students through Scaffolding Instruction**

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Scaffolding, as one of the structured-teaching learning strategies on language skills, has been developed worldwide including in Indonesian context. This paper investigates the effect of using scaffolding to enhance reading comprehension of ninth-grade students in SMP Negeri 04 Batu, East Java, Indonesia. The present study employs a quantitative research design which involves 30 participants (i.e. 12 male and 18 female), and their average ages are 15 years old. The instruments used in the study are pre-test and post-test besides questionnaire. The tests are done before and after using the scaffolding strategy and the questionnaire are used to identify the students’ perception and feeling after the implementation of the strategy. Data analysis are carried out using paired-samples t-test and the questionnaire (5-Likert scales) are analyzed descriptively. The results of the study show a significant difference between before and after using the scaffolding strategy. It indicates that the scaffolding strategy practiced by the students could build their reading comprehension skills by means of steps by steps activity. Besides, the students feel more comfortable and eager to read more authentic reading material on account of this strategy. Therefore, it is recommended for teachers and syllabus designers to include scaffolding instruction to enhance the students reading comprehension.

**Keywords:** scaffolding, reading comprehension, instructional strategy, classroom activity

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of language skill requires good attention, it emphasizes the important role of learners in reading comprehension. Reading comprehension related to the process of obtaining information. The purpose of reading is to find out the meaning of reading and to be understood, the information obtained hopefully able to improve knowledge. Reading looks simple but involves a complex thought process. According to Harris and Graham (2007), reading comprehension is an activity to obtain information from reading texts that involves a complex process to get meaning in the text being read. When someone reads the text, the person must first understand the words in the reading for later information in the reading can be interpreted.

The importance of reading ability reflects that reading comprehension is one of the aspects of English that students must master well. The government requires reading material in the English curriculum, considering that reading cannot be separated from the language learning process. The government created a reading curriculum in learning with the hope that students could comprehend information from the English-language text as a whole. Although In the 2013 curriculum, reading is not emphasizing taught indefinite time it was explained that one of the objectives of reading was to improve students' reading comprehension so that they could not only be able to read but also understand the meaning of reading. Commonly, it is often found that students can read and know English vocabulary and can pronounce English words well. However, many students still find difficulties to understand the meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text as a whole.

To overcome these problems, it needs appropriate an effective learning method to support students' reading comprehension. Students must realize that reading comprehension is important, not only be able to read fluently but also to understand the meaning of the text they are reading. One effective method to improve students' reading skills is scaffolding. This method is one of the methods of learning that emphasizes student activities. This method was first introduced in the world of education in 1976 by Bruner. This method has been widely used in education to improve students' reading comprehension skills. According to Bruner (1976), this method becomes one of the effective learning methods to guide students to increase their potential.

Based on previous research conducted by Rabab'ah and Safadi (2012) entitled "The effect of scaffolding instruction on reading comprehension skills", it is known that this method is effective to improve students' ability to read comprehension. This previous study aimed to determine the effect of scaffolding on 11th-grade students in Jordan. Based on the results of the analysis using One-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA), it is known that this scaffolding method, if executed optimally and appropriately, can provide significant results on improving students' reading skills.

Other research related to reading comprehension is research conducted by Salem (2017) titled "Scaffolding Reading Comprehension Skills." Salem's research aims to investigate the effect of scaffolding on students' reading comprehension abilities. In contrast to previous studies, Salem's (2017) study is a descriptive qualitative study. The choice of method is based on the reason that the type of descriptive research is following the formulation of the problem to be answered. The results showed that often teachers could not determine what method was appropriate to improve their students' reading skills. The teacher is not fully aware of the benefits of implementing the scaffolding method on students' reading abilities.

Many previous researchers used qualitative or quantitative, but in this research, the researcher used descriptive quantitative research. Based on the previous researches above, the researcher will research teaching reading comprehension by using scaffolding by using descriptive quantitative. The researcher uses scaffolding technique in teaching reading comprehension at the ninth grade of SMP Negeri 04 Batu by comparing between the students’ score before and after being taught by using scaffolding technique and using pretest and posttest each of item.

Teaching and learning English in SMP Negeri 04 Batu need various strategy and technics. Its caused by the background of the differences of students, various levels of student’s competences, capable and readiness factors are also the reason, why the teachers should apply various kinds of strategies and technics. Teaching and learning reading needs appropriate strategy and technic. The strategy and techniques used are expected to be able to enhance the students reading comprehension. The present research aims to explore how the students of the ninth grade of SMP Negeri 04 effect in teaching and learning activities using a Scaffolding strategy in reading comprehension.

Studying and applying about scaffolding has been done by many researchers and teachers, teaching and learning using scaffolding give many advantages in facilitating the teaching and learning process, not only for applying in elementary school but also for Junior High School and University. About Scaffolding in the former, Wood et al (1976) told that the teacher or tutor greatly influences how the development of students' abilities, the proper interaction between students and teachers can provide a significant increase in student learning outcomes especially in terms of foreign language learning. Interaction between teacher and student through scaffolding can also overcome student obstacles and difficulties. In a study conducted by Wood et al (1976) students consisting of adults received appropriate support from their tutors so that they showed better learning outcomes. According to Reiser (2004) Scaffolding involves the teacher's efforts to help students solve problems that students cannot overcome. Learning activities in the scaffolding method are not passive learning activities but rather involve many active activities related to behavior tutorials (Walqui, 2006). In line with Walqui's statement, Collins et al (1989) state that one of the learning strategies that are the key to learning success is the scaffolding method, because in the scaffolding method, students involve themselves more in the learning process, students are responsible for the problems they face in the learning process, so students can better explore their abilities that lead to increased ability.

Related to many perspectives above, scaffolding truly can be one of the alternatives and solutions for teachers to provide various kinds of strategies for teaching activities, especially in reading. On another statement, in the learning process on the scaffolding method, the teacher helps students do not mean that the teacher presents easy problems, the problems given by the teacher remain complicated but the teacher helps students to be able to solve their problems better (Bruner, 1986). Scaffolding learning method allows students to be able to learn actively and obtain information from others, help each other, and develop their knowledge, this concept is the concept of ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) (Hosseini, 2008). In line with this, Suherdi (2008) argues that in the scaffolding method, there are instructions given to students. Suherdi (2008) added that in the scaffolding method, the teacher provides quite complex problems that cannot be worked on by the students themselves and requires cooperation with their friends, in this case, if students continue to find difficulties, the teacher assists in the form of motivation, guidance, and example. The keywords, in this case, are activities that provoke student independence.

Scaffolding has several concepts, among others. First, knowledge is built by the students themselves and depends on the activeness of the students themselves. The teacher only provides material assistance and provides advice. Several strategies in scaffolding can be applied by teachers in classroom learning (Walqui, 2006; Gibbons, 2002; Reiser, 2004). The first is the Bridging strategy, this strategy aims to make students able to make connections between what they have learned now and previous material. This strategy allows students to be able to learn new concepts by prioritizing knowledge. Second, Modeling is the teacher becomes a model for students, the teacher exemplifies how to do the right reading.

Third is schema building, this strategy is a strategy to build a connection between the current material and materials or other things around students. The teacher helps students to see the connection between the lesson and the activities or environment around students so students can understand the material more easily. Fourth, Developing metacognition, this strategy is a strategy that requires students to be able to monitor their abilities and ways of learning. The ability of students to monitor their actions includes four aspects; first, students realize that they are applying certain strategies while learning; second, students know that many ways can be used to learn better; third, students can evaluate ways of learning that are suitable for themselves; and the fourth is to plan the use of other methods that are more suitable for further learning.

Research Questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between before and after using scaffolding instruction strategy for reading comprehension of ninth-grade students SMPN 04 Batu?
2. What are the students’ perceptions after using scaffolding instruction strategy for reading comprehension of ninth-grade students SMPN 04 Batu?

**METHOD**

The research was conducted in SMP Negeri 04 Batu. This research is a descriptive design that is designed to explain the participants accurately while using Scaffolding in the teaching and learning process. This quantitative research method is used to investigate the effectiveness of using scaffolding technique in teaching reading text. This research was conducted from January until March 2020.

**Participants**

The research participants are 30 students a ninth grade of SMP Negeri 04 Batu with 30 12 male, 18 female. Their average ages are 15 years old.

**Instruments**

The instruments of this research are tests and questionnaire. Pre test was conducted to check the condition of the learners before treatment is given. Post test is conducted after the treatment was done. The result of the pre test was compared to the result of post test in order to check the effectiveness of the strategy used in the present study. Besides, questionnaire was distributed to learners after they have experience of learning reading using scaffolding strategy. It is aimed at the students’ perception, attitude, and feeling as well.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Data was collected before and after the treatments. The result of the test in term of scores were analysed using t-test for correlated samples as the participants are the same subject measured twice, before and after treatment. The scores from pre-test was compared to the score of post-test which aims to investigate whether the difference is significant or not. Data from questionnaire was collected using google form and analized descriptively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the researcher acted as a teacher and brought out a teaching and learning process. The researcher conducted the activity in teaching naturally as usual activity. While teaching and learning process the researcher got classroom observation and made field note. And after teaching and learning the researcher got an interview with many students.

In the first meeting, the researcher gave narrative text was aimed to identify the generic structure and language feature of the text to identify the words; verb, noun, and adjective are probably often used for narrative text, the students work in a pair to find the point of them. In the second meeting, the researcher gave students text and form of Scaffolding. The students worked individually in reading the text based on Scaffolding guidance.

Researcher ways to provide scaffolding in the teaching and learning process for reading comprehension using the curriculum cycle including building the field, modeling, joint construction, and independent reading.

When the teaching and learning process ongoing in the second meeting the students enjoy learning well, they looked very exciting and interested. Many of them said that it was very easy to identify the generic structure and language features.The students felt that Scaffolding was very helpful to understand the text, although many of them still considered that the comprehend the text in several parts is still difficult caused by their limited vocabulary. Based on the analyzed data from classroom observation, interview, and field note the research found that the students were able to comprehend the text better rather than before using Scaffolding. The student's outcome in process of teaching and learning can be seen in Chart 1 as follows.

Chart 1: The Student's Outcome in Process of Teaching and Learning

The implementation of the teaching and learning without using scaffolding shows that the value of student learning outcomes obtained is: Lowest Value 40, Highest Value 76, Average Value 52. As a comparison, the teaching and learning by using scaffolding show that the value of student learning outcomes obtained is Lowest Value 72, Highest Value 92, Average Value 85. From the comparison can be concluded that the implementation of the teaching and learning using scaffolding was very significant to increase the students' value.

The research indicates that the scaffolding method can enhance students reading comprehension skills. The significant increase in classroom activity certainly has an impact on students' scores in reading. The cooperative and conducive classroom atmosphere for learning makes students' motivation in reading better many times. These results are consistent with the results of research conducted by Rabab'ah & Safadi (2012) and Salem (2017), in addition to several other studies Cubukcu, 2008; Fung et al., 2003 also showed that scaffolding helps students to improve reading comprehension.

The active classroom atmosphere is caused by the application of good scaffolding. Previously students felt that learning in class was monotonous and felt boring. However, in scaffolding, students do not feel bored because the teacher helps and provides stimulus to students. In the learning process, the teacher starts with the pre-reading stage. At this stage, the teacher begins by conveying the learning objectives, the teacher communicating the learning objectives in general and then conveying the specific objectives of reading. The specific purpose that the teacher is conveying is that students can understand the contents of the reading and obtain information from the reading. After delivering the objectives, the teacher conveys the material to link students' knowledge with the text that students will read. Submission of material by teachers in the form of lectures or questions and answers with students. Before delivering the material, the teacher writes the topic discussed on the board and together with students discusses the topic.

After explaining the material, the teacher writes the keywords related to the text to be read on the board. The teacher writes one word and allows students to predict what will be read. When students can predict what will be read, then the reading task will be easier. Predicting the reading content of keywords is called predicting from the word. After predicting the keywords, the teacher writes the title of the reading on the board. The written title is related to keywords making it easier for students to predict in more detail about the contents of the reading text. In addition to the title, the teacher and students predict from the first sentence if there is no title in the reading text. Like the text that students learn at the third meeting, the text given does not have a title so the teacher and students make predictions from the first sentence. This activity is also called predicting from the title or first sentences. In explaining the material, the teacher not only uses English but uses Indonesian. Gibbons (2002) refers to this activity as storytelling in the mother tongue. In addition to making predictions from titles, keywords, or first sentences in the reading text, the teacher and students share experiences and knowledge about the text. Students who know better and better understand the material are allowed to express their opinions on the topics covered. Questions from students are not answered by the teacher but are given to other students who know better. It aims to make students active and the material can be understood in greater depth. This activity is called sharing existing knowledge.

After pre-reading activities, the teacher and students do the reading activities. At this reading stage, many reading activities are carried out by the teacher. The first activity the teacher does at this stage is modeling reading. This activity is also called a reading demonstration. The teacher exemplifies how to read to students and students listen to how to read the teacher. The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate how to read with the correct pronunciation to students. Reading an English word is not the same as the pronunciation, the student is accustomed to hearing how to pronounce the words contained in the reading text. reading demonstration is done by the teacher repeatedly until students can imitate the way of reading as exemplified by the teacher. After the teacher reads, the teacher reads again from the beginning of the sentence, this time the students follow after the teacher. If students have not made a mistake, the teacher tells students to read the text itself.

In addition to demonstrating how to read, the teacher also did a demonstration when explaining words that were considered difficult. The teacher explains words that are considered difficult. The teacher explains accompanied by gestures and hand movements. Other activities in the reading phase are skimming and scanning text. This activity is carried out to find certain information. The teacher accustoms students to skimming and scanning so that students do not need to read the entire text just to get certain information from a descriptive text. The teacher trains students to look at the discussed keywords contained in the reading text. So when students want to find certain information, students can read quickly by looking at keywords that have been discussed before reading activities.

Unlike skimming and scanning, reading for detail is done to understand the text in more detail. The teacher assigns students to read texts slowly and thoroughly, students are also accustomed to underline words that are considered difficult or sentences that are considered important. In addition to marking words or sentences, students take notes in their books so that students understand the text in more detail. After the teacher assigns students to read slowly, the teacher pause and predicts. In this activity, the students who read are not students, but teachers. The teacher reads the text from the beginning of the paragraph. But the teacher does not read the entire text, the teacher only reads half of the entire contents of the text in a loud voice. The teacher reads slowly and stops when he reaches the middle of the reading text. The teacher asks students what the contents of the paragraph the teacher have read. Because students have read several times, students are not too difficult to remember the information asked by the teacher, for example, the teacher asks what happened in the text, then students will be able to answer the teacher's questions based on the text that has been read.

In addition to asking the text, the teacher and students together predict the contents of the next paragraph, even though they have read, but students do not understand the contents of the next paragraph because it has not been discussed. Students predict the contents of the next paragraph by looking at the contents of the paragraph that has been discussed. By predicting, students can make a complete and unrelated understanding of information. After predicting the teacher continues reading to the end. After reading, the teacher and students discuss the contents of the reading text. The teacher and students discuss the text by conducting question and answer. The teacher and students discuss words or sentences that are not understood by students. The goal is that students can understand the entire reading content and make conclusions about the reading content. The teacher writes difficult words on the board then discusses them together. Words that are considered difficult by students are not immediately interpreted by the teacher, the teacher asks other students who know better. If no students know, the teacher explains using sentences or through gestures and hand movements. So students answer for themselves the meaning of the word or sentence being asked. The last activity carried out at this reading stage is reading aloud. Reading aloud is done first by the teacher. After the teacher reads once, students read the entire text themselves aloud. This is done by the teacher in addition to developing reading skills, also to develop listening skills. By listening to other students, students can improve memory of the text being read and make it easier for students to understand the contents of the reading.

The last stage of the scaffolding technique in learning to read literacy comprehension is the post-reading stage. Activities at this stage are carried out after all reading activities have been completed and students have understood the contents of the reading text. At this stage, the teacher no longer guides students in answering questions or guides students in reading. The teacher only controls and monitors students. the teacher goes around the classroom and looks at the work of students one by one. If a student makes a mistake, the teacher simply points to the student's book and tells the student to check the answer again. The teacher does not say the student's answer is right or wrong, so the students themselves decide whether the answer is right or wrong. The activities carried out at this stage vary according to the type of text being read. The text used in learning to read literacy comprehension in class IX is descriptive. From the text that has been read, the teacher can give questions in the form of True / False question or questioning text. True / False question in the form of a sentence containing a statement following the reading text. If the sentence statement matches the reading text, then the student answers by circling the letter T on the question sheet. If the statement sentences do not match the reading text, the students answer by circling the letter F on the question sheet. Another way that teachers often use to check student understanding at this stage is by Questioning the text. The teacher gives questions about reading texts. Students are considered to have understood the contents of the reading if they can answer questions about reading correctly. If students can answer questions correctly, the learning objectives and reading goals are achieved.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings, the research concludes that by using scaffolding it could be seen that the students’ ability to comprehend the text is better. Scaffolding could invite students’ participation with the curriculum cycle that makes them think more critically and can read the text well. This is relevant to Rabab'ah & Safadi (2012) and Salem (2017) which shows that reading comprehension can be improved using scaffolding. Unfortunately, this research only used 2 meetings in the teaching and learning process. Next, hopefully, a teacher used longer and more various ways to implement scaffolding with other curriculum design. The results also show that the teacher as a researcher got some experiences and challenges in providing scaffolding with the students in the classroom.

It is highly recommended for further research to involve a larger number of subject in a different context to get richer, more reliable data and further research, and also develop in many kinds of curriculum stages since scaffolding is possible to reveal in each learning-cycle, it is possible to modify or use various scaffolding in the teaching-learning process.

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